

## MINUTES

WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2005  
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION  
WACTC –ROOM 303

**Call to Order**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:**

Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
Michael Bileau, Vice Chairman	Present
Allen Auclair	Present
John Ward	Present
Michelle Williams	Present

**GOOD AND WELFARE – PUBLIC**

- **Todd Brien, 560 Lydia Avenue, Woonsocket, Candidate for Mayor:** Said that it was a sad commentary that money couldn't be found from the City to continue our sports program at the WMS – a school labeled as "toxic", but was able to find \$50,000 to save the Beacon Charter School. "Let's fund our public schools first," he said. Brien is hoping that the school administration will ask the City Council where the meal tax money is.
- **Tara Seneck, WMS Student:** Said that she played field hockey for two years at the WMS and was very disappointed when it was cut. The players canvassed their neighborhoods and received 400 signatures in favor of continuing the WMS sports program. They hope the program can be restored before they miss any more games. She asked that the WSC please reinstate the funding of the sports program at the WMS.
- **Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street, Woonsocket:** Extended her condolences to the staff of the WED on the passing of Pat Mendillo. She also had a concern about the money earmarked to reinstate the WMS sports and doesn't think it should be used for this purpose. She is the PTO president at Globe Park School and they have a separate account for funds raised in this manner (i.e. soda machines, fundraisers, etc.). "At the last meeting, Michelle Williams stated that Dr. D'Acchioli received a check for \$10,000 for not taking the medical coverage. I wonder how many other staff members received this benefit when it could be used to fund things that are being cut?" she asked.
- **Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Avenue, Woonsocket, WTC President:** Urged the WSC to find the funds for the sports program at the WMS after last Thursday, and urged them tonight to transfer the funds they have found since then to the sports program as soon as possible. He also urged them to approve the candidate for WMS Vice Principal this evening.
- **Judith Guillet, 63 Verdun Street, Woonsocket, McFee Secretary:** Pleaded with the WSC not to question the cutting of the clerical positions at the McFee administration building. "We are all overwhelmed and overworked to provide you with the information you need. Sometimes we don't even take a lunch. It's an insult to even consider making more cuts at McFee."
- **Concerned WMS Parent:** Spoke about the sad fact that it came down to the 11<sup>th</sup> hour for funding to be found for the sports program at the WMS. "There are so many programs that have been cut – music, for example." She has an older daughter who went through this school system and they always said what a wonderful education she received, but over the past ten years, many of these programs have been cut. "After being labeled "toxic" and everything else, these kids need a sports program. Why did it wait until today? The communication has to be better. I blame the state and city governments for lack of funding for education. Everyone says how important education is, but yet the funding keeps getting cut. It's a shame and our kids don't deserve it!"
- **Al Brien, 513 South Main St., Woonsocket:** He wanted to speak to the issue of funding for interscholastic sports at the WMS because it's very important. "Sports teach children leadership and teamwork. It formulates and teaches lessons that last a lifetime. It appears that with the \$17,000 found in an unofficial account that these programs will now be saved. It isn't fair. The lack of fairness here within this school administration is that the money seems to flow to the top and away from the bottom. I want to speak to that this evening. I can't speak for the City Council, but from what I have been told –that until there's some measure of frugal spending practices, there will be no additional money to flow from the City. Last year there was some controversy regarding the contract of the superintendent and whether we were arguing over small change. Dr. D'Acchioli is now making \$146,000 a year. Next year, that will jump to \$174,000. Most of the people on the bottom will receive less than 3% increases, but those at the top will receive 19, 20 and 21%." He spoke about Richard Ackerman and his yearly salary of \$83,000 as a WED employee. "Mr. Carroll, City Solicitor, makes \$57,000 a year. There's also Workers' Compensation Insurance. The Woonsocket Housing Authority goes out to bid every year for legal services. To the best of my knowledge, the WED does none of this. How successful do you think your

superintendent will be when he goes to City Hall next week to request more funding?" He asked Mr. Auclair to focus on this – taking a look at the cost of the management of this administration and comparing it with other similar communities. "You will find that the per pupil cost is excessive. In the future, please have greater consideration for the feelings of the students."

- **Carla Lister, Chorus Instructor at WMS:** Spoke about the All-City Band and Chorus program at the WMS. Announced that instruments will be selected on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> and instruction begins on September 29<sup>th</sup>. She said it's a very successful program and growing every year. She's very thankful for the funds that are providing for these programs; however, she was at the meeting to beg for more. When she went to the elementary schools, the students asked where they could get an instrument. They can borrow one, but if that's not possible, many can't afford to buy one. Her biggest problem is getting her kids to the WMS. Many of them don't have a ride. She would love to have a new music teacher to travel around to the elementary schools. There used to be one. She would love to have money for transportation if that is not possible to pick the kids up. She would also love to see that her teachers get paid for 32 days because they are only paid for 25 and do it out of the kindness of their hearts for the extra 7 days.
- **Louise Masse:** Said she was very proud of the WMS field hockey students. "They were very angry and disappointed last Thursday, but they handled it with grace."
- **Carol Thistle, Fairfield Avenue, Woonsocket:** She was concerned about funding for these programs next year and the year after that. As a teacher assistant at the WMS, she knows that many of the kids need the incentive of a competitive team to maintain their academics. "\$25,000 is a small amount of money to maintain this incentive."

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**RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Dr. D'Acchioli**

Congratulated the teachers who put in countless hours to make the summer enrichment program a great success: Kathleen Crowley, Chairperson, Lisa Ferrucci, Audra L'Etoile, Norman Loiselle and Patricia Pora. Approximately 120 students participated and completed the program.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Bileau

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)

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**MOTION TO TAKE OUT OF ORDER THE BUSSING APPEALS: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau (Unan. Approved)****NEW BUSINESS:****1. Bussing Appeals:**

- **Jaquesja Chamblee** – Ms. Salette Chamblee, guardian, spoke regarding bussing for her 6-year old niece. She became her foster parent as of two months ago and has a newborn child and a 24-month old with no transportation. She lives next to Valley Transportation and said it would take her niece ½ hour to walk to school. She has never crossed the street at all and is not from Woonsocket. Her niece would have to cross Providence and Front Streets. She has already missed 2 days of school. Ms. Chamblee is afraid something would happen to her if she can't walk with her niece. She stated that she could easily walk Jaquesja over to the Valley Bus parking lot to get her on the bus there. She sees her neighbors do it. Ms. Chamblee had the Dept. of Children, Youth and Families contact the WED making the request in addition to her own. Mr. Ward informed her that they have ruled pretty consistently in regards to the transportation policy. He said it seemed that Ms. Chamblee was already on her way to a successful appeal to the Commissioner. Ms. Williams asked what the policy is, because she thought all kindergarten students were bussed. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that not all are. When Dr. Macera was asked if she had seen the letter from DCYF, she said she had, but doesn't have the power to grant these waivers.

**Motion to deny the appeal: M. Dubois**

2<sup>nd</sup>: **M. Bileau**

**[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]**

- **Amanda Shahbaz** – Mr. & Mrs. Shahbaz had Dr. Macera read a statement from them. It stated that two of their children are special education students and are being bussed. "Even the bus driver asked why the 3<sup>rd</sup> child couldn't ride the bus. There's room on the bus. She has to walk from Third Avenue to the WMS. We have 6 children. I got a call from the vice principal that my daughter is being cared for by her and I had to leave work. When I got there, she was left waiting on the sidewalk," said Mr. Shahbaz. Dr. Macera said she would address the matter with the vice principal. Mr. Ward said he has a problem with the separation of siblings.

**Motion to deny the appeal: M. Dubois**

2<sup>nd</sup>: **M. Bileau**

**[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – No / MW- No. Motion passes 3-2.]**

- Brittany Velturo** – Ms. Lena Velturo read a letter she sent to McFee on July 28<sup>th</sup>. She called after getting the denial letter dated August 5<sup>th</sup> and no one had even read her letter. “It it’s within the mileage limit, they just send out an automatic denial letter. In one month, my daughter will be walking in the dark. There are no public transportation bus routes to take her to school. It’s not just my child. My 15-year old at the high school gets a bus. The high school’s further, but these kids are younger. The streets they gave me as a route for her to walk are dangerous. What’s it going to take for this policy to change? 1.6 miles is far for a 12-year old to walk in the dark, because at 6 a.m. in the winter, it’s dark. Her father is in Iraq. For her to get to school and back, someone’s leaving work. The Cote’s, who have the next appeal, are our neighbors and they have the same problem. Bill Legare of Valley Bus said there are 50 kids within two to three blocks who would all want bussing if these appeals are granted. Mr. Ward thought many of their concerns could be alleviated by people getting together and having their kids walk in a group. Ms. Velturo said there’s a bus that goes right up Mason Street with room on it. Mr. Ward explained that the seats are assigned to students that may not end up using the bus everyday. Ms. Williams said she wouldn’t want her child walking the routes that Valley uses to measure the distance and suggests they take. “There are alternate routes, even though they may be longer. I wouldn’t want my child walking some of these streets. I can’t deny this. We should look at the streets and routes we are suggesting people send their kids to school on,” said Williams. “If we approve these two appeals, we will have to deal with approximately 50 more from others in that area. We could be taking on another \$50,000 budget item for another bus,” said Ward. When asked what we would be adding to the bottom line if the mileage were dropped, Mr. Legare figured it would be 4 or 5 busses in addition to what we have now or \$250,000. “Safety of kids is definitely a priority. I was standing where you are now (to the parents). We have a Transportation Committee that doesn’t have the authority to do anything,” said Auclair. He suggested reviewing that policy. He was willing to allow bussing for 2 months while the review and possible revision of the policy takes place.

**Motion to award bussing on a 2-month, temporary basis to those in the affected area because Water and Canal Streets are unsafe streets and review the cases at the end of that period: M. Dubois**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau [Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Passes 5-0.]**

Motion to dispense with the next appeal: JW

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unan. Approved)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 8/24/05 Open/Closed**

Motion to Approve: M. Bileau

2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Ward (Unanimously Approved)

**CONSENT AGENDA: Motion to approve with the exception of Beacon Charter School Tuition – M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)**

**1. Personnel Actions (See attached)**

Certified Appointments/  
Non-Certified Appointments

**2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:**

<b><u>Local Funds:</u></b>	New England Mechanical Services, WHS, Hot Water Repairs	3,900.00
	RI Interscholastic League, WHS, FY06 Fees	4,115.00
<b><u>Grant Funds:</u></b>	Dell Computers, WACTC, Computers	28,063.80
	Jane Kondon, District, SALT Review	20,000.00
	Scholastic, WMS/WHHS, Licenses / Read 180	74,160.00
<b><u>Voc. Revenue:</u></b>	Apple Computer, WACTC, Computers	2,798.00

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve the payment of \$94,000 to the Beacon Charter School for student tuition: A. Auclair  
2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Ward (Unanimously Approved)**

Dr. D'Acchioli explained that because the Beacon Charter School remained open, it will cost the WED \$94,000—maybe even \$99,000 according to Miriam Goodman at this time—for tuition for Woonsocket students attending there. The WED received a bill for 68 students. We spend about \$2,000 per student less than this. The money is coming out of our local budget.

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**Motion to take NEW BUSINESS out of order: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau (Unanimously Approved)**

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**2. Bid Award**

▪ **#06-01 Janitorial Supplies:**

Motion to Approve recommendation of administration to award to various vendors for a total of \$10,475.02: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau

[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

Ms. Williams asked about Pac-Kem and where it was. Miriam Goodman said it was in Spring, Texas. It was posted on the website. Mr. Auclair asked about purchasing these products in collaboration with the RIASC. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that the WED does some group bidding and takes advantage of what works best for us.

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**3. Approval of Job Description for Woonsocket Middle School Principal**

**Motion to approve: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau**

Motion to Amend to change #31 under Duties & Responsibilities to read: "At the discretion of the **Superintendent, .....**": J. Ward 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois

[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

**Vote on Main Motion: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.**

Mr. Auclair asked that these job descriptions be placed on the website in a PDF format to prevent alteration.

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**4. Approval of Job Description for Woonsocket Middle School Assistant Principal**

**Motion to approve: M. Dubois 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Ward**

Motion to Amend to change #16 under Duties & Responsibilities to read: ".....at the discretion of the **Superintendent and/or his designee.**" and include the same educational preparation, experience, and qualifications as for the WMS Principal: J. Ward

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois

[Roll Call Vote: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.]

**Vote on Main Motion: MD=yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW=yes. Motion passes 5-0.**

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## 5. Appointment of Woonsocket Middle School Assistant Principal

Motion to approve the recommendation of appointing Linda Kuras as an Assistant Secondary School Principal to be assigned to the Woonsocket Middle School: M. Bileau

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois

Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.

Dr. D'Acchioli read his letter of recommendation. Mr. Ward noted that she obtained her Masters with a program the WED offers in collaboration with Providence College at a discounted rate.

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## 6. Approval of FY06 School Budget

Dr. D'Acchioli stated how this budget is affected daily by different, unforeseen factors.

**Motion to approve as presented: M. Bileau**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois**

Mr. Ward spoke about the \$17,000 in revenue from an account for student activities. He spoke with someone from RIDE and they said we couldn't use that money indiscriminately as we wish. Dr. D'Acchioli had told him it was an account no one seemed to know about. "Did you find out any more about it?" he asked D'Acchioli. "Ms. Valentine brought this account to our attention last year. It was created illegally and has not been audited," said D'Acchioli. Ms. Goodman explained that she has tried to get answers such as documentation as to the origin of the money, plans for use, etc., but to no avail. The signatory on the account is no longer an employee. The bank would not give her any information since she is not a signature on the account. Mr. Ward considers this uninvestigated money – not found money.

He had concerns with the following line items:

#200-319 Educational Training – Asked why the \$240,000 allocation. Miriam explained.

#200-334 Vehicle/Outside Equipment Repair – "Only \$15,000. They aren't getting newer."

#200-252 Workers' Compensation – Spoke about going out to bid for this item. Said that Beacon was more money, but they are more aggressive. We stayed with RI Interlocal Trust with the assurance that they would be more aggressive in getting people back to work, etc. He also noted that we are among the school districts that have the highest per pupil expenditures in the state and lowest administrative costs in the state.

#200-393 Special Tuition – Ward asked how we could reduce the amount of special ed tuition from last year. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that we opened a new room last year and this year with the hopes of reducing these costs.

#200-448 Regular Textbooks – Asked about \$23,200 reduction in this line item. Dr. Macera explained what has been purchased in the past few years.

#200-451 Fuel – Ward believes this allocation is too low by about \$50,000.

#200-452 Light & Power – He also thinks this allocation is too low and is not comfortable with these figures.

#715 Medicaid – He is very concerned about Medicaid and the projected reduction in revenue from it. "We are optimistic on the expenditures and pessimistic on the revenues," said Ward. He doesn't know if he can support the budget as it is presented. Ms. Williams asked if we could add \$300,000 in revenue to our budget if we went by previous revenues received from Medicaid. Mr. Ward believes we can certainly get more than \$900,000.

#200-393 Special Tuitions – Mr. Auclair asked about the teacher/student ratios and ways to bring more out-of-district placements back into our system to save money.

#714 Grant-Indirect Cost – Mr. Ward thinks we will get more revenue from this. "We could have revenue available to us that we are not taking advantage of." He suggested some of these items be revised. He spoke about Richard Ackerman's salary, saying that before we put him on the payroll it was costing us more money for his services. "We now have a managed control of this expenditure for one of the best school attorneys in the state."

Dr. D'Acchioli recommended that \$200,000 be added to the Medicaid revenue and also to the Fuel account. Miriam suggested \$100,000 each to Fuel and Light & Power. A discussion began about additional money to be allocated for the music program. Mr. Auclair asked Carla Lister what they are short. She didn't have her paperwork with her, but estimated it to be about \$300 to pay the teachers for the extra days of work.

**MOTION TO AMEND to do the following: JW                    2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau**

- **increase #715 to \$1.1 million**
- **increase #200-451 to \$734,000**
- **increase #200-452 to \$795,000**

**Vote on Amendment: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.**

**Vote on Main Motion: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / JW – yes / MW-yes. Motion passes 5-0.**

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Motion to table the rest of the agenda: J. Ward

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Bileau (Unanimously Approved)

Motion to adjourn at 10:30 p.m.: M. Bileau

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair (Unan. Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle  
Substitute WSC Recording Secretary