

# MINUTES

## WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2008

7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION

Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center

Multimedia Room 303

**Called to Order by Chairman Marc Dubois**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
	Michelle Williams, Vice Chairwoman	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Linda Majewski	Present

**By a consensus of the committee, Recognitions & Announcements was moved up on the agenda.**

### **RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Macera**

**Globe Park National Recognition-Title 1 School:** Dr. Macera congratulated Globe Park School for being one of two schools in RI to be recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School for "Closing the Achievement Gap Between Student Groups." Mr. Capasso, Principal of Globe Park Elementary, spoke about this achievement and recognized his faculty, many of whom were present. He read the criteria for the award and had Student Senators make presentations. Two teachers who had attended the National Title I Conference related their experience at the conference. Donna Houle, PTA President, spoke about the events and activities the PTA has been involved in.

**Middle School Students of the Quarter:** Dr. Patrick McGee, WMS Principal, recognized the Students of the Quarter, noting that they demonstrated the three Rs—respect, responsibility and readiness.

**Presentation to Allen Shawn Feinstein:** Pauline Papino, WMS Assistant Principal, presented a plaque for Mr. Feinstein (not present), in appreciation of all the good deeds he does for Woonsocket.

Dr. Macera congratulated the winners of the district-wide spelling bee and the runners up. She thanked the Valley Breeze for their donation to the Bee and thanked Linda Filomeno and Donna Blais for their efforts. Macera also congratulated the winners of the Stella Gould Scholarship at the WHS. She congratulated Claire Laquerre for receiving the 2007 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics & Science Teaching. Macera recognized WACTC students Michael Hyatt and Jaques Lussier for being the Ocean State Automotive Contest Winners. She extended her appreciation to everyone who helped out during the boiler situation at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue School.

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

**By a consensus of the committee, it was decided to move New Business #1 before Public Good & Welfare.**

### **NEW BUSINESS (taken out of order)**

#### **1. Resolution to Authorize Acquisition of Former Capeway Dye Parcel on Florence Drive as part of the Proposal for Woonsocket Middle School Project for \$125,000 – J. Matthews., Dr. Macera**

Dr. Macera read the resolution in its entirety, which would approve the acquisition of the former Capeway Dye Parcel on Florence Drive for the amount of \$125,000. This purchase is necessary in order to move ahead with the new middle schools project.

Motion to approve the resolution: A. Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:** Chairman Dubois asked that only people who weren't speaking about the budget get up during Good & Welfare, because they will have a chance to speak when that item comes up on the agenda later.

- **Cindy McNeill, Parents Advisory Council Co-Chair, 457 Elm Street:** Asked if the subcommittee has been formed yet for the superintendent search. Requested that if the WED is proposing cutting programs, that the administration visit the programs that are under consideration for cutting before they are cut. Announced that PAC will be sponsoring a Reading Assessment Workshop on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the WHS auditorium at 7 p.m. She invited everyone to attend. McNeill gave a copy of the flier to the WSC.

- **Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Ave., WTG President:** Acknowledged that the WSC and Dr. Macera have some very tough decisions to make regarding the budget, adding that every single program is valuable. He proposed that the WSC and WTG leadership, the superintendent, the Mayor and the City Council go up to Providence in a united front. "The people who give you the money to run the system have us in a box. If you believe that the system is working, then you run the system the way you think it should be run. When you run out of money, you shut the doors and turn the keys over to the state. They will not shut us down. It's time for people to say that enough is enough! We think art is valuable. We think music is valuable. We think sports are valuable and we are going to do it!"
- **Kevin Candora, WHS Class of 1998:** He is a former member of the WHS Percussion Band and heard about the potential of Woonsocket losing its music program and felt he had to speak out. He spoke about the values the program instills in students' lives. "It teaches them responsibility and respect. Sometimes music is all they have." He thinks he is the person he is today because of his experiences with the music program and his teachers. "It self-generates money." He urged them to take this into consideration when making cuts.
- **Katelyn Fontaine, former WHS student:** She participated in Woonsocket school music programs for many years. She and her sister have collected names of people opposed to the cut of the art and music programs in the city. They have 420 names so far, which have been collected in only 6 days. Fontaine read some of the comments that people posted on the Internet when submitting their names.
- **Roger Harris, 939 Bernon Street:** Stated that he is part of the RI Campaign to Eliminate Childhood Poverty. Saturday morning they will be having a community forum at the Woonsocket Senior Center regarding the drop out rate in Woonsocket. There will also be a workshop on energy.

**By a consensus of the committee, it was decided to move New Business #3 up on the agenda.**

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**NEW BUSINESS (taken out of order)**

**3. Discussion and Approval of FY09 School District Budget – Public Hearing – 1<sup>st</sup> Passage– M. Goodman, Dr. Macera**

Dr. Macera explained that, by state law, she must balance a budget based on current projections by March 1<sup>st</sup>. She commended everyone who spoke under Good & Welfare. She said that 67 teachers were laid off last year and every one of them was brought back by September. She gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed budget for FY09, followed by the Public Hearing.

- **Kim Pierce, Art Teacher at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue School:** She thought the PAC's suggestion was good about going to see the programs before they are cut. She described her program and its benefits. She invited the WSC members to visit her classroom.
- **James Alger, Pascoag:** Said he has a son at the WHS. He has been a carpenter for 16 years and has been faced with many challenges. When he has had to make cuts, he would never take away from the product. "Here, our kids are the product. Even though the cuts won't take effect now, the anxiety starts now." Alger was a former member of the Music Boosters.

**Dr. Macera** pointed out that Cranston is laying off over 300 teachers. "This is something we have to do by law. They are not things that we want to do. RI is 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in funding education. The law needs to be changed that makes us give pink slips now instead of in June," she said.

- **Janice Andrade, WMS 8<sup>th</sup> Grader:** As a chorus member, Andrade stated that "music is her life". She stated that Ms. Lister has gotten her through a lot of things and she wants to be just like her. She and the other chorus members have been trying to raise money because they don't want the music they love to go away.
- **Andrew Jacques, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade WMS Chorus Student:** Said that music is his life too. He thinks about his little brother not being able to share the same experience he has had. Spoke about Mrs. Gilbert being an awesome band teacher.
- **WHS Freshman Student Body President:** Spoke in support of music and art departments at the WHS. Students are trying to think of ways to solve the money problem by selling T-shirts, etc.
- **WHS Band Member:** Spoke about her experiences and that she's an honor student and band is more stimulating than most of her classes.

- **Melissa Sousa, Gilbert Street:** Her children are in band. She suggested putting any potential uniform contract out to bid to save money and maybe realize some profits. She has had some experience with this in the past.
- **Another parent:** Stated that many students aren't good at sports so they need something else like music and art.
- **Lisa Guernon, 146 Hamilton Street:** Has a son who "eats, breathes, and sleeps music." Spoke in support of Mrs. Lister and Mrs. Gilbert. Suggested getting more money from big companies in the city like CVS and Walmart.
- **Haley Fontaine, WHS Chorus Student:** She started out in the WMS Chorus and spoke in support of Mrs. Lister and Mrs. Gilbert. Said that all the kids in music stick together and are like a big family.
- **Donna Houle, 130 Ward:** Asked if the budget that's being presented tonight includes the \$12 million from the federal government. Dr. Macera told her, "No, but grant funds cannot be rerouted to areas they aren't designated for. We are pretty sure about receiving those grants again next year, however."
- **Another chorus student** stated that music helped her to stick with things. He has been in chorus for 7 years and would be devastated if it went away. Other chorus students said that for some kids, it's the only reason they go to school.
- **Ms. Forcier, Cottage Street:** With Dr. Macera's record, she's pretty sure that she will get everyone's job back. Forcier wanted to know whom the public should contact at the state level about getting more money. Dr. Macera said they need to speak with the RI representatives and have them research how other states fund their education system. She said our state reps are Constantino and Alves. They have both been very supportive.
- **Gordon Davignon, Woonsocket Elementary Music Teacher:** He believes that Dr. Macera wants to get the teachers back. He is saddened by our legislators. "We have a problem. We are to blame because we aren't staying on top of our legislators. We need to make our politicians accountable because they are elected officials. Music and art allows students to dream. In music and art, you get immediate reinforcement. It's a great self-esteem builder."
- **Zoey Rogers, Wood Ave.:** Stated that "music is her life" and helps her in her other subjects.

**Dr. Macera** stressed that this is just the beginning of the budget process. The staff in the affected programs has been reduced by half. The programs haven't been completely eliminated.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: M. Dubois**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.**

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

Mrs. Nadeau felt that the bargaining units should have come to the table by now in a good faith effort so we know more about what we have to deal with. Dr. Macera commended the bargaining units for being willing to come to the table and again stressed that it's a process. "They have to first go to their membership. There has been a betrayal," said Macera. She asked for time to work with the unions and the general legislature. "It takes time. I'm not about to attack unions because the unions here in Woonsocket have done their job!" she said. A parent asked how much of a tax rate increase it would take to bridge the gap. Mr. Dubois said that that question needs to be put to the City Council and the Mayor. Mrs. Majewski added that the WSC cannot levy taxes. Ms. Williams explained that raising taxes is just an immediate fix, but it won't correct the real problem. She suggested that the band and chorus go up to the State House and play as loud as they can to attract attention to this issue. "Maybe Valley Transportation will provide a bus to make this happen," she said. Majewski said we need to advocate for a funding formula. "If we are under PS&I, where is the support?" she questioned, noting that she's a music therapist. "Tonight is one of the saddest nights I have had to listen to," she claimed.

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Open & Closed Sessions of 1/23/08**

Motion to approve: A. Forcier

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

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve Consent Agenda: A. Forcier**

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

**1. Personnel Actions**

Certified Appointments/  
Non-Certified Appointments  
Non-Renewals/Terminations

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

Apple Computer/Equipment/Software/District Wide/Technology/Article 18  
B&H Photo//Cameras/Equipment/Beacon Charter School/Perkins Grant  
Cintas Fire System/ Fire & Sprinkler Alarm Testing/ District Wide/Facilities/Local  
Dell Computers/Equipment/Server/McFee/Technology/Article 18  
Follett Library Services/Library Books/WMS/Library Grant  
Len Cabral/Performances/District Wide/Library Grant  
NRI Collaborative/Consultant/Sp Ed./Local  
Norton & Associates/Sp. Ed Services/SPED/Local  
Sew Rite Embroidery Inc./Shirts/Feinstein/Feinstein Reimburse  
Tech Depot/Equipment/Technology/McFee/Article 18  
Vortex, Inc./Boiler Replacement/Fifth Ave./Local  
Wistow & Baryllick, Inc./Legal Services/McFee/Local  
Woonsocket Teachers' Guild/Expenses/District/Local

**3. Field Trip/Conference Requests**

National Science Teachers Association Convention/Boston, MA/WHS/ARMADA Project  
2008 TESOL Convention, NY, NY/WHS/Article 18  
WHS Grade 9-12/Rome, Italy/WHS/Fundraiser/Parent Support Group  
WHS Grades 9-12 ESL Students, Washington, DC/WHS/Fundraiser

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Mrs. Majewski has received several emails from WHS teachers regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> passage of the movie policy and some concerns they have. She asked that it be put back on the agenda for an amendment. Mrs. Nadeau spoke to Cindy McNeill and told her that she received her email about having parents on the search committee for the new superintendent. Nadeau said they still need the job description. She also asked how the two members on the search committee could communicate with the other three WSC members about the search without violating the Open Meetings Law. Atty. Ackerman told her that only two members can screen the applicants. When the whole WSC is involved, they need to follow the Open Meetings Law.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None .

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**2. Discussion of Legislation regarding School Uniforms for Woonsocket Students – Dr. Macera, Rep. Roger Picard**

Dr. Macera wanted the WSC's approval for Rep. Picard to move forward with introducing this legislation before the General Assembly.

**Motion to approve a resolution: E. Nadeau**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.**

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

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**4. Discussion of RIDE Face to Face and their Recommendations–FY2009 – Dr. Macera**

Dr. Macera stated that Mrs. Majewski and Mrs. Nadeau were present at the meeting. She said that RIDE holds the position that we need to have an assistant superintendent, but we cannot afford it.

**Motion to support Dr. Macera telling RIDE that we cannot afford an Assistant Superintendent: E. Nadeau**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams** **Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.**

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**5. Plan to Address PBGR Diploma Criteria for Preliminary Approval – Dr. Garcia**

Dr. Garcia reported that he received a letter from RIDE stating that we didn't get preliminary approval of Woonsocket High School's Diploma System due to insufficient evidence of an acceptable level of implementation. He spoke about the Design Team's many hours of work on this diploma system. He believes that at this time there is no system that is foolproof. They have decided to form a Task Force. He told RIDE that they need to come and work with us. RIDE representatives were supposed to come to a meeting today, but didn't show up. He spoke to them on speakerphone, however.

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**6. Adult Education Program Approval – Dr. Macera , Mike Ferry**

Mr. Ferry gave a brief description of the Adult Education Program and Veterans Diploma Program that are being proposed.

**Motion to approve the Adult Education and Veterans Diploma Programs: A. Forcier**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau/L. Majewski** **Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.**

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**7. Change of Title from Supervisor Alternative Programs to Supervisor of Instructional Services – M. Ferry, Dr. Macera**

Dr. Macera explained that RIDE likes the title of Supervisor of Instructional Services better than Alternative Programs.

**Motion to approve change to Supervisor of Instructional Services: A. Forcier**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams** **Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

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**8. Memorandum of Agreement between Local #94 &1137 and WED- Dr. Macera – Not heard due to lack of time.**

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**THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WERE NOT HEARD DUE TO IT BEING AFTER 10:30 P.M.**

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**CONFERENCES: Reading Recovery Presentation- Julie Francis/Linda Filomeno**  
**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Macera**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:**

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary