

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2009
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center
Multimedia Room 303

Call to Order / Moment of Silence / Pledge of Allegiance

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

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Sharon Charpentier, Vose Street: Read a petition with 289 signatures on it from Globe Park School parents that are against the removal of the medically fragile classrooms there and replacing them with the Feinstein Academy. "These classrooms have existed in this building for over 20 years. They don't feel that there is another classroom elsewhere that will meet their needs." Charpentier listed all the things that are available at Globe Park for them, adding that they feel these children will be negatively impacted by this move. The parents are asking the school department to reconsider this decision. Charpentier said that when her three children were told that these kids won't be in the school any longer, they cried.

Tracy Cesana, Feinstein Academy Teacher: She feels that her students deserve to be in a large school and integrated in with the rest of the student population. Her kids can interact with the staff and students at Globe Park and they should give them a chance to be part of their community. Cesana brought a scrapbook showing all the different activities that her students have been involved in. She believes her kids can benefit from this environment also.

- **Dr. Gerardi** said that he has spent many months and meetings with administrators and principals discussing this issue. He said that they gave the medically fragile classroom teachers the opportunity to look at two other schools where they could move. "As it turns out, they will probably be able to stay at Globe Park, as well as Feinstein," he said.

Edward Benjamin, Assistant Principal at WHS: Benjamin spoke about retiring before he was ready and not really having a choice. He said that he has served 37 years in this school system, starting at the Woonsocket Junior High School, which is now the middle school. Benjamin named all the superintendents he has worked under. He taught for 29 years as a Math teacher, then worked as an administrator and named all the principals he worked under at the Woonsocket Middle School. He spoke about the goals they strove for and the committees that were formed. "People didn't ask 'Are we getting paid for this?'" He had wanted to end his career at the WMS where he began, but it wasn't to be. In the 5 years he has been at the WHS, he has been privileged to work with, and named, all the administrators that have come and gone there in those 5 years. He was accepted there and knew many people who were there from the WMS. For him it was always about the kids. He wouldn't trade his career in Woonsocket for anything else. Benjamin thanked all the staff and administrators that he has worked with. He compared the devastation to the WED with the budget cuts to a farmer's field being devastated by a drought. He asked the WSC to bring back the programs that have been cut and spoke about running into two former students at the graduation who said he was a great teacher and helped them. "It's all about the kids. Kids first—budgets second."

Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street, RIPIN Change Leader: Announced that the next meeting for the School Success Coalition will be held on August 17th from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., with a light supper and babysitting provided. She asked the WSC when their meetings are during the summer. Mr. Dubois told her that they are on July 15th and the second and fourth Wednesdays in August.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

"Teacher of the Year Award"- Dr. Gerardi/K. Lombardo: Dr. Gerardi announced that the "TEACHER OF THE YEAR" is Ms. Sandra Gasbarro, a Woonsocket Middle School Teacher. He congratulated her, adding that Ms. Gasbarro is a consummate professional, excelling at her job as a House Leader. She is insightful and often goes beyond the parameters of her job description and serves as a confidante, surrogate mother, disciplinarian, and is a

source of inspiration as situations arise. She served on the ESL and the SIT Team Committees for the past 5 years and spends countless hours of her own time for planning and implementing professional development. She is well respected by her peers and the staff at Woonsocket Middle School and cares deeply for her students and their success. Gerardi presented Gasbarro with a certificate and showed the plaque to which her name will be added with all of the Teachers of the Year awarded since 1975 that will be displayed at the McFee Administration Building. Gerardi congratulated the "CLASS OF 2009" again and congratulated Laura Moynihan, Valedictorian, and Erin Staples, Salutatorian, and thanked everyone who participated to make it a great ceremony. He also reported that the WHS Senior students exhibited exceptional behavior at the senior prom and commended them. Dr. Gerardi recognized three students from Woonsocket Middle School who had perfect attendance for the past 3 years amounting to 540 days of school without any absenteeism: Timothy Boutsady, Benjamin Auclair and Jarrod Hamel.

- At this point, Mr. Dubois called Robert Begnoche, a WACTC graduate, to come out of the videotaping room and stand at the podium. He indicated that Robert graduated last week and his teacher sent a report to the WSC about Robert's outstanding performance videotaping the meetings of the WSC and a Cox Cable production. Mr. Dubois read the report and congratulated Robert, adding that he will be staying on to tape the meetings for the WSC.

Motion to receive and place on file: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Williams/E. Nadeau (Unan. Appr.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 10, 2009 OPEN

Motion to approve: M. Williams

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

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

- *Purchases/ Transfers Over \$2,000 – Barnes & Noble, Valley Transportation removed by M. Williams / RI Interlocal Risk Management Trust removed by L. Majewski*

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments

Linda Majewski noted that many teachers were being voted on for extended school year programs and summer school. The summer school appointments are dependent upon enrollments and will be assigned by seniority and certification. **Mr. Dubois also mentioned that he had requested that the street addresses not be listed on the public copy of the personnel appointments and they still are being included.** The only thing necessary is the city and state in case a copy is left behind and students get hold of it.

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Barnes & Noble/Consumable Textbooks/Globe Park/Local – Removed by M. Williams
Century Consultants/Annual Software Support/Technology/Local
Follett Software Company/Annual Service and Support Agreement/Technology/Local
Keystone Information Systems, Inc./Annual Contract-Financial Software/Business Office/Local
Lakeshore Learning Materials/Educational Supplies/DIVE Summer Program/Title I Grant
NE Association of Schools and Colleges/Membership Dues/WHS/Local
RI Interlocal Risk Management Trust/Workers Comp & Liability Insurance/Business Office/Local—Removed by L. Majewski
Roy Seitsinger, Jr., Ph.D/Professional Development/Wallace Grant
School Dude.Com/Annual Renewal/IT Direct Services/Technology/Local
Stadium Systems/Equipment Repair/Reconditioning/Athletics/Local
Valley Transportation/Annual Fuel Adjustment/District/Local—Removed by M. Williams

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests: NONE**4. Home Schooling Requests****END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:

- ***Barnes & Noble/ Consumable Textbooks/ Globe Park/ Local: \$4,718.00***
- ***Valley Transportation – Annual Fuel Adjustment – Local: \$120,000.00***

Ms. Williams asked what 'consumable textbooks' are. Dr. Gerardi told her they are workbooks. She then asked if the fuel adjustment for Valley Transportation is because it exceeded what we had budgeted for this year. Ms. Busby believed it was because the cost exceeded what we had locked into.

Motion to approve: A. Forcier

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

- ***RI Interlocal Risk Management Trust – Workers Comp & Liability Insurance – Local District: \$453,812.00***

Mrs. Majewski asked about looking into the City plan for our liability insurance instead of having our own plan. Ms. Busby said that we did go out to bid and RI Interlocal was the better bid at that time. She noted that there is a penalty for pulling out early. Busby also noted that they offer programs for our employees to help keep Workers Comp costs down. She can investigate the City plan more, however.

Motion to Table in order to look into what the City has: L. Majewski

2nd: A. Forcier (Unan. Approved) TABLED

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Majewski reported that the school uniform bill was passed by the House yesterday and she and Mrs. Nadeau will be working on a policy for the uniforms.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Caruolo Action Plan Update - Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported at the last meeting that the City Solicitor asked the judge to give us an extension to see if the City Council would pass the Mayors' proposed budget, which would have resolved the FY09 deficit with a city deficit reduction plan. If that had happened, the Caruolo action would have ended. It's his understanding that the City Council was not able to get the 6 votes it needed to override 4.75% tax cap and, therefore, made cuts to the City budget including cutting the funds earmarked to eliminate the WED FY09 deficit. He provided the WSC with a letter to Ted Pryzbala requesting the information that we need to prepare for the upcoming Caruolo Court Date of July 20, 2010. In light of the approved FY10 budget, the WED will be required to submit a revised FY10 budget within 30 days which will comply with the level funding approved by the City Council or file a second Caruolo Action if that is not legally possible. Mrs. McGuire Forcier had asked him to look into contacting the Auditor General to determine if we can roll the FY09 deficit into the FY10 projected deficit so that we could save money on one Caruolo action instead of two for the two different years. Gerardi said he will contact his office and ask if this is possible. He noted that whether we can cut the FY10 budget to comply with the city's level funding or if we end up in a second Caruolo action, we will have to continue to scrutinize our budget and cut any costs that are not mandated. He and Mrs. Busby also provided the WSC with a revised FY10 budget as of 6/22/09. The Budget reflects the projected savings of approximately \$500,000 in transportation based on the new transportation contract, which reduces the FY10 projected budget from \$68,615,163 to 68,115,163. This, in turn, reduces the FY10 projected deficit from approximately \$6.9 million to approximately \$6.4 million. They have also included the state's projected reductions in pension contribution. If the pension reform is passed by the state legislature, our pension contributions could be reduced by an additional \$731,897. Gerardi recommended that the Finance Subcommittee meet with Ms. Busby and himself to find any other potential cuts and that we consider another joint meeting with the City Council or, at the very least, another school committee meeting to revise the FY10 budget and comply with the 30-day requirement. He requested a closed session at the end of tonight's meeting to discuss this further.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. BID AWARD:

- **#10-12 Consultant Evaluator for WHS – 21st Century Program**

Mrs. Majewski asked Dr. Gerardi to explain why this review is needed for the public. He said that it's a significant grant that we receive and consultants are hired to make sure that the money is being spent appropriately. He believes that it's also a requirement of the grant.

Motion to approve the award of the 3-year bid to New England Educational Consultants for \$33,280: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Dubois
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED.

• **#10-09 Inspection and Testing of Automatic Sprinkler Equipment and Fire Alarm Systems**

Ms. Williams was concerned that the company being recommended had a much lower bid than the others. "There's a \$7,000 difference from the next lowest bidder," she noted. Ms. Busby said that it was discussed with Peter Fontaine and this company will meet all the requirements and are qualified. We have used them in the past without any problems.

Motion to approve the award of the 3-year bid to Communication Systems, Inc. for a total of \$33,000: A. Forcier
2nd: M. Dubois
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED.

2. Approval of WHS Portfolio Handbook – 1st Passage –A. Croft, B. Starring, L. Stanley

Ms. Linda Stanley said that the WSC members all have a copy of the Handbook, which has gone through three major revisions since they started. This is Version 4. They ultimately want to make it an electronic document and put it up on the website for anyone to access. Mrs. Majewski asked a question regarding the Carnegie Units. Stanley said that this information came from the guidance department and the student handbook. Dr. Garcia said Mrs. Majewski's point is well-taken and they will look into it. Majewski also had a concern about the End of Course Assessments counting for half of the final grade. She also had concerns about the NECAP and if a student does poorly on the NECAP test, there's no opportunity for them to retest. Garcia told her that it's only one of the components for graduation. "There are other ways. It's desirable that the whole package be fulfilled, but not necessary. I'm pretty sure that the students will have more than one opportunity with the NECAP down the road. RIDE has a provision for 11th Graders to retake the NECAP as 12th Graders," he said. Under the Teacher Responsibility section, Majewski asked that some kind of comment be included on the report card about student portfolios and how they are doing. Stanley explained that with an electronic portfolio system, the parent could access their child's portfolio at any time with the proper authorization. Majewski thinks that until this happens, maybe something could be put on the report card. Majewski also feels that March is too late for the Final Review. Stanley referred her to the process for preliminary review so that they have an opportunity to do some remediation. This is done during the first quarter of the senior year. Majewski commended all of them for their hard work and the great job they did. She feels we are moving in the right direction. Ms. Williams asked what the transfer policy is if a kid moves here from out of state. "What happens if that state doesn't require one? Is it something that's statewide or just in Woonsocket?" she asked. Stanley explained that as far as she knows, it's just our policy. "It doesn't make sense in such a small state because we should have the same policy for the entire state. I'm glad to see that we have one in there now," said Williams.

Motion to approve 1st Passage: M. Williams
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes APPROVED.
2nd: M. Dubois

3. Discussion of Handbooks- ELEM/WMS/WHS – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi said they have deliberately held off on printing the handbooks in hopes that we could institute the Dress Code Policy. It's his understanding that the House passed it last night and that the Governor has 10 days to sign or reject it. He's hopeful that he will sign it and we can begin the process of implementing the dress code. He recommended that the WSC Policy Subcommittee meet in advance of our next meeting to write the Dress Code Policy and have it approved with the Handbooks at the next two regularly scheduled meetings so that we will have time to have the handbooks printed before the next school year.

4. Discussion of City Braver Audit Report- Stacey Busby

Busby read the findings of the report and recommendations that were made, noting measures that will be taken to correct any deficiencies that were found. Dr. Gerardi added that because of Ms. Busby's accounting experience, she has already implemented procedures to address the deficiencies.

Motion to accept the report: M. Dubois
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED
2nd: M. Williams

CONFERENCES: None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Gerardi said he was disappointed to hear and read about the comments made at the City Council Meeting Monday night about the school committee and him not being there. He was glad that Committee Member McGuire Forcier

was voluntarily attending and did speak up to represent them. No one had invited the school committee or him to that meeting or gave them any hint that they wanted them there. They would certainly have attended if they had known. It was his understanding that the only recommendations that were again offered involved the school committee taking illegal actions like breaking contracts, not adhering to state education laws, or violating board of Regents' regulations. If they had been there to respond, they probably would not have had anything new to offer other than that we continued to take the high road and abide by the laws of the state of Rhode Island. He reminded the public about some calendar items: Report cards for students at the WHS will be available starting June 29th. Summer School Registrations will be held at the WHS Auditorium from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Summer School starts Monday, July 13th through Friday, July 31st.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

M. Dubois: Thanked everyone who participated in the graduation on Friday, saying he was amazed at how quickly the gym was set up after calling it indoors in the morning. He thanked the crossing guards at the elementary schools that give up their recesses and time to help their fellow students. He hoped they still get an end-of-the-year party. An audience member told him that they went to Canobie Lake Park. Dubois wished his son and fiancé the best of luck together. They are getting married on Saturday.

L. Majewski: Wished the graduates well in their future endeavors. Welcomed the WMS students who will be high school freshmen this fall. Congratulated Teacher of the Year Sandy Gasbarro, adding that she had the pleasure of working with her and how wonderful she is. Majewski requested for next year the we include parents in events such as Class Day, mentioning all the other celebrations like for the NECAP test, that they could have been invited to. She has had some calls from parents regarding the student photos by LifeTouch. "The sitting fee is \$25 to \$50." Majewski wants to know if they are taking our ID photos and if those photos could be used for the yearbook. She wished the teachers that are retiring a wonderful retirement and thanked them for their hard work over the years. Wished the students a safe and happy summer.

A. Forcier: Passed.

E. Nadeau: Said that she certainly appreciates all that Mr. Benjamin has done for our system. "We are limiting our experience pool when we lose people like him. She thanked him. Nadeau said the Building Committee had the opportunity to see a mock classroom at the new middle schools. They took a tour of the North building. "It has improved this city. In spite of all the negativity we endured, it's something to be really proud of." She spoke about the City Council meeting on Monday and the 5-year deficit reduction plan being rejected. "The bottom line is that it doesn't make it go away. I think there are certain people on the City Council who play to the voters. Two people need to step up. Now we are faced with a double Caruolo action. By doing nothing, you have accomplished nothing and all you have done is place the taxpayers in this city in a worse predicament."

M. Williams: Congratulated the Class of 2009 and also to Edward Benjamin on his retirement. "You will be missed. Hopefully, when we need a substitute for an administrator, you'll consider it. We would love to have you." She noted that the medically fragile students at Globe Park will stay there for now. Dr. Gerardi added that there is room in that area for both groups. "It's up to the teachers in those rooms," he said. Williams said she would definitely not want to see that program moved. Her daughter went there up until the 5th grade and volunteered in that room. "She learned things you can't teach a child without having them there. This program is something very special to Globe Park and teaches the children tolerance and acceptance. It's too bad we don't have it in all of our schools." She asked again about whether we get a subsidy from the government for students who reside in subsidized housing. Dr. Gerardi said that we get housing aid, but it's not tied to that.

A 5-minute recess was called to go back into Executive Closed Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary