

MINUTES

WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2008
7:15 PM – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center
Multimedia Room 303

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

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

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Carmen Boucher, Parent: She is concerned about the Bernon Heights Nature Trail because Mt. St. Charles is talking about making a new skating rink in that area. The Bernon Heights PTO is doing a great job in trying to keep the trail, but she feels that the WSC, City Council and community members need to help out with the initiative to keep this trail. "Not everyone just learns with textbooks. They can go out into the environment and learn hands-on. Please keep the open space for our children and our future. There are meetings that will be held regarding this issue." She urged people to get involved.

Roland Berard, Music Boosters Member: He reported that the Music Boosters have been advocating for the music department to the City Council and the State House. He wanted an update from Dr. Macera on negotiations with the unions and projected revenues and where the music department stands. Dr. Macera said she met with the music department yesterday and the librarians. She has a plan in place to bring back some people at the next couple of WSC meetings. She said that the unions will be coming to the table in June.

Bill Legare, Valley Transportation: Reported that there have been meetings at City Hall about the traffic direction during the WMS construction project. He announced some street closings and the Kendrick Avenue Bridge closing beginning on June 1st, which is earlier than had been anticipated. Dr. Macera told him that a letter will be going home to parents regarding these changes.

Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street: Spoke about her concerns regarding the Memorandum of Understanding for Ayotte Field that's on tonight's agenda. "Are we going to be putting money aside to maintain this field if it is moved to Barry Field? Who will be maintaining it? In the past, to use Barry Field a permit was needed. Will a permit be needed for this field as well?" Mr. Dubois said that the paperwork only came in late this afternoon and he will request that this item be tabled this evening.

Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street: Spoke again about the financial state of the City and how it will affect the WED. He had mentioned previously about sharing a superintendent with other districts and also reopening negotiations with the unions. He had asked about consolidating resources with the City. "On tonight's agenda, there's an appointment for a new Business Manager. This is an opportunity to possibly blend a service with the City. In Woonsocket, the district receives \$10 million in Title I funds each year, yet there are large performance gaps that these funds should have improved." He gave some statistics from state test scores. He does not believe that more money means better education. Dr. Macera thanked him for his research, adding that statistics can say anything and noting the positive results that Title I funds have produced. She will have Pat Dubois come in and present again on the NECAP scores. "Compared to the other urban districts, we are doing very well and making progress," she said.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Macera

The Woonsocket School Department has been awarded a Worksite Health Award sponsored by the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island. On May 28, 2008 Mr. Nasuti will be attending a breakfast in Warwick to accept the award on behalf of the Woonsocket Education Department. Thanked Bob Desrosiers, Physical Education Teacher, and Sue Mrocza, School Nurse, for encouraging the children at Harris Elementary to join the walking club. Up to 75 children show up daily to do a 20-minute walk through the corridors before school begins. Some of the walkers are part of the SMILE Club (Science Mathematics Investigative Learning Experience) an after-school program run by the University of Rhode Island. Congratulated four members of the Jr. ROTC, Cadet Major Christian Gonzalez, Cadet Major Krystal Ivins, 1st Lt. Ashley St. Sauveur and 2nd Lt. Jarred Belisle for presenting the colors at the May 1st Boston Red Sox game. Students at the Woonsocket Middle

School received a lesson in law on Friday, May 3rd. Superior Court Associate Justice Judith Savage and longtime lawyer Bruce Wolpert participated in "Law Day" visiting classrooms throughout the state. Justice Savage and Attorney Wolpert spoke to eighth-graders in Ms. Campopiano's and Ms. Peter's social studies class about cyber bullying. They stressed the importance of learning about the dangers of posting personal information online social networking sites such as MySpace and FaceBook. Congratulated Marissa Silva, WHS Student, for winning first place at the Chaminade Music Club's 48th annual auditions held on April 6th at the Florence Hayward Sweet Club House. Marrison received a \$500 award to further her studies in music. Macera announced that People Magazine will be doing a story about Jacob Miller, student at Bernon Heights and his mom Debbie Hewes. The story is about intellectually impaired parents and the triumphs and challenges faced by over 215,000 disabled parents who are raising their children. The interview will take place with Alexia Fleming from "People Magazine," at Bernon Heights School on May 16th at 9:30am. Jacob's classroom teacher, Michelle Lisiecki and Principal Tincknell will be interviewed. Macera congratulated Maghean Duprey, fifth grader at Globe Park School, for being one of five finalists in the Kitch N' Kids recipe contest. The contest invited children ages 7 to 14 to create a nutritious recipe using milk, cheese or yogurt. Maghean received a \$1,000 saving bond for her recipe of "Vanilla Apple Crunch". The Educational Programs congratulated the WHS Music Department for participating at the *Williamsburg Festival of Music event*.

Motion to receive and place on file: E. Nadeau

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Open/Closed April 30, 2008

Motion to approve: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Dubois

Motion to amend to approve Open/Closed Session of April 30, 2008, with the closed session minutes regarding the non-renewal of attorney's contract being made null and void: M. Williams

2nd: L. Majewski (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:**Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exemptions: A. Forcier**

- *Certified Appointments – Removed by L. Majewski*
- *Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000: Beacon Charter School/Tuitions – Removed by M. Williams & L. Majewski*

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

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/
Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Apple Computers/Computers/WMS, WHS/Title III
Auto Zone/Supplied/WACTC/Voc. Revenue
Beacon charter School/Tuitions/District/Local – Removed by M. Williams & L. Majewski
D.M Lonergan/Back Stage Curtain/Globe Park/Feinstein Grant
Dell Computers/Computer Equipment/WMS, WHS/Title III
Epson Computers/Computer Equipment/WMS, WHS/Title III
Follett Library Resources/Library Books/Citizens, Harris, WMS/Get Ready Grant
Mt. St. Charles/Professional Development/Grants & Curriculum/Title II Grant
Ponte Sala Design/Professional Development/Grants & Curr./Mt. St. Charles/Title II Grant
Senior Project Center/Conference/WACTC/Local/Article 31
Skills USA R.I./Conference/WACTC/Perkins Grant
University of Massachusetts/Professional Development/WACTC/Perkins Grant

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

Senior Project Conference, New Orleans, LA/WACTC/Article 31

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

million in surplus, which will give Woonsocket another \$193,841.58 in additional funds. Dr. Macera requested approval of the proposal.

Motion to support the Health Care Rate Proposal: E. Nadeau 2nd: M. Williams
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

4. Appointment of Director of Administration and Finance: Dr. Macera

Dr. Macera read her memo to the WSC with her recommendation of Robert F. Strom for the position of Director of Administration and Finance. Three candidates were interviewed as finalists. The memo outlined Mr. Strom's experience and education and her reasons for the recommendation. Mrs. Nadeau and Ms. Williams served on this interviewing committee. They said the process was quite extensive. "The interference from the City Council members and attempts to intimidate were there, but I'm glad that Dr. Macera didn't let that deter her," said Nadeau. Mrs. Forcier said she wasn't comfortable with Mr. Strom's appointment, adding that she thinks he's a very nice person. She doesn't feel that he has the school finance experience necessary for the position and that this is a political move for an outgoing mayor. Forcier doesn't think we have the time to train a new person with a new superintendent coming in. Dr. Macera noted that as good as Mrs. Goodman was, she didn't have an MBA and no accounting background. "We all agree that she was a great business manager. Mr. Strom appears to meet the criteria. None of the other candidates meet all the criteria. Many candidates looked great on paper, but when we called their references, it was a very different story," said Macera. She stated the degrees that are required by the state, such as accounting and certification as a school finance director. "Every one of Mr. Strom's references were the same. Mrs. Goodman did a great job without the financial background that Mr. Strom has. We cannot wait until a new superintendent is hired because of the new chart of accounts that have to be implemented by July 1st," explained Macera. Mrs. Williams agreed with Dr. Macera about how some people look great on paper, but then you interview them and find out something else. "You have to be involved in the entire process. It was fair and equitable and I believe the right decision was made," said Williams. Mrs. Nadeau advised sitting in on these interviews as an observer from the WSC before make judgments. Forcier claimed that she tried to be there and was told that she couldn't. Mr. Dubois knew that this would be controversial because many people don't like the Mayor, but everyone can't be painted with the same brush. "This appointment was not fixed. We called him back three times," said Dubois. He asked Dr. Macera about a threat made to her. She said that a City Council member called her office and spoke to her secretary in a threatening manner. Mrs. Majewski felt that to postpone this appointment would jeopardize their superintendent search because it will be very difficult to hire someone without a deputy superintendent and without a business manager. She is comfortable with this appointment for one-year.

Motion to approve the appointment of Robert Strom to the position of Director of Administration and Finance for a period of one-year: M. Williams

2nd: E. Nadeau Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (AF). APPROVED

5. Memorandum of Understanding regarding Ayotte Little League Field: Dr. Macera/P. Fontaine

Motion to Table: M. Dubois 2nd: M. Williams
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

6. Discussion/Approval of RIASC Dues: M. Dubois

An invoice was received for \$9,000 for RIASC dues. There was no letter included with it. Mr. Dubois asked if the committee wanted to reconsider membership in this organization.

Motion to approve paying the dues: A. Forcier 2nd: NONE Motion Dies.

7. Approval of Elementary Handbook 2008-09 –1st Passage: K. MacBeth

Karen MacBeth thanked Dotty DeRemer and Melissa Mathurin, secretaries at McFee, for all their help in getting this document ready. She received an email from Diane Engels regarding some modifications to the 504 section late this afternoon. It needs to be approved by the Civil Rights Office first. An addendum may need to be made if approval isn't received in time for the handbooks to be printed. Mrs. Majewski felt that it should be made clearer as to what children may require waivers. Mrs. Majewski asked if truancy is a problem in other schools besides the high school and middle school, and if so, we may want to consider putting in something for next year at the elementary level. Mrs. MacBeth said she would leave it up to the WSC. She has a letter that is sent out to parents when it is habitual at

L. Majewski: Congratulated the WHS students participating in Honors Night tomorrow. She can't make it because of the superintendent interviews. She attended a Reading Recovery Program today and spoke to the teachers. "It's a wonderful program." She requested that Atty. Ackerman get a copy of the easement for the Bernon Heights Nature Trail. Thanked everyone who has made an effort to be part of the superintendent search, especially Dotty and Kim, who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. "They have made our job much easier."

A. Forcier: She was glad that we had attorneys go to the middle school to speak about cyber bullying. "It would be nice if they could go to the WHS too. We need to let parents know what self-defense is." Congratulated the WHS Band. She wants to go to the fair funding formula hearing, but it's Honors Night and her daughter is involved. She asked Dr. Macera how she could be two places at once. Forcier attended the meeting at Bernon Heights regarding the Nature Trail. "The Mt. St. Charles reps came to discuss their plans with the PTO. The PTO is being told it's up to them, but if they say no, Mt. St. Charles could go to court. The PTO doesn't have any money. We should help them out if we can." Thanked Dr. Macera for being willing to stay on. "As far as Mr. Strom, he is under investigation and has no experience in school finances."

E. Nadeau: Thanked Dr. Garcia for the hard copies of incident reports. Congratulated Mr. Strom, "who is not a political appointee. I hope everyone welcomes him and works well with him." After tomorrow night's interviews, the finalists for superintendent will be at a reception next week on May 20th and 22nd. Everyone will be notified. She extended invites to the WSC members and Dr. Macera. "The members of the Superintendent Search Committee will pick the final candidate –not the RI Department of Education."

Motion to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary