

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 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:

Lorraine Corey, Huntington Avenue: Questioned the school committee regarding the \$1 million in pension fund savings that the WED realized they had recently and what it will be used for. "If \$200,000 is going to restore high school sports, is the rest of it going to fund the six new positions that the state has mandated? Have you decided where the remaining funds will go? I think they should go toward the deficit." Mr. Dubois told her that this topic will be discussed later this evening.

John Marsella, Bluestone Drive, WHS Assistant Football Coach: Thanked the WSC for reinstating the sports funding. Reported that Coach Carnell Henderson has not been on the practice field for the past two days because he has been told he can't coach since becoming a 12-month assistant principal at the WHS. "His players are asking where he is." Marsella asked the WSC to explain to his players why Mr. Henderson is not being allowed to coach. Dr. Gerardi said that he and Mr. Dubois have spoken about this and "traditionally, when a person becomes a 12-month administrator, they are not allowed to coach." He did note that a final decision has not yet been made. "We are in our second week of the season and are like a ship without a rudder right now," said Marsella.

Shawn Harris, Olo Str., WHS Football Player: Stated that Coach Henderson has been a father, role model and head coach for the players. "When I have difficulties in my life, I go to him. The other players feel the same way. (getting emotional) Coach Henderson has been there for me since I was little."

Jose Merced, WHS Football Player: Stated that they talk about family and respect on the field. "Some of us have never really had a family and we learn what it means to be part of a family. I've grown up in the projects and you don't see a lot of respect there. We learn about respect from Coach Henderson." Merced spoke about how Coach Henderson handled being thrown out of the playoffs last year. "We need our leader back. A lot of us wouldn't be there on the field if it weren't for him and a lot of the fans too."

Giovanni Heredia, WHS Football Player: Stated that Coach Henderson is the best man for the job.

Joseph Morin, WHS Football Player: "For two weeks into the football season we have been working together, but the last two days we haven't been the same without Coach Henderson. In school and on the field, he keeps us in check."

Other WHS Football Players: Spoke about how Coach Henderson has turned kids around in their life and school work. Now they are thinking about college when they hadn't even considered it before. They just want their coach back.

- ❖ Mr. Dubois informed the players that Mr. Henderson is not on the agenda so they can't make a decision tonight. The WSC members realize how valuable he is as a coach, an administrator, and a role model. "It was our hope that in his new position, he would focus more on his administrative duties. It was his choice, but he has not been told he could not show up the past two days. We are very close to coming to an agreement with him, but there will be some stipulations. His job at the WHS must come first," said Dubois. Dr. Gerardi commended the players for their comments and urged them to keep up the hard work. Mrs. Majewski said that she received some complaints from taxpayers about reinstating sports and she thinks the players were a great testament tonight in support of sports.

Phil Labrecque: Urged the WSC to fight the unfunded mandates. "You have the city and the Mayor behind you. We are here to back you up and push back against the state."

Tracy Cesana, Special Education Teacher at Globe Park School: She spoke regarding the Career and Technical Center funding. She noted that she's a WACTC Child Studies graduate of 1993, has been a cooperative education teacher, and parent of two alumni students. Sixteen years ago she would never have believed that she would be where she is today, if it weren't for the teachers at the WACTC. She holds two Masters Degrees and has been a teacher in the Woonsocket school system for ten years. Cesana spoke about the preschool program and the influence it has had on her children. "They are prepared for Kindergarten. It may be just a building to some, but it's like part of my family."

Katie-Rose Precourt, 2009 Graduate of WACTC Graphics Program: Precourt gave a brief overview of the programs at the WACTC and said that the school prepared her well for college.

Kelsey Gately, WACTC Student: Gately spoke about how the Graphics Program saves the district money by doing all of its printing. She listed all the things that the Construction Program has done for the community. Gately lives in Burrillville and came to the WACTC because she wanted something her school didn't offer. "We are like a family. I don't want to go back to Burrillville."

Bill Gately, Joslin Road, Burrillville, Parent of WACTC Student: He noted that Burrillville does have a good school system, but "we do tend to have an attitude about the big city. My daughter went from Bs and Cs to high honors. This school needs to stay."

Katie Gomes, Bradford Street, WACTC Graduate: She graduated from the WACTC with a teacher assistant certification and now attends RIC. Next year she will have her own classroom. "There's a lot of students like me who wouldn't be where they are today if it weren't for this school."

John McLaughlin, South Main Street: Thanked Ms. Williams for her service on the WSC because he knows she isn't running again. "She was one of the few that came to the WMS and exposed what was going on in that school. There's a lot of gossip going around in the city and I want to know what the truth is. There's a \$1 million savings in the pension funds and we have a \$6 million deficit. Where is this \$1 million going to go?"

- ❖ Dr. Gerardi explained that they started the year \$7.1 million in the hole. They have made as many cuts as they could. They were able to make the pension fund cut because they finally got a definite number from the state. "This money went towards the deficit. At the same time, however, we got word from the Commissioner that we must hire six more staff members. It's on the agenda for consideration again tonight." Mr. McLaughlin said he had heard that \$200,000 went towards restoring sports at the high school and the remaining \$800,000 is going to administrators. "That's not true," said Gerardi. "We need to be able to ask what's going on and get answers," said McLaughlin when he was told that Good & Welfare is not a question and answer forum and these items will be discussed separately elsewhere on the agenda.

Carol Crystal: Spoke about the implementation of the uniforms halfway through the school year—especially right after the holidays. She thinks it will be an undue hardship for parents and asked about where they would be able to get the uniforms. She was told that uniforms will be discussed later on the agenda. "Just because you have been waiting awhile to implement them, it doesn't mean you should put a hardship on people," she said.

Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street: Auclair commended all the students who spoke tonight, saying they did an excellent job. Spoke about agenda item #6 under New Business regarding evaluation forms and timelines. He was happy to see it on the agenda. Auclair also spoke about the unfunded mandates and suggested that since the waivers probably aren't going to be waived, that the ones that are funded be implemented. "The ones that aren't funded and will least impact the students—pull them out. It may violate state law, but they violate state law by removing the funds for these programs."

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that he enjoyed the Back to School Celebration held at Coleman Elementary School last Saturday. He found it very rewarding to see all of the parent volunteers, student volunteers, school personnel, and community agency personnel chipping in to provide good information for parents and backpacks for students who will appreciate and use those backpacks to support their academic achievements. He recognized Jackie Dowdy for organizing and leading this successful event.

Motion to receive and place on file: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Williams (Unan. Appr.)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 12, 2009 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve as corrected: M. Williams

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Mrs. Majewski had a couple of items she asked Dr. Gerardi about at the August 12th meeting added into the minutes for the record. Under Unfinished Business #1 – Page 2, 2nd Paragraph: Add **“Mrs. Majewski asked Dr. Gerardi, in light of these new positions that are being required and waivers not being granted, if we could ask RIDE to consider renegotiating our District Negotiated Agreement. Dr. Gerardi explained that it’s only a \$200,000 agreement to help cover other positions that are required for PS&I and there’s no room in that.”** This sentence to be inserted prior to “We have a lot of intervention.....”

On Page 5, Item #5 under New Business, Majewski asked that it be added that **she requested that Dr. Gerardi obtain a copy of the Superintendents’ Evaluation with the ISLIC requirements.**

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- *Personnel Apptmts.:* L. Majewski removed the LEA Rep., Summer Step-Up, and SBC positions.
 - *Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:* Judith Keeley removed by L. Majewski, CCF removed by A. Forcier.
- 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)**

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Ardente Supply co./Water Heater/Gov. Pothier/mLocal

Connecting for Children & Families/Contract/Elem,WMS,WHS/21ST Century Grant – removed by AF

Judith Keeley/Prof. Development/District/Title I Grant – Removed by LM

Mentor, Inc./ABE,GED & ESL/Even Start/WIA Adult Basic Ed. Grant

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

Youth Educational Program, Orlando, FL/WACTC/Fundraiser

4. Home Schooling Requests

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

Personnel Appointments:

LEA Rep. (Special Ed. Case Mgr.) – Mrs. Majewski asked if this was the position that was approved at the last meeting. Carole Lerner told her, “No. It’s usually filled by a retiree and must be posted yearly.”

Summer Step-Up Positions – Mrs. Majewski asked why they were approving people after the fact for this program. Linda Filomeno explained that there weren’t any applicants to recommend in time for the last meeting agenda. They didn’t get any applicants until they started calling people and are now being put on retroactively. Linda explained that they had to move forward because it was a grant through CCF and in order to provide CCF with the staff they needed, these people were hired as substitutes.

School-Based Coordinators – Mrs. Majewski asked what these positions were. Dr. Lynne Bedard explained that they are grant-funded and determined by the Area Coordinating Committee for the WACTC and the superintendents of each community that the WACTC serves. Bedard said that she cut their budgets this year and they are now being funded as consultants so that benefits are not being paid. Their positions are fully-funded by Perkins, which is a regional grant. Mrs. Nadeau asked if they do recruiting for the WACTC. Bedard said that they do assist the guidance counselors, but that they mostly work on Applied Learning projects with teachers. They get paid \$24,500 a year. Nadeau asked, “If these positions weren’t grant-funded, would they be put into your budget?” Bedard explained that the WACTC doesn’t have a school-based coordinator for the building, but the superintendents from the sending communities may decide to pick up the cost out of their own budgets. Nadeau said that she wouldn’t support these positions if they weren’t grant-funded. Dr. Bedard told

her that the SBC for Woonsocket High School, Kenneth DeCubellis, helps with the Biotechnology Program that is being housed at the high school this year. Mrs. Majewski asked if Perkins was an annual grant. "Yes, it is and a state grant," said Bedard.

Motion to approve the Personnel exemptions: M. Williams 2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:

- ***Connecting for Children & Families/Contract/Elem,WMS,WHS/21ST Century Grant – \$334,842.00***

Mrs. Forcier removed this item because she needed to abstain from voting because she is a board member.

Motion to approve: L. Majewski 2nd: E. Nadeau (4 yes – 1 abstain AF)

-
- ***Judith Keeley/Prof. Development/District/Title I Grant - \$2,250.00***

Mrs. Majewski asked for clarification on this item. Mrs. Filomeno explained that it was for a payment out of last year's grant that doesn't end until September 30, 2009. Majewski asked about Judith Keeley working for RIDE, and Filomeno told her that Keeley is now retired and working as a consultant. Mrs. Majewski also questioned Filomeno about the Mentor, Inc. item, but Filomeno wasn't familiar with that grant. She believed it was for the population in a specific area of the city.

MOTION TO APPROVE EXEMPTED ITEMS: A. Forcier 2nd: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Majewski reported that the School Success Coalition met on August 17th and reviewed what was discussed. She thanked the PAC Co-Chairs for setting up an information table at the Back to School Celebration regarding the school uniforms and conducting a survey of parents regarding their feelings about when they should be implemented. Majewski announced that SELAC will meet at 6:30 p.m. the first Thursday in October at Pothier School.

By unanimous consent, the first three items of New Business were taken out of order.

NEW BUSINESS: (taken out of order)

1. Discussion/Approval of Compliance with Commissioner's Waiver Denials – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that at the Joint City Council/School Committee meeting, he and the WSC were urged to exercise civil disobedience in regard to state regulations that are contradictory to state law. One example that has been used is North Smithfield's continued implementation of the "Pay for Play" proposal after the Commissioner ruled against it. One of the difficult topics for the WED that night was the RI Commissioner of Education's waiver denials that resulted in the need to hire 6 additional positions at a cost of approximately \$276,000 which would increase our projected deficit. At the last WSC meeting, the School Committee added those 6 positions to our revised budget. Members of the School Committee have since suggested that another vote be taken tonight to reduce the budget by the 6 positions that resulted from the waiver response at a cost of approximately \$276,000 and let the Performance Audit, the RI Auditor General's recommendations, or ultimately a judge in a Caruolo hearing determine if we have to add this expense to our budget. If the WSC votes to revise the FY10 budget by eliminating those positions, Gerardi had prepared a draft letter to the Commissioner explaining that the RIDE regulations are in conflict with RIGL 16-2-21.4 requiring the School Committee to make every effort to produce a balanced budget. In the past, Gerardi has stated that not being in compliance with RIDE regulations could result in their withholding our Article 31 Professional Development funds, which were significant at that time. Unfortunately, this year the legislature decided not to fund Article 31 money to the school districts for FY10. Gerardi has also asked Rick Richards to run this item and New Business Item #2 by Commissioner Abbott to get a legal opinion as to the potential consequences for a school district out of compliance with the RIDE regulations. The only response he got was, "Let Bob know that North Smithfield is not off the hook. We will be holding a hearing on their 'Civil Disobedience'." He informed the WSC that the full committee can vote under this agenda item to remove the 6 positions from the FY10 budget if they so choose. If the full School Committee votes to remove those positions, then they could also vote to have him send a copy of the draft letter to the RI Commissioner of Education.

Mrs. Forcier questioned why we are being asked to put these positions on now. Dr. Gerardi thinks that the state probably doesn't have the staff to go around and check to make sure we are meeting all the mandates and when we were honest and requested the waivers, it brought it to the state's attention. "We haven't had these positions in the

budget for years," he said. Mrs. Nadeau asked, "If we don't fund these positions now, can we backtrack and look for other positions that the state has mandated that haven't been funded?" "I don't think it's good practice to disobey regulations, because they are put in for a good reason. I also don't think it would be a good idea to backtrack. This one is timely because it happened as we are dealing with this crisis. In my career, I have never heard of school committees standing up and violating mandates until now," he said. "So this is just the start of a revolution? I know of a number of positions I would like to look at. We could possibly balance the budget if we could backtrack," said Nadeau. Ms. Williams noted that this started when the No Child Left Behind Act came about and positions were mandated and not funded. "It's the way that education is funded in RI that's the problem. Somebody has to make a stand," she said. Mrs. Majewski also supported the letter going out, but she suggested that in the matter of civil disobedience, we should say that we would be happy to comply if these positions are fully funded and we can revisit the District Negotiated Agreement under PS&I. She also thinks it should be added that we have made provisions within our current staffing levels through others picking up extra duties. Dr. Gerardi told her that he has already asked about the District Negotiated Agreement and hasn't gotten a response. Mr. Dubois asked how many state and federal mandates we have. Gerardi said he didn't bring the book with him, but it's very big. "The superintendents get the answer from RIDE that we get state aid and that's how we're supposed to fund the positions. There are more than 100 laws in the book of mandates," said Gerardi. Dubois asked if someone could check back to when we started getting lesser funding from the state to fund these mandates. Dr. Gerardi said that information is coming when the performance audit is done. Dubois thinks that RIDE is way overstaffed with people making six figures—not short-staffed. "I believe other communities are watching us with this issue and to see how the uniforms work out," he said. Mrs. Forcier asked about the penalties for not meeting the mandates. Gerardi explained that there are penalties for things that we should do and don't do. Atty. Ackerman noted that money can be withheld by the state as a penalty.

Motion to approve the School Committee's not being in compliance with the six positions and authorize Dr. Gerardi to send the letter to the Commissioner notifying her of this vote including the following sentence, "***We would be happy to comply with the mandates if RIDE fully funded all the positions through our District Negotiated Agreement under PS&I.***" Dr. Gerardi is also to reiterate to the Commissioner how the WED plans on meeting the responsibilities for those positions. Motion made by E. Nadeau.

2nd: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

2. Discussion/Approval of Letter to Board of Regents regarding State Finance of WACTC – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi reported that at the Joint City Council/School Committee meeting, Councilman Ward enlightened the WSC and himself that the RI Board of Regents is legally responsible to provide regional vocational education under RIGL 16-8-1 and yet they have created another unfair funding issue. The unfair issue is that the state-funded program at Davies Career/Tech Center requires a minimal transportation cost to the districts in their region, while the WED expends nearly \$2,800,000 on salaries alone at WACTC and only receives approximately \$500,000 in out-of-district student tuitions and \$220,000 in State aid for vocational programming. This adds up to a \$2 million annual expense for the WED. Councilman Ward suggested that the WED close the doors and send the Board of Regents the keys and tell them we can no longer afford to run the center. Dr. Gerardi said that the WED had to identify WACTC as key program that would be spared to the federal government in our assurances to receive the stabilization funds; so therefore, we must run the vocational school for this upcoming school year. WSC members have suggested that we be proactive in reducing the FY11 budget by writing Judge Flanders, the Chairman of the Board of Regents, and explaining that we can no longer fund the WACTC for FY11, highlighting the fact that we have an excellent program in place and hope that they will find a way to fund it so that the WED could continue to run it. The other option would be for the state to take it over and continue to run the very same program. Gerardi assured concerned parents and teachers that RIGL 16 – 8- 1 clearly states that it is the Board of Regents responsibility to provide vocational programming and, regardless of who funds it and who runs it, the students will have a program provided for them. Gerardi asked for approval of a letter he provided to them in their packets.

Mrs. Forcier noted that she was a former student in the Health Occupations Program at the WACTC. "Everything that the students and parents who spoke tonight said is 100% correct. We don't want to close it down. Pushing the issue is the right thing to do," she said. Dr. Gerardi gave the history of the career/tech centers in the state and described the three models. He spoke about Pawtucket being able to send their kids to Davies and only paying \$400,000 for transportation. Forcier asked if we could be reimbursed for all the years that the state hasn't adequately funded the WACTC. Atty. Ackerman didn't think so and thinks we would have a hard enough time going forward in the current economic climate. "Last year, the state asked us to take over the building because it's a state-owned building," said Gerardi. Mrs. Nadeau said that her son survived high school because of the WACTC and he went on to become very successful. "The whole circumstances surrounding this are unfair. I don't want to see career/tech schools go away. They are a vital part of our education system. Not everyone goes to college," she said. Mrs. Majewski asked if the Board of Regents is responsible for the funding of the career/tech schools. Dr. Gerardi said they are responsible for Davies and decide how much Davies will get. "We all know this school is important. It's an issue of fairness. One school is completely state-funded and other schools aren't given anything," said Majewski.

She thinks we should send a letter to the sending schools because they spend money in tuition to send their students here. "We should let them know what we are doing because it affects them as well," she said. "There are 624 students that are enrolled for this coming year altogether--510 just from Woonsocket," said Forcier. Atty. Ackerman noted that the RIGL states that "the state is responsible for providing"—"It's not the same as they are required to pay for it. It's a very tricky subject. What happens if they refuse to fund it? Do we sue them?" said Ackerman. He doesn't think it's as simple as saying "they do it over there so they need to do it over here". "It's not equitable, definitely," he said. Dubois asked who sets the tuitions for the sending students. Dr. Bedard told him there is no standardized formula around the state. She had just discussed this issue with Stacey Busby. "When the school opened, there were mandates. The state was supposed to pay for the administrators, guidance counselors, etc., and the tuitions were supposed to help cover that. "The state has been trying to get rid of this building for years. Especially since the new fire codes came along," said Dubois.

Motion to authorize Dr. Gerardi to send his letter to the Board of Regents with the following amendment made by Linda Majewski on Page 2 after "...withdraw our personnel resources from the current program" – **if state funding, as it's provided for Lincoln, is not secured.** Motion made by A. Forcier.

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED.

3. Discussion/Approval of Self Insurance Issues and Letter to GHGRI. – R. Ackerman/C. Lambert

Dr. Gerardi reported that the Mayor's attorneys have conferenced with Attorney Ackerman, Ms. Busby and himself on several occasions and have convinced them that there could be a great savings in the administration of our Health Care Program. A copy of correspondence sent to RIGHG was given to the WSC indicating that the WED would like to speak with them about leaving their program and possibly entering into the program that the city is in. They have already responded that they would like to meet with us on September 10th. Attorney Ackerman for WED and Attorney Lambert explained the benefits of leaving RIGHG to the WSC. After the presentation, the full committee was asked to approve the meeting on September 10th and an investigation into the possibilities of leaving RIGHG in an effort to further reduce our expenses for FY10. It was noted during the presentation that this change wouldn't affect the insurance that is offered to WED employees. It would only change the management of our health care program. Mrs. Majewski asked about any penalties that might occur. Atty. Lambert doesn't see any at this time.

Motion to support Dr. Gerardi, Stacey Busby and Atty. Richard Ackerman working with Atty. Lambert in exploring another health care partner: E. Nadeau

2nd: A. Forcier/L. Majewski

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2. Revised FY10 Budget – Dr. Gerardi (*taken out of order by unanimous consent*)

Dr. Gerardi told the WSC that Ms. Busby would identify the cuts that she has been able to accomplish between the last school committee meeting and tonight and present a revised FY10 budget that includes the changes the WSC has approved tonight under New Business Item #1. Stacey Busby noted a reduction in kindergarten salaries by placing .5 of the positions in the Title I grant and keeping .5 in the local budget. Increased revenue from the lease agreement for Social Street School has been added amounting to \$54,000. "The programs that have been put back in such as sports and extra-curricular activities only amount to 1.1% of the total budget," she noted. Dr. Gerardi commended Ms. Busby and the Title 1 Director for finding the extra \$140,000 in savings. He pointed out that the Mayor's appropriation this year is less than the WED actually spent each year for the last two years and commended everyone for being so frugal for three years in a row. Gerardi is confident that when the performance audit is done, the auditors will be amazed at how we have been able to run the department with the monies appropriated. Mrs. Forcier said she has been hearing how our teachers haven't done enough. "They are getting zero raises for the next two years. I haven't heard of any other community doing this. If anyone has, please let me know. We all need to work together," she said, encouraging everyone to show the revised budget copy to everyone they know and call the talk shows with the accurate information.

Motion to approve: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2nd: M. Williams
APPROVED

1. Update of FY10 Corrective Action Plan – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi read a letter from Mayor Menard that she requested be read at tonight's meeting regarding her recommendations for reducing the WED's budget for FY10. Dr. Gerardi reported that members of the School Committee suggested that he write a letter to the City Council and the Mayor explaining that we believe we should

delay the request for the City to raise the \$6,107,874.00 that we made in writing to Chairman Fontaine on August 13th. The reason for this delay would be that further cuts have since been identified, reducing our projected deficit from the original \$7,100,000 deficit to our current \$5,559,966 as of the most recent revised budget passed tonight. The WSC members would like to wait until the Mayor's initiative to leave RIGHG to change to self insurance is finalized because as was explained, this could be a large reduction in the final deficit projection. Gerardi asked for approval for School Committee Chairman Dubois and himself to send a letter to City Council Chairman Fontaine updating him with our most recent revised budget and requesting that he and the City Council delay our original request until we have a final accurate budget projection which may hopefully eliminate the deficit. Mr. Dubois said that as far as he knows, none of our unions are getting salary increases for FY10, referring to Recommendation #4 of the Mayor's letter. Dr. Gerardi thought she may be thinking of the 2% deferment, but that's to January of 2014. Dubois asked about entering renegotiations with the union. Gerardi has sent a letter but hasn't gotten a response yet. He's still hopeful because he hasn't received a letter saying "Absolutely Not". Both Dubois and Nadeau agreed with making everyone paying a health care copay as the Mayor recommended. Mrs. Majewski noted that the people who aren't paying are the people at the highest step and can more afford to pay.

Motion to approve requesting a delay: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2nd: M. Dubois
APPROVED

4. Appointment of Assistant Special Education Director – Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi read his letter of recommendation for the public.

Motion to approve the appointment Kenneth A. Duva: A. Forcier
2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED

Mrs. Majewski asked about his contract. She was told that he will be given a one-year contract because we are in the middle of the two-year contracts with our other directors. Mr. Dubois noted that this is not a new position and was a replacement for Elaine Hazzard after her retirement. Dubois thanked Hazzard for her many years of service. Hazzard spoke about her daughter graduating from the WHS after they moved to this community and thanked everyone in Woonsocket for everything they have done for her and her family. Mrs. Majewski asked that when someone is interviewed for a special education position, that someone from SELAC be invited to sit on that interviewing committee. Dr. Gerardi explained that it was an oversight and that they had also neglected to invite someone from the union.

7. Discussion of Implementation of New School Uniforms – L. Majewski (taken out of order by unan. consent)

Mrs. Majewski said she has worked with the Uniform Committee to come up with the prototype for the uniforms, but the implementation date is up for discussion tonight. An informal survey was done at the Back To School Celebration and it was pretty close between starting at half-year or waiting until next year. Her opinion is that she doesn't want to burden the parents at the middle of the year and trying to find the uniforms in the middle of the year will be more difficult. "Getting the school pricing will be more difficult at half-year versus at the beginning of the year. The uniform policy still needs to be drafted. A parent on the Uniform Committee suggested an incentive program for students of getting credits towards a prom ticket for each day the uniform is worn," said Majewski. She thinks starting next year would be best. Mrs. Forcier agreed because they still haven't figured out what will be done if a student doesn't comply. "You can only send them home so many times," she said. Mrs. Nadeau thought that part of the Uniform Committee's job was to come up with the vendors. Mrs. Majewski said that they thought about having a vendor fair, but it will be difficult to do mid-year. "It was part of the plan and we thought it would be passed back in March, giving us plenty of time to work on that part. It's still part of the plan, or possibly a list of places where the uniforms would be available," said Majewski. Ms. Williams agreed with starting next September, mentioning that people on assistance get a clothing allowance. She asked if they would be able to get uniforms at a discounted price. Mrs. Majewski has spoken to a couple of service agencies that provide avenues to address these needs. Mr. Dubois thought there may be a possibility of Mr. Feinstein subsidizing uniforms for those that can't afford them.

Motion to implement the school uniforms at the beginning of the next school year: L. Majewski
2nd: A. Forcier

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes. APPROVED

6. Discussion/Approval of Administration and Non-Union Personnel Evaluation Forms and Timelines – Dr. Gerardi (TABLED)

5. Discussion of Bussing – Peter Fontaine, Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi and Mr. Fontaine are working with Durham to have a smooth opening and will continue to work together to maximize cost savings. In regard to the bussing cost savings measure of eliminating secondary bussing that the Mayor recommended in her letter, they have done some investigating to determine what the cost savings would be.

Unfortunately, the contract is written so that we are charged per bus per day and because we double utilize the same buses for elementary and secondary, the WED would still need the same number of busses to transport the elementary students negating any cost savings. "So you're saying that the only way to save on the bussing is to cut out bussing entirely—not just for the secondary level? If we do that, there are other concerns," said Nadeau. Mrs. Majewski asked about parent notification about walking limits and what schools their children will be attending. Dr. Gerardi told her that letters are going out. She asked when the bus schedules will be in the paper. Gerardi said he would ask Mr. Fontaine tomorrow. Mr. Dubois appreciated the Mayor's suggestion, but there's no way he can support not providing elementary bussing with the traffic in this city. "Safety comes first. I will never approve that," he said.

CONFERENCES: None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi announced that the first day of school for students is September 1st and wished everyone a happy and successful 2009-2010 school year. He's encouraged that the School Committee has been working collaboratively with the Mayor and the City Council on initiatives to reduce the FY10 budget and is hopeful that the spirit of cooperation continues.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

L. Majewski: Thanked Ms. Williams for her service, saying she spent a lot of time with her when she was working on the Report Card Committee. Thanked the Orientation Committee for the WHS, saying she went last night and it was very successful. She asked for an update on the Trust and asked Dr. Gerardi for clarification on how kids are going to be placed in the two middle schools. Dr. Gerardi said there has been a committee working on it and explained the plans. Majewski announced that she wouldn't be at the next WSC meeting because she'll be away on vacation.

A. Forcier: Passed.

E. Nadeau: Said she's going to miss her running mate during the next election (to Ms. Williams). They had a lot of fun together. She asked Dr. Gerardi to stress to administrators to follow and enforce the dress codes. "People are saying, 'they don't enforce the dress code now—how are they going to enforce the uniforms?' I would like to prove them wrong." Dr. Gerardi said he will make sure that the Director of Instruction takes care of that.

M. Dubois: Said he'll save his comments for Ms. Williams. "She'll be at a couple more meetings." He's glad the other four of them are running again. Sometimes they just agree to disagree. Thanked Gilbane, AI3, and everyone instrumental for the walking tour of the middle schools that was provided to the WSC this morning. "They are so classy and it's just amazing. Our kids will be going to the nicest middle schools in the state." He thanked everyone for speaking under Good & Welfare, especially the football players. "They spoke from the heart." He urged everyone to drive carefully with school opening. He asked why someone from Durham Bus wasn't here tonight with bussing on the agenda. Ms. Busby told him that Mr. Fontaine told her they couldn't be here, but didn't say why.

M. Williams: Said she'll miss Ellie, but still will be available to push her around in a wheelchair if necessary when she campaigns. Williams said her life has changed so much. She wants to further her education and working full-time, she just can't do everything. Her daughter will be going off to college before she knows it. Williams now has some freedom after taking care of a mentally challenged woman for nine years also.

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 p.m.: M. Williams

2nd: E. Nadeau/A. Forcier
(Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary