

MINUTES

**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 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	Absent
Michelle Williams	Present

By unanimous consent, the conference regarding the transfer of the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center deed from the state to the city was taken out of order.

CONFERENCES: Transfer of WACTC Deed (*Taken out of order*)

Arn Listnoff, an administrator for the Division of Capital Projects for the state of Rhode Island, introduced himself and John Rizzo, an engineer from Chevron, who were present to discuss the benefits of entering into an energy services contract for the WACTC. Mr. Listnoff congratulated WED as a tenant, saying it has done a marvelous job of maintaining the building. He announced that a \$15 million bond referendum was passed last year to bring all the state career & technical centers up to code. There is \$890,000 worth of work that needs to be done at the WACTC, which includes a new roof. The state fire marshal came out to the school last week and they are waiting for the reports. There are many things on the wish list of repairs that the state cannot afford to do because of the needs of the other career/technical centers. They would like to enter into an agreement about what work the state would do and what the city would be responsible for. Mr. Listnoff distributed an information sheet with costs and a graph showing the energy savings that could be realized under an energy services contract. For an investment of approx. \$350,000 for upgrades to the HVAC system and installation of high efficient lighting and controls, a savings of \$45,000 per year in energy savings would be realized. In seven years, the debt would be paid and the equipment would belong to us. They said that there are older energy systems in this building and it would be well worth the money. Mr. Listnoff wants to negotiate the terms of an agreement and bring it back before the WSC for approval. Dr. D'Acchioli told him that nothing would happen until a formal proposal is brought before the WSC with input from Richard Ackerman, Andrew Riley, Peter Fontaine, etc. Mr. Rizzo explained the sheet that was distributed, saying that he evaluated the systems in the building. He said the controls don't work very well. He added that Chevron has done over 600 contracts where they have gone in and figured out what was wrong and fixed it. The interest rate on the \$350,000 would be 4.5%.

GOOD AND WELFARE – PUBLIC

- **Mary Keegan, Woonsocket:** Spoke regarding the nepotism policy, saying she could think of at least four incidents over the years where relatives were in supervisory positions over someone else in their family. "There was never a problem. With George Nasuti and his sister, he might be a principal, but most principals don't usually deal with the goings on in the special education department. I think it's an injustice, when you have good people, to deny someone a promotion for this reason. His sister cannot get a promotion with the job she has."
- **Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Ave., Woonsocket—WTG President:** Said he never understood the reason for the nepotism policy. "Debbie Moylan would be under the control of Rick Emerson, Special Education Director." He notified the WSC that he and the Woonsocket Middle School staff will be coming before them at the May 25th meeting during Good & Welfare to speak regarding the problems at the WMS, since they cannot be dealt with in closed session. He also urged the WSC to give a directive to Peter Fontaine and the superintendent about retrofitting the security system. "Anyone can get into any building. In each elementary school, there's a buzzer at the door. The person is buzzed in and then it's free game. Yesterday, a parent came into a school and went into the front office of the school. They took two visitor passes and went up to the second floor to confront a teacher. It just so happened that the principal saw something and stopped the person. It almost came to blows. The times we live in right now are very violent. People are more prone to do what they want. We had a similar incident at the high school, but at least at the WHS there is a person who you have to go by to enter the building." He spoke about the secretaries at the elementary schools having so many things going on that they can't always worry about where someone went after they let them in the building. "One day, someone is going to get hurt. Put the secretary's desk out of the office into the corridor. That's the cheapest solution." Mr. DiPardo also spoke about what seems to be an epidemic where some parents and children think they can take a teacher down just by making an accusation. "It's—you are guilty until you are proven innocent. We are fighting back! We are providing legal representation for those accused of assault. It's now part of the WTG policy. I want to also amend the policy to provide that if one of our members is brought up on charges and the case is

unfounded, that we can bring civil charges against that parent. Kids lie and parents want to believe them, but if a teacher is found innocent, we should be able to file charges.”

- **Marlene Smith, Cumberland, RI – WMS Teacher:** Spoke regarding an award she would like give to one student chosen from each cluster at the WMS in memory of Jennifer Rivera, a teenage heroine who was murdered in Providence a couple years ago before she was to testify against a murder suspect. She asked if that would be okay and Dr. D’Acchioli thought it would certainly be appropriate. Ms. Smith will get the plaques and it won’t cost the school department anything. The four teachers from each cluster would pick the students. She also brought in some student papers for the WSC to take a look at and invited them to visit her classroom anytime.

RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS – Dr. D’Acchioli

Congratulated Adam Gingras for being named “Scholar Athlete of the Week” by The Call. Adam is co-captain of the Villa Novan’s has earned this distinction by his pitching and batting stats, and his leadership quality of helping classmates, on and off the field. He is also a member of the National Honor Society, and is planning on attending Wheaton College after graduation. D’Acchioli also acknowledged the staff, students, and parents at the Leo A. Savoie School for their participation with the spring cleanup of the Nature trail. The clean up was organized by Principal Mark Prince and Gr. 4 teacher, Kathy Heath. Thanked all who participated. Gave Kudo’s to Linda Barrette, Rita Gentile and Karen Smith for writing, directing and making the play “GREASE” come alive for the children at and the Citizens’ Memorial school. He was able to see the performance and it was marvelous.

Mrs. Diane Lafrenaye, librarian at Woonsocket High School was awarded a \$300 grant for her work in Cross Curricular Reading. She and English teacher Danielle Derotto collaborated on cultural discussions and exhibitions utilizing the book: “The Kite Runner.” Hundreds of students toured exhibits in the library created by Mrs. Derotto’s students. High School Social Studies teacher Mrs. Michelle Gerber was selected as Walmart’s “Teacher of the Year.” At a ceremony at the high school on Thursday, she was presented a check for \$1,000.00 to buy school materials for her classroom. Mrs. Gerber was cited for her work in creating a program for having students work in polling stations during elections and secondly, her excellent project-based instructional skills. Gave Kudos to Kyle Mulrey, Sam Bibeault and Joel Lanoue, for their winning projects in the Harris Elementary School Science Fair. 45 Students participated in the fair. The theme of magnetism was highlighted through games, experiments, and demonstrations. The event was organized by fourth grade teachers Kristin Moreau and Eileen Larivere. Kudo’s to all winner’s and participants.

The RI Builders Association awarded \$1,000.00 scholarships to five WACTC students: Mark Barnard and Jailleen Saldana, in Architectural Design; Brandon Nantais, and Mason Lorange – Cabinetmaking; and Angel Cameron, Electrical. Gave special recognition and thanks to all nursing staff in honor of National Nurses’ Day.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 4/27/05 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve: A. Auclair

2nd: M. Bileau (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/
Non-Certified Appointments

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

Local Funds:	American Arbitration Assoc./Business Office/ Promac	\$37,992.50
	Asbestos Abatement Co., Inc./District/Hazardous Waste Removal	\$2,800.00
Grant Funds:	Exemplars/Prof. Dev./Consultants	\$9,000.00
	Marilyn Burns Education Assoc./Prof Dev/Ed Materials	\$4,988.78
	RI Ctr for School Leadership/Grants&Curr/Prof Dev Series	\$24,800.00

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

ASBO International Conf./Boston, MA/McFee/Local **Removed**
Middle Level Leadership Conf./ Breckenridge, CO/ WMS/ Art. 18
2005 National Academy Foundation Leadership Conf./ San Diego, CA/ WACTC/ Perkins Grant
Skills USA Conference/ Kansas City, MO/ WACTC/ Perkins Grant

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA: M. Dubois

2nd: M. Bileau

The ASBO International Conf. was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion and approval separately.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Unanimously Approved

EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:

***Motion to approve the conference request for ASBO International Conference in Boston, MA: M. Dubois
Second: A. Auclair / M. Bibeau (Unanimously approved)***

Mr. Dubois questioned the amount of \$84 for transportation to Boston and thought that was excessive. Mrs. Goodman explained that she plans to take the train and that it's an estimate and probably won't cost that much.

COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. Bileau said that the first Thursday of each month there is a meeting at Pothier School for parents with special needs children. Urged them to attend, saying it is very informative.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

CONFERENCES: Technology Plan Update – Jonathan Gallishaw, Technology Director

Mr. Gallishaw gave a Power Point presentation which included showing the upgraded security camera system at the WHS and the WACTC. It has been upgraded from 8 to 12 cameras of very high quality which can be viewed on the web from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. You need a password to get into the website and access is limited right now. He reviewed the accomplishments of 2004-2005 regarding technology in the district, noting that the student/computer ratio increased from 7 to 1 in 2000 to 4.3 to 1 in 2005. The teacher/computer ratio increased from 6 to 1 in 2000 to 2.2 to 1 in 2005. His objectives are to improve computer skills, integration, data content, training and access. Also included will be creation of new policies, upgrading of computers, and increasing access to supporting data for computer programs. Maintenance and expansion of the school department website is a goal, which can include video streaming of educational videos and professional development programs (video-on-demand). This will be very, very helpful for teachers and is one of the benefits of increasing our bandwidth. Dr. Macera had Mr. Gallishaw demonstrate how teachers can access the curriculum standards and benchmarks for each grade level in PDF files through the website. Mr. Auclair noticed that we have begun posting the grants on the website, which helps provide a clearinghouse for district. Mr. Gallishaw added that a new work order system will be unveiled soon for facilities and technology work orders. As far as the absentee calling system at the WHS, it also covers the WACTC. Dr. D'Acchioli added that they are trying to tie-in email addresses to that system also.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

2nd: M. Bileau (Unan. Approved)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Bid Award:

- **#05-21 Dishwashers/ Coleman, Fifth Avenue and Social Street Schools**

Motion to Approve recommendation of administration to award to Kittredge Equipment Company, Inc, in the amount of \$13,188.00: M. Bileau

2nd: A. Auclair

Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / MW – yes. Motion passes 4-0.

Mr. Bileau thought that the price was very high for three dishwashers plus the time for our people to install them.

2. Appointment of Supervisor of English/Language Arts (Gr. 6-12)

Motion to appoint Linda Kuras to this position: M. Bileau

2nd: M. Dubois

Roll Call Vote: MD-yes / AA – yes / MB – yes / MW – yes. Motion passes 4-0.

Dr. Macera read her memorandum which was included in the WSC's packet regarding the recommendation and unanimous endorsement of the screening committee and listed Ms. Kuras many accomplishments. Mr. Auclair asked if she was related to anyone in the school system. Ms. Kuras said, "No."

3. Nepotism Policy / WHS Principal

Dr. D'Acchioli stated that he put this item on the agenda because of the many questions about why Mr. Nasuti was appointed in view of the policy. "Both George and his sister were hired prior to 1989, when the policy went into effect. The policy is being adhered to in this instance. He would not be responsible for doing her evaluations. Teacher assistants are evaluated by the teacher and then the department head," he said. Mr. Auclair asked that from now on, he wants applicants to be asked during the interview process if they have any relatives working for the department in order to avoid this type of situation. Dr. D'Acchioli has instructed the Human Resources Director to ask every single candidate for every single position. Ms. Williams said that the school committee members received phone calls and it was their duty to go to the superintendent. Apparently, Mr. Vachon had mentioned that George had a sister working at the high school as a teacher assistant to Dr. D'Acchioli, but the superintendent hadn't remembered it. He maintained that if she had been a teacher and he felt there would be a conflict, it would have stuck in his mind. Ms. Williams said they really want Mr. Nasuti at the WHS. Mr. Bileau had no problem keeping Mr. Nasuti as principal at the WHS, but felt that dirty politics were involved because people knew that his sister worked there and waited until after the appointment to say something. Mr. Dubois was surprised that no one on the interviewing committee knew he had a sister at the WHS. "The principal is ultimately responsible for everyone in his building. I was upset with the memory loss of the superintendent. It put us all in a bad position and is an embarrassment," he said.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. D'Acchioli

Thanked Mr. Gallishaw for a very thorough presentation, as well as he and the technology staff for keeping Woonsocket at the forefront of innovation. Reported that district administrators continue to attend RIDE work-sessions and work on a myriad of required annual reports. Serving on the Northeast Superintendents' Leadership Council, affiliated with the Education Alliance at Brown University and the federally-funded regional LAB, last Thursday and Friday he served as a facilitator for the Superintendents' 17th Annual Leadership Institute. The conference affirmed for him that the district has made some remarkable achievements in teaching and learning and that we are clearly on the right track.

Middle School teachers received a draft report from the visiting SALT team last week. The draft is embargoed by RIDE pending release of the final report. The draft report contained few surprises and pretty much mirrored the school's self-study. He has contacted the Deputy Commissioner to schedule a School Committee retreat to ascertain RIDE's perspective as to what we will need to do to address the shortcomings identified in the SALT report.

The Mayor released the City's proposed FY06 budget that included a 1.74% increase for the schools. Unfortunately, the district built its budget on a 4.5% City increase. If this budget remains as is, the Committee will need to cut an additional \$316,895 from the budget approved last February. Although the State has announced a brighter fiscal forecast than that projected last February, it is highly unlikely that the State will provide the budgeted 5% increase, let alone make up the City's short-fall. School supporters need to appeal to the City Council for additional funds - now. Absent additional revenues, the February budget that already included reductions in staffing and supplies will need to be further reduced.

On the topic of school safety, an April 27 editorial in the Providence Journal misused a statement he made regarding a rash of Middle School infractions. They attributed his comments to a student fight that took place in our high school. Yesterday, the Journal published a clarification letter to the editor that he had submitted. He supports strict rules and applauds the administration and the WSC for consistent enforcement of those rules. However, he also believes our schools are safe but suffer from excessive attention and bad press. He ended his letter by affirming that he stands strong in defense of the children, staff and administration of the Woonsocket Education Department.

He attended the Junior Prom last Friday at the Roger Williams Park Casino. With the exception of one small group that was refused admission, the event was delightful. He received a letter of apology from one of the students sent home. The fact that this unsolicited letter arrived at his office is further proof that we have great students in our district, students who deserve our support.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Dubois

**2nd: M. Bileau / A. Auclair
(Unan. Appr)**

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:

A. Auclair: Thanked Mr. Gallishaw for his presentation and asked for suggestions on how to improve our website. He thinks the transfer of the deed from the state to the city for the WACTC will be beneficial and looks forward to having some sort of connection between the WACTC and the high school. He attended the RIASC annual meeting and thinks we need to teach our staff how to write effective press releases. The press also has trouble trying to understand the budget and thinks communications need to be improved. Mr. Auclair also spoke about the national PTA standards and how we can incorporate them into our district. He feels that the Safety Committee could work on the security issues discussed tonight during good & welfare. Sometimes he goes to the school to get his daughter and the door is wide open. As far as bee-bee guns go, he encouraged parents not to let their kids bring anything like that to school. He asked Dr. D'Acchioli if the enrollment figures and the WED budget could be posted on the website. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that the figures would be misleading because they are always changing – especially enrollment. He encouraged people to call and ask for them and the WED would be happy to give them whatever information they want. He doesn't feel there's anything to be gained by posting them on the website. Mr. Auclair congratulated Linda Kuras and George Nasuti. Dr. D'Acchioli told him he would be making a report on split grades at the first meeting in June when asked by Auclair.

M. Bileau: Thanked Jonathan Gallishaw. Wished Ms. Kuras luck in her new position. Asked about postings on the website for Principal at Coleman and the Vice Principal at the WHS. He was concerned that one position was kept internal and asked why. Dr. D'Acchioli said that Ms. Lombardo was asked to repost and advertise for the vice principal position at the WHS. He explained that they focus on vice principal-ship for training in-house people, but Mr. Ward felt that by not posting outside, we were closing out minorities. "We work with Providence College and a program that Dr. Macera has for a training ground," he said. Dr. Macera added that within the next three years, the WED will lose more than 50% of its administrators to retirement. "We have invested thousands of dollars in professional development for current employees. The reason for partnerships is to make it convenient for our staff to take courses and get college credit," said Macera. Mr. Bileau believes that unless we open it up to the outside, we are not going to know what is out there. "We are keeping it closed and I don't like it."

M. Dubois: Congratulated Ms. Kuras. Said he went to the Stadium Theatre to see "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat". "Many of the performers were from our school district." Extended his condolences to Lincoln on the loss of a 9th grade student this week, saying he was impressed with their grief counseling system and wondered what we have in place. Dr. D'Acchioli told him that we have the same thing. Dubois asked about the principal at Globe Park being out on medical leave and for how long. Miriam Goodman confirmed that the principal is out on a stress-related condition regarding an incident with a student and has no return to work date yet. She has been out a week. Dr. D'Acchioli will follow up on the situation. Dubois noted that there are less than three meetings left before July 1st and asked that a request not to renew the superintendent's contract be placed on the agenda. He doesn't want it to automatically roll-over or have the superintendent say he didn't receive proper notice.

M. Williams: Congrats to George and Linda. Said she heard something about two passes being required for students to use the bathrooms at the WMS and the maintenance people have to monitor them. Dr. D'Acchioli explained that that is not at all what the administrator had communicated, but Williams said it was right at the bottom of the principal's newsletter. "Men should not be checking the girls' room," she said. She announced that she would like to schedule a Minority Concerns Committee meeting on June 1st, at 7 p.m., at the WACTC. She has also heard that recess is being taken away if students don't do their homework and doesn't feel that is an appropriate action. "Kids need to get out and release that energy." Dr. Macera told her that she and Dr. D'Acchioli have told the elementary principals repeatedly about not doing that. As far as security, she said that after school hours the doors are sometimes left open because there is Kids' Club at her daughter's school and something could happen. She reported that the NRI Child Services Program is seeking parents of children who have received services to get their input on how to better help others and improve their services.

Motion to Adjourn at 9:15 p.m: M. Dubois

2nd: A. Auclair (Unan. Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle
Substitute WSC Recording Secretary