

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2006**  
**7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**WACTC –ROOM 303**  
**MULTI MEDIA LAB**

**Called to Order by Chairman Marc Dubois**  
**Moment of Silence**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
	Allen Auclair	Present
	Michelle Williams	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present

**MOTION to take Purchase Over \$2,000 for Home Care Services of RI and Conference for the Review of Nurse/Teacher Plan for Woonsocket Schools Out of Order: M. Dubois**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams      Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes.**

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**PURCHASE OVER \$2,000: Home Care Services of RI for payment of \$11,000 for bus nurse from 7/1/06 to 8/18/06.**

Dr. Macera felt she needed to make the WSC aware of the fact that a contract cannot be located between the WED and Home Care Services for these services. However, since they were provided, she feels that they should be compensated for them. Their services began on September 8, 2005 and on December 1, 2005, a request for \$54,000 for the year for these services was approved by the school committee. "This is highly irregular, since it was done without a contract. These services should have gone out to bid in order to keep within state law," said Macera. Donald Nagle, a registered nurse and administrator for Home Care Services for RI, was present and stated that he was also unable to locate a contract. He stated that he negotiated the services with Mr. Richard Emerson, Special Education Director, and a contract was never mentioned or signed. "Mr. Emerson contact us about providing the services. Vincent Ward owns Home Care Services of RI and lives in Florida. He only comes to RI from time to time and I am in charge of running the business while he's away. It's the first time we have offered services for the WED and we employ approximately 50 to 75 people. We also provide services for Lincoln and don't have a contract with them either; however, the services we provide there are different. The nurses go to the patients' homes there," said Nagle. Dr. Macera noted that it's protocol to have a contract and that Richard Ackerman writes those for the WED.

Ms. Williams asked how the rate of pay was determined and Nagle explained that Mr. Emerson determined the rate. Mr. Dubois explained some background regarding these services. Two years ago, his sister was doing this job and he asked if it was okay since he was on the school committee. He was told that it wouldn't violate the nepotism policy at that time. After he became chairman of the WSC, he was told it was a violation of the nepotism policy and his sister took another job in Providence. Dubois asked Atty. Ackerman to look into this matter to see if anything unethical took place, because then John Ward's brother's company was hired without a contract to provide this service. Ms. Williams found it very interesting that Dubois' sister was doing this job and was told she had the position and two days later she was told she didn't have the position. Then John Ward's brother's agency is hired. At this point, Mr. Nagle explained that he lives in Warwick and has no connection to any politics in Woonsocket. Mrs. Nadeau found it hard to believe that anyone on the WSC that voted on the \$54,000 to Home Care Services of RI didn't know whose company this was. "There's a morale issue here. What happened to Mrs. Desheppa was horrible and a crime!" said Nadeau. Nagle stressed that his people could lose their job if they don't get the bid. Mr. Auclair asked what entity or individual could enter into contracts for the WED. "The WSC or any individually they approve to do so," answered Ackerman. However, he did recall an arbitration case where there was implied delegation and it was upheld. "It can be direct delegation or implied delegation," he said. Auclair was concerned about accountability and spoke about the policy that was developed by Ackerman for contracts to help clarify this process. He asked Ackerman to review the policy he helped to write regarding contracts. Nadeau asked about a system of checks and balances. In his 34 years of experience working with public education, Ackerman said it is very difficult to have a system like that with decentralized administration. Nadeau felt that safeguards need to be put in place to prevent situations like this. Atty. Ackerman explained that how the system usually works is that the WSC schools the superintendent, and then it's up to the superintendent to school the administrators under him or her.

When Dubois asked how the billing was done, Nagle said he billed monthly. Dubois apologized to Nagle for the cross-examination and explained that they were not accusing him of anything involving this situation. Nagle said that

he received a check after every billing—not a lump sum for payment in December and that he would provide a copy of every check he received from the WED. The WSC asked him to do that.

Ms. Williams asked for the names of the nurses who provided the services. Nagle said that they vary—he was one of them. Miriam Goodman located the names in her paperwork and one of the nurses was Kelly Ward.

**Motion to approve Home Care Services of RI: M. Dubois**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair**

**Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes.**

The chair called a 2-minute recess at 7:45 p.m.

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**CONFERENCE (Out of Order): Review of Nurse/Teacher Plan for Woonsocket Schools – Carole Lerner**

Dr. Macera said she met with 67 teachers in February about lay-offs for the coming year. Over the past 6 months the administration has looked at the programming and streamlined as much as possible and has been able to bring back 62 of the 67 teachers that were laid-off. This was accomplished in spite of not getting all the funding that was requested from the city and the state. “There were four nurse/teachers laid-off. Through several long, long meetings with a number of people, we have done the best we could as far as the school nurses are concerned. We have been able to bring back all of them by reconfiguring some of the positions,” reported Macera. She reviewed a handout showing the distribution of the nurse/teachers and the schools they would cover. She also reported that the medically fragile room at the WHS has been moved to a larger room right near the nurse’s office. One full-time nurse/teacher will be assigned to that room and when she is on break or prep, the WHS nurse will cover. Retired nurse/teachers will provide backup for the WHS nurse.

Diane Engels, Chair of the Nursing Dept. Staff, gave the credentials of the nurse/teachers on staff. “They are a very close-knit group. Tracy Doire was a RI Nurse/Teacher of the Year in 2004, “ announced Engels, as she introduced her. Ms. Doire gave her resume of experience and qualifications in this field. She is trained in tracheotomy care and a parent of a handicapped son who has had 23 surgeries. Terri Conte will be the new WHS nurse and has 29 years experience—15 with the WED. She also worked at the V.A. Hospital and has done many various procedures. Rose Trudeau, the Savoie School nurse, worked for 9 years at Landmark and at the VA. She was also a Critical Care Unit nurse. Maria Bouvier, Globe Park nurse, has been there 9 years and has 43 years of nursing experiences. She also ran a medically fragile room at one school for three years and assured parents that they should not worry that their children will not be well taken care of. The experience and qualifications of Renee Diczno (Social/Citizens); Sue Morosca (Harris); Sue Sutherland (WMS School Nurse/Health Teacher); Jocelyn Ackerman (Pothier); Angela Ryan (Fairmount Schools) and Diane Engels, (Dept. Chair) were also given for the parents.

Carole Lerner then asked for parents’ questions. A parent asked how the medically fragile room at Globe Park School would be covered. Lerner explained that there would be a separate nurse for that room. The children will still go out on day trips as they have in the past, facilitated by Diane Engels. Lerner explained that there are three medically fragile rooms at Globe Park and one nurse/teacher covers all three rooms. She bills Medicaid and it covers most of the cost of her position. The mother of a student from Blackstone stated that Blackstone pays tuition to send her son to Woonsocket. She is concerned about coverage for the teacher at the WHS when she is on break or during her prep period. Dr. Macera explained that there would be a certified nurse/teacher in that medically fragile room at the WHS at all times. All the retired nurse/teachers that will be used to substitute are experienced with medically fragile students also. Lerner explained that out-of-district students are accepted when there is space available. Mr. Auclair thought that was a good idea and maybe we should look into taking in more if room can be found. He requested a 90-day review of the new plan because of the concerns that the parents have. The Blackstone parent said she was the one who let the Blackstone school dept. know about this new plan. Ms. Lerner said she had been playing phone-tag with her contact in Blackstone for some time and just got in touch with her.

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**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

- **Sharon DiSpirito, Parent of Medically Fragile Student at WHS:** She was glad to see that the administration had finally put together a plan that she recommended a couple of weeks ago to ensure full-time coverage in the WHS medically fragile (MF) room. DiSpirito chastised the administration’s complete lack of communication with the parents about what was going on. She also chastised the administration trying to pit the parents and the teachers against each other. “We have had to deal with the school nurse/teachers for many years in most cases and have no problem with them. We were just concerned that there would not be anyone physically in the MF room at the WHS, not 10 feet down the hall with a walkie-talkie.” She asked if the teacher in that room will also have to treat regular high school students in there at any time. Dr. Macera couldn’t speak in cases of an emergency what would happen. DiSpirito said that parents are concerned about sick students going to that room and the dignity and privacy of their children. Macera apologized for any lack of communication that took place and explained that she was out of town due to her mother’s death also. The parent stated that two parents who work for the district were the only ones informed. No one else. Dr. Macera said she would address that issue,

saying she probably should have pulled the nursing plan off the agenda for the meeting that she missed. Carole Lerner explained how the parents that knew found out. They were on a field trip that Diane Engels attended.

- **Carmen Boucher, Co-Chair, Parents Advisory Council (PAC):** She was very excited to have the nurses back, adding that she didn't get a personal letter about the nursing cuts. She attends the WSC meetings and heard about it there. Boucher thanked the parents for their support and lobbying efforts to get the nurses back. She thanked everyone involved—especially the nurse/teachers for all they do for the kids and for the experience they have.
- **Richard DiPardo, WTG President, Huntington Avenue:** Said he can't wait to get back to school. "It's been a lousy summer. This will be my 36<sup>th</sup> opening day." He's very happy to find out that 62 of 67 teachers will be returned to their positions. In regards to the life insurance policy change, he asked if it involves a retiree that misses a payment being able to be reinstated by the WSC.
- **Denise Boulay, SELAC Co.-Chair:** Thanked the administration for putting their heads together. "Please keep communicating. It's the best way to resolve these issues. How were you able to get the nurses back?" she asked. Dr. Macera explained that they looked at where they could work with the schedules and the budget to get them back in. As a former high school principal, Dr. Macera has had some experience with scheduling and knows how to make a schedule very, very tight. She said that the budget is also very, very tight. Boulay noted that Woonsocket has some very active parents and they will be following the budget closely.
- **Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street:** Thanked the administration for reinstating the school nurse/teachers. Asked if they have posted a position for a reading specialist for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade at the WMS yet. Dr. Macera responded that she didn't have the funding for it, but that she is working on it. She added that it's a priority. Mrs. Nadeau added that she knew where they could find the money for the reading specialist. "Take the money from the mentor for Pat McGee, who doesn't need one. If the state wants to spend \$1,500 for a 3-day week for a mentor, then I guess that is what we get!" she said.
- **Carmen Boucher, Co-Chair, Parents Advisory Council (PAC):** Stated that she's willing to be involved with the PS & I meeting. "Our parents are more than willing to be involved," she added.

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**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS – Dr. Maureen Macera, Superintendent**

Dr. Macera announced that school starts on September 5<sup>th</sup> for teachers and teacher assistants, which is an orientation day. The 6<sup>th</sup> is a professional development day. Students start on Thursday, Sept. 7. The school calendar has been revised due to the Governor declaring that schools will be closed on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> for primary day. The new calendar reflects this change and extends the school year by one day.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 9, 2006 OPEN**

Motion to Approve: M. Dubois

2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau/M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve by E. Nadeau with the following exemptions:**

***Purchases & Transfers Over \$2,000***

- *Diane Vachon/Nursing Services removed by A. Auclair*
- *Home Care Services of RI removed by M. Dubois & taken out of order at start of meeting*
- *Susan Prentiss/Physical Therapy Services removed by A. Auclair*

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

**1. Personnel Actions**

Certified Appointments  
Non-Certified Appointments

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

Apple Computer/Computers/Social/Local  
Hope Foundation/Ed. Supplies/District/Local  
McZip Printers/Elementary Handbooks/District/Local  
School Specialty Inc./Chairs/WMS/District/Local  
Shilepsly, O'Connell, Casey, Hartley, Michon, Yelen, LLP/PROMAC/McFee/Local

**3. Home Schooling Requests:**

Ms. Cheryl Aubin for Rebecca, Gr. 2  
Mr./Mrs. Eric Correia for Emily, Gr. 11; Sarah, Gr. 9; Alexander, Gr. 7; and Joshua, Gr. 1  
Ms. Brenda Stanley for Elizabeth, Gr. 3; and Thomas, Gr. 1.  
Mr./Mrs. Matthew DiSpirito for Dominique, Gr. 1  
Mr./Mrs. John Libucha for Theresa, Gr. 7; and Andrea, Gr. 5  
Mr./Mrs. Christopher Blais for Kelsey, Gr. 5

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**EXEMPTIONS TO CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000: Diane Vachon and Susan Prentiss**

Mr. Auclair stated that they received a contract for these two service providers and asked if they have to sign these contracts. Atty. Ackerman told him the WSC could do it or delegate that authority. Ackerman wrote the two contracts. Dr. Macera explained that previously, the vendors wrote the contracts themselves. "It looks to be a fair and just contract. No benefits are provided. Diane Vachon will work in the medically fragile classroom at Globe Park School," said Auclair, adding that the WSC can delegate the signing of the contracts if they wish. Mr. Dubois said that the vote on these two contracts would be taken under New Business.

**COMMUNICATIONS: None**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**SELAC Committee Report:** Denise Boulay announced that the meetings for this school year would be held the first Thursday of the month. The first regular meeting is on September 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at Pothier School Library and a lot of information parents should have will be distributed. She can provide help for families in the way of medical assistant direction and ways to access it.

**CONFERENCES: Presentation of Physics First Program by Janet Miele**

Ms. Miele gave a presentation regarding the scheduling of Physics for 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. She said that we have been doing it right along, but giving it along with Chemistry. "We want to push Chemistry back to 10<sup>th</sup> grade and Biology would be offered last. Students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade are required to take a full year of Algebra and Foundations for Physics is an algebra-based program. Everyone is eligible for this program and all 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be taking it this coming fall." Mr. Auclair wants the handbook reviewed to make sure that it's aligned with the new program.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None**

**NEW BUSINESS: (Moved from Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000)**

- **Motion to approve the contract between the WED and Diane Vachon: A. Auclair**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes.

Mr. Auclair asked the WSC if they wanted to delegate this to someone else to sign or do it themselves. The consensus was to have Mr. Dubois sign for the WSC.

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- **Motion to approve the contract between the WED and Susan Prentiss: A. Auclair**  
2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois      Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/no; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 4 yes/1 no. Passed

Mr. Auclair notice that she only will work 180 days and only provides services prescribed by a physician. There's no mention of IEPs. Ms. Lerner explained that some children need physical therapy but don't have IEPs. Ms. Prentiss is a physical therapy assistant and needs to be supervised. The contract can be extended if her supervisor is also working during the summer. Mr. Auclair thought the rate is high for 180 days and for the services provided. Ms. Lerner has gone to all the agencies we contract with to compare rates and her rate seems to be a good rate for the job at \$42-\$43 per hour. "It's \$15-\$20 less per hour to employ her than to go through an agency," she said.

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## 1. Bid Awards:

- **#07-02 Crisis Counselor for MSC:** M. Dubois recused himself from this vote.

Motion to approve award of the 3-year contract to NRI Community Services, Inc., of Woonsocket, RI for \$10,500 annually: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Auclair      Roll Call Vote: (MD/abs.; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/no) 3 yes/ 1 no/ 1 abstain

Mrs. Nadeau asked under what law we are required to pay for this. Dr. Macera said it's under the federal law for NCLB (No Child Left Behind). "Their tuition is about \$7,000 a year," said Nadeau. Ms. Lerner spoke about IDEAA and what that state law mandates for the WED and what we have to provide. "Basically, anything provided in the public schools has to be provided to the private schools as well. Only three states in the US have this state mandate," explained Lerner. Dr. Macera added that it's a political issue. "There's many, many private schools in these states and they have a very strong lobby," said Lerner.

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- **#07-03 Fire Alarm & Sprinkler Inspection & Testing:**

Motion to approve award of the contract to Fire Suppression Services, Inc., of Pawtucket, RI, for \$18,848: A. Auclair

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams      Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes. Passed.

Mrs. Nadeau commented, "This is the way contracts should be awarded. We have a list of vendors and their principal owners." Miriam Goodman advised her that the name listed with each vendor is not necessarily the owner. It is just the contact person for the bid.

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- **#07-04 Vinyl Composition Floor Tile (VCT) for WACTC:**

Motion to approve award of the contract to Robert K. Brown Interiors for the total cost of \$15,226: A. Auclair

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams      Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes. Passed.

Mr. Dubois said he stopped at Lambert Brothers for something and they didn't know how to submit the bid properly. They called Mr. Fontaine and were never called back. He thinks this may be the reason they were out-bid. Mrs. Goodman explained that the first three pages of the bid are terms and conditions. "If Lambert Bros. had any questions, they could have contacted the WED by fax, email or phone. There's a mechanism in place for vendors to have an opportunity to get questions answered," said Goodman.

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## 2. New Policy for Life Insurance (1<sup>st</sup> Passage)

Motion to approve: E. Nadeau      2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams  
Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes. Passed.

Dr. Macera explained that this change would allow the WSC to reinstate a retiree's life insurance policy if a premium is missed. Mrs. Nadeau asked what amount of time will the insurance company allow to transpire before they would reject someone's reinstatement. Mrs. Goodman wasn't sure and will get a letter from the insurance company addressing that issue.

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### 3. Approval of Revised FY2007 Budget

Motion to approve: A. Auclair 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau  
Roll Call Vote: (MD/yes; AA/yes; MW/yes; AMF/yes; EN/yes) 5 yes. Approved.

Dr. Macera explained that the budget was revised to account for the reduced amount of revenue we received from the state and the city. She stated that she is very nervous about this budget. Mrs. Goodman went over the major adjustments to the \$63,021,264 budget. Mr. Auclair requested that the budget be posted at the library with a cover letter about who to contact regarding any questions. The full budget will be posted at the library and the first five pages will be posted on the website.

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#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Dr. Maureen Macera, Superintendent**

Dr. Macera thanked everyone on behalf of her family on their remembrances of her mother who died on August 5<sup>th</sup>. She noted that under the revised school budget, salaries were a very modest ½% increase. Pension and medical is where the huge increases are. She thanked Karen Macbeth on securing a donation from Staples that has been distributed throughout the district, as well as Staples for the donation. She commended the custodians on their hard work in getting the schools ready. The career/technical center is a state building and the state is in the process of turning buildings over to the districts. "The state has chosen to do repairs in the building when we have a roof that leaks. Ahlborg, the state contractor, is working with us. All the ceiling tiles have been taken down and a strong effort is being made to get things done. I will not recommend to this committee at any time to accept this building without full repairs being done—especially a new roof!"

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau/A. Auclair (Unanimously Approved)

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#### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE**

**Williams:** Thanked the administration for being so honest with the WSC and to the public. She is very confident that the nurses will do an excellent job. She's excited about the "Physics First" program coming to the WHS. She questioned whether the life insurance premiums could be done by automatic withdrawal, but Mrs. Goodman explained that it could not and why.

**Auclair:** Thanked everyone involved in the success of Back To School Celebration held at the WHS on Saturday. He said there was a very good turnout. Thanked individuals who formed the group of Residents Addressing Community Concerns on Chester Street. He received a box of GLEs and CDs on Friday. All he wanted was a syllabus for the year. "I don't need 500 pages." He asked that this item be put on the agenda. Dr. Macera said that they have the outlines for teachers to give to the parents and it's even in "kid speak" to give to the kids. "To make something mandatory, it has to be in the contract," she explained, adding that she misunderstood his request. She will put it on the agenda for discussion. Auclair spoke about Progressive Support & Intervention (PS&I) at the WMS and the promotion policy in regards to increasing the requirements for students to pass on to the next grade. Dr. Macera will put it on an October meeting agenda.

**Dubois:** Asked about approval of purchase over \$2,000 at the last meeting to McZip for the printing of the student handbooks. Dr. Macera said that Mr. Webb was unable to do it and we got a \$900 lower price from McZip. Dubois asked about the school breakfast program. Dr. Macera said she would be submitting a request to do a pilot for the entire district. He thanked the nurse/teachers for coming tonight. Wants Mrs. Goodman to get a copy of the checks to Home Care Services of RI, saying that Dr. Macera called him about this issue today at 3 p.m. Apparently, people felt they weren't informed. He explained that left her office around 5 p.m. and there wasn't time to inform everyone on the committee before the meeting tonight. "It's not normally this way. I do make every effort to inform the members of the WSC and I have in no way tried to keep anything from them."

**Forcier:** Pass.

**Nadeau:** Wished Mary Keegan well. "She had surgery last week and there were complications. She's in ICU and is starting to do better the past couple of days." Commended the parents from medically fragile room for all their interest and their advocacy for their kids. "Sometimes it seems to be a bit much, but when you consider the parents who never advocate for their kids, we much prefer that."

Motion to adjourn at 10:35 p.m.: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary