

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2011
7:30 PM – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet
60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Call to Order by Mr. Dubois.
Moment of Silence
Pledge of Allegiance

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

Atty. Richard Ackerman reported out on the Memorandum of Agreement that was agreed to by the Woonsocket Teachers' Guild and the WSC regarding the last contract vote on July 1, 2010.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE: None.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi congratulated Governor Pothier School for their donations for "Pennies for Patients" campaign. They collected over \$1700 in pennies to donate to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Association. He also thanked all students who participated in the Alan Shawn Feinstein campaign against hunger. Students at Pothier collected food for the needy to help with this campaign. He congratulated the Junior Scholars at Pothier for their donation of soda can tabs for the Ronald McDonald house in Providence, noting that this program supports families with children who are hospitalized for serious illnesses. Students have donated over 200,000 soda tabs for this worthwhile cause. Dr. Gerardi also congratulated the WMS 8th Graders for putting on the Art Exhibit at Harris Library. The exhibit will be up throughout May and he urged everyone to stop by. Gerardi reported that Woonsocket Middle School students were addressed by Judge Silverstein and Attorney West on internet safety and cyber bullying. Safety, awareness and student supports were highlighted on the visit. Attorney West and Judge Silverstein emphasized the dangers of using social media and reminded students that when they post or make comments on social networks that everyone can see what is said. They also told the class about cell phones and protocol usage and emphasized how to keep safe while using these interactive products. Dr. Gerardi congratulated the students from the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center for having the opportunity to participate in the Rhode Island Construction Career day held in East Greenwich. The Construction students attended a two-day event at the RI Department of Transportation maintenance facility. Students were able to get hands on experience using and operating heavy equipment and tools and were also able to speak with industry professionals. He congratulated KayLnn Pitts who took second place in the high jump at the Cumberland Invitational. KayLnn leaped 5 feet 3 inches and she also placed second in the 200-meter dash with a time of 26.6 seconds which set a school record. Also, he congratulated junior Alexis Pike for her sweep in the shot with a distance of 29 feet 6 inches and the hammer throw of 122-0. and junior Mary Shields with her efforts in the javelin with a toss of 100-10 and junior Latoya Dythe who had a productive day with a running time of 13.2 in the 100 dash. She also placed third in the two hundred meter run, while Jordon Lopes posted a strong time of 1:04.5 to win the 400 meters. Gerardi also congratulated junior Kristen Treganowan who had a pair of second-place finishes in the 1,500 and 800 meters. He congratulated Jalen Evans who won three events; the 100 meter dash with a time of 11.6, the 400 meters at 51.8 and the 200 meter with a time of 23.8. Also teammates Tyler Bourk, Jessie Charette and Alex Correia who won the 4X100 relay with a time of 45.2. Also, Anthony Neal, Jessie Charrette and Travis Reeves who each won two individual events for the Villa Novan's. Gerardi congratulated Coach Dan Richards for the team's outstanding efforts and wished them good luck at the Northern Division Championships.

Gerardi also congratulated the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical students who were honored for sponsoring their TV Ad for preventing Sexual Violence. The team included Michael Ellis, Vanessa Norkham, Jenny Ounnarath, Michael Pimentel and Randi Tessier. This media contest has become a critical part of efforts to educate teens on sexual violence and how they can help prevent it. These students created their own ad so they better understand the issue of sexual violence and incorporate what they learned into their own lives. Dr. Gerardi thanked Science teacher Claire Laquerre and other members of the High School Staff for taking the initiative in creating a new bio-tech lab for the students. He also thanked URI for donating the equipment used to help put the lab together. It has allowed students to learn the techniques of DNA fingerprinting. On behalf of Governor Pothier School, Gerardi thanked the staff from CCF and especially the Early Reading First Committee for the assistance in the Kindergarten Orientation

program to be held for incoming kindergarten students on May 17th from 5:30-8:00. An evening of information and fun will be provided and we look forward to meeting all our new students. Gerardi congratulated Citizen's Memorial and Bernon Heights for their improvement on the NECAP State testing and for coming out of choice. Gerardi reminded everyone that the Community Build Day for Playground at Globe Park is June 11th. The Opening Ceremony is scheduled for June 18th.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. Forcier

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Revised March 23, 2011 OPEN, p. 3 & 5; April 7, 2011 SPECIAL OPEN; April 27, 2011 OPEN/CLOSED

Motion to approve as corrected: A. Forcier

2nd: V. Phongsavanh (Unan. Approved)

Mrs. Majewski asked Mrs. Busby about a statement made on Page 3 of the March 23, 2011 Revised Minutes under NFS Leasing discussion. She believes that the last sentence of that paragraph is contradictory with previous statements that were made and asked her if this was correct. Busby explained that we have been reducing our usage costs by decreasing our Konica usage costs. ***The last sentence will be changed to read, "We have been paying the usage fees for Konica while we are phasing out the older machines. We locked in for five years on the pricing," explained Busby.***

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exemptions: E. Nadeau

*Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000: Dell Marketing and RINET removed by L. Majewski

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

CBS Therapy/Contracted Services/Special Education/Local

Dell marketing/Software/Technology-WHS/Local-TIF – removed by L. Majewski

RINET/Internet Upgrade/Technology-WHS/Local-TIF – removed by L. Majewski

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests: NONE

FBLA National Conference, Orlando, FL/WHS/Self Funded

Harvard University, Cambridge MA/Prof. Development Conference/Gov. Pothier/TITLE I, ARRA Grant

National Interscholastic Athletic Admin. Assoc. Leadership Training, Brewster, MA/Bernon/ Title II Grant

Skills USA National Competition, Kansas City, MO/WACTC/Perkins Grant/Student Fundraising

4. Home Schooling Requests

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

2) Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:

Dell Marketing for Software Technology for WHS (\$4,210.69 Local TIF): Mrs. Majewski asked if we had another company providing this software for the VLA previously. Mrs. Busby said she believes it's the same company and this purchase is just for additional licenses. "Are we adding any more seats?" asked Majewski. Busby said that it depends on the kind of funding we get for next year.

RINET for internet upgrade at the WHS (\$2,684 Local TIF): Mrs. Majewski asked if this is the first time we are using it RINET for the security system. Mrs. Busby wasn't sure and would have to talk to Mr. Gallishaw about that.

Motion to approve both exemptions: E. Nadeau

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Ms. Phongsavanh reported that with a bullying death being back in the news due to the defendants having to go to court, there are workshops being held surrounding this issue. She doesn't want a situation like this to happen in Woonsocket. This incident could have been prevented. A workshop is being held at the St. James Baptist Church on May 17th and another one is being held here at the WMS. She encouraged parents to attend and get educated about this issue. The next Health and Wellness Committee Meeting will be held at the WMS at 6:30 p.m. Mrs. Majewski announced that the next SELAC meeting will be held on June 2nd at 6:30 p.m. at Pothier School. The Curriculum Committee is meeting weekly to update policies on PBGRs in light of changes that were made. She is going to ask that they table Item #2 under New Business tonight because they are still working on that.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Budget Update – S. Busby

Mrs. Busby reported that 72% of our fiscal year budget for 2010-2011 has been spent. She handed out a document to the WSC from the auditor on our budget about where we stand right now. "They think we will have a small surplus. I think we will break even. The auditor met with the Mayor and the City Finance Director yesterday. Once I get the official report I have to sign off on, I will provide it to the public," said Busby. The audience applauded. Dr. Gerardi said that as recently as last week, the City was saying that the WED had a deficit and now we have the findings. "We have stayed within our budget and the auditor has identified that that is the truth," said Gerardi. Mrs. Majewski and Mrs. Forcier thanked Mrs. Busby for all her hard work. Forcier thanked all the staff for their sacrifices this year. Mr. Dubois thanked everyone at McFee and the schools and Mrs. Busby for towing the line. "In today's Woonsocket Call, there was front page article on Lincoln and how 80% of their budget is going towards their education budget. We have 12% of the city's budget allocated to us in Woonsocket," said Dubois. "I'm not surprised in Mrs. Busby. I have always had faith in her. Congratulations on the good work!" said Mrs. Nadeau. Nadeau said she attended a meeting at RIDE and found out that Woonsocket is probably the most efficient school district in the state. "We do the most with the monies we have. Right now we are in pretty good shape unless the state cuts us again. Thank you again, Stacey," she said.

2. Discussion of Secondary Grading Policy- WMS/WHS – L. Majewski

Mrs. Majewski asked that this item be tabled because they are still gathering data.

Motion to Table: L. Majewski	2nd: A. Forcier
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes	TABLED

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Superintendent Vacancy– E. Nadeau, L. Majewski

Mrs. Majewski reported that in the superintendent search three or four years ago, they had about six months to find a new superintendent. Now they have 60 days notice from Dr. Gerardi and they are all very sad to see him go. They don't have six months this time to hire another superintendent. She suggested getting together a small committee to hire an interim and asked permission to do that process. Last time this was done, they spent about \$4,000 and it was a very good search. Mrs. Nadeau noted that the first step is to provide the system with an interim superintendent; and because of the system that she and Mrs. Majewski set up during the last search, everything is in place to get someone in place for the new school year. "We did it before. We will do it again," she said. "We do have a Deputy Superintendent who is qualified to be a superintendent," noted Mrs. Forcier. She asked how they would feel about having him be the interim superintendent because they have the instructional leaders to help handle the curriculum part. She suggested he be put in as interim until a new superintendent is in place and noted that most of the current WSC members aren't running for re-election again in November. Mrs. Majewski said they would ask the RI School Committee Association to help with finding candidates. "If the state cuts us anymore money, we will not have a balanced budget and there's a good chance we would have to file a Caruolo Action. It would be good to have a seasoned person in place that has been through this before. We will consider all candidates and aren't ruling out anyone," stressed Majewski. She encouraged anyone who is qualified to apply. "Regarding the point about a new school committee coming in, many people have approached us about completing this task before a new committee is put in place. I don't feel it's fair to put a new school committee through that task. The current committee has the

background and experience. Last time it was done with a committee of twenty people. It's totally unfair to leave that task to totally inexperienced people," said Nadeau. Mrs. Forcier asked what they meant by a "seasoned" person for interim superintendent. Mrs. Majewski said that they will certainly consider all candidates with a superintendent's certificate. "Dr. Gerardi was an assistant superintendent before he came here and he has been through many trials in his tenure here. I feel that someone who knows the district would be better than someone coming in not knowing what has gone on here," said Forcier, adding that she doesn't feel we should rush to hire someone before the school year starts. "What the deputy superintendent does is offer us stability and we need that right now. The administrative team that Dr. Gerardi has built is excellent," said Ms. Phongsavanh. Mr. Dubois noted that they aren't going to rush into anything. Last time they had a twenty-person committee to do the search and it's not going to be just the recommendation of Mrs. Majewski and Mrs. Nadeau. Mrs. Forcier requested that members of the City Council and RIDE be on the search committee. "Last time, the City Council person attended one meeting and dropped out," said Nadeau. Forcier maintained that there are new people on the City Council now and it doesn't have to be the same person. Mrs. Majewski explained that RIDE was involved in the process last time. In the meeting she attended recently with RIDE, Nadeau reported that they were concerned that Dr. Gerardi is leaving. "They didn't mention being on the search committee, however. They asked that we get someone who is aware of the dire circumstances that the system is in--someone that has the experience to handle all of these things. Dr. Gerardi had a trial by fire and was able to handle it. Not everyone can do that. The last time, RIDE got to meet the candidates so they aren't concerned. If it's not broken, don't try to fix it!" said Nadeau. "If we search for an interim superintendent, is that an extra cost?" asked Forcier. Mrs. Nadeau said that it wouldn't cost us anything. RISCA has a list of people and we will also post it in-house. Mrs. Majewski noted that last time, we didn't have a deputy superintendent and we needed a business manager and a superintendent. She asked if they needed to vote to begin work on this subcommittee. Mr. Dubois said that they didn't because Nadeau and Majewski are assigned to that committee. Dr. Gerardi asked if the interim person would be allowed to apply for the permanent position. "Yes, they can apply. It gives us a chance to see what they're about and for them to see what we're about," said Nadeau.

CONFERENCES

Discussion of Family Planning: A. Forcier, V. Phongsavanh

Ms. Phongsavanh said that the Health and Wellness Committee has been meeting since October. She reported on some of the statistics regarding teen pregnancy and STD's in Woonsocket, saying that it's a community issue, not just a health and wellness issue. "We need to take off our blindfolds. We have brought some advocates for family planning here tonight to speak to everyone about the effort to allow these services to be provided through the Thundermist Health Hut at the high school with parental consent," said Phongsavanh.

Chuck Jones, Thundermist Community Health Center Director: He read excerpts of a letter from Patricia Flanagan, President of RI American Academy of Pediatrics, in support of this effort.

Dr. Peter Simon, Medical Director for the RI Dept. of Health: He provided data and background on what the Health Department is planning as far as support of this effort and referred to three documents that were provided to the school committee.

Leanne Barrette, Policy Analyst, Kids Count: She testified about the importance of this issue. They produce the Kids Count report every year and noted that the teen birth rate in Woonsocket is second in the state behind Central Falls. She read a letter documenting the problems faced by teen parents and other statistics.

Deb Smith, YWCA Coordinator for Parenting in Progress Program: This program has been in operation for the past 24 years and over 1600 young women have passed through it. She spoke about the common problems that they face, both short-term and long-term.

Elaine Card, Retired WHS Dean of Students: She noted that she has come before the school committee before on this issue and reminded them about how difficult it is for the teens they work with to be both a student and a parent. "We have the second-highest incidence of live births in the state. It doesn't include the incidence of miscarriages and terminations or students who have had pregnancy scares. We also have a high incidence of STDs in our students. Most of our teens are or will become sexual and are ill-prepared to handle it. We need on-site services that are accessible where the kids feel safe. Many of these teens believe that if they had been able to visit the school's clinic, they might have been able to delay sexual activity or take advantage of protecting themselves."

Bethany Baker, Nurse Practitioner at the MET School: She staffs the school-based health center there. It has been there since 2005 and has been prescribing contraception since it began with parental permission. "The consent form is sent out every summer for every school year. It's a collaborative effort between the Providence Community Health Centers and The MET." It hasn't wiped out teen pregnancies at the MET, but she assured everyone that there are much fewer. They have a walk-in policy and they don't need an appointment to come. She thinks we have a

great opportunity here to provide these services and educate a lot of kids who need it. She encouraged the WSC to support this idea.

Lisa Carcifero, Executive Director of Woonsocket Prevention Coalition: Reported that the Prevention Coalition realizes that substances can impair teens' judgment regarding sexual behavior. "They are more likely not to use contraception when having sex. The statistics support the argument for these services at the Health Hut."

Margot Morriseau, Director of Community Building, Neighborworks: They provide afterschool programming in the Constitution Hill neighborhood and run a class in healthy lifestyles because there is a need. "The parents have to sign off on their participation. Of all the kids that have participated in this program, none of them have gotten pregnant." They are very happy to see this discussion happening.

Ashley Cordeau, Family Resources Community Action: She provides services to teen moms who have dropped out of school to get their GED and develop job skills. The majority of them receive government assistance. She discussed some of the problems they face.

Dr. Melkin, Pediatrician, Thundermist Community Health Center: She gave more statistics on teenage mothers. Spoke about the low number of teens referred to Thundermist Health Center who actually follow up. "We need to get to them where they are because they have all kinds of reasons not to go somewhere else outside of the school—work, babysitting, transportation, etc. They are ten times more likely to go to the in-school clinic than a community health center. Currently 25% of school-based health centers are providing family planning services."

Mrs. Forcier thanked everyone for coming out and said she will be supporting family planning in our schools with parental permission. She will put it on the next agenda for a vote. Mrs. Majewski thanked everyone for coming and giving their input. She wondered what they are doing as far as working with teenage boys and the implications for them when they parent a child at 14, 15, or 16. She also asked about a state grant that Dr. Simons had mentioned. She was told that it's a federal initiative that was authorized through the Health Information Act. They are applying for it in September and an abstract was provided for the WSC. Mrs. Majewski wondered about research on those contraceptives that don't protect against STDs and HIV and whether there's an increase if teens use methods that don't protect against that. Bethany Baker from The MET School told Majewski that students are always reminded that the other methods don't protect against STDs and HIV and will recommend that they use condoms as well. Leanne Barrette told Majewski that as far as services for teen boys go, young women don't always claim them on the birth certificates. "In general, they are more likely to drop out, enter into the judicial system, and have a low employment rate. The babies born to teen mothers are usually by older men. School-based clinics are probably more effective to reach them because they are much less likely to go otherwise," said Barrette. Ashley Cordeau reported that she does home visits and it's few and far between where there is an intact family unit with a mom, dad and baby. Her grant doesn't cover funding for a teen dad program. Ms. Baker said that some boys wanted to father kids because they want someone to carry on their name if they die sooner than expected as a result of their lifestyle. Dr. Melkin reported that she sees very few teen dads at the clinic. Mr. Dubois thanked everyone for coming and sitting through a boring school committee meeting because they were last on the agenda. He knows once this is approved, there will be people going around thinking we will be walking around with platters of condoms at school. "That will not be the case. I will support this when it comes before us for a vote," he said.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Gerardi

Dr. Gerardi is pleased that Stacey has been working with the state and they have found that we are operating within our budget and that we have been good stewards of our funds. We are still operating with a balanced budget with only 7 weeks left in this fiscal year. He is concerned, however, that the state will change the pension contributions for FY12, which would cause our next year's budget to be out of balance.

**Motion to receive and place on file: L. Majewski/V. Phongsavanh/E. Nadeau
2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)**

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:

M. Dubois: Shared with the committee that they do have to advertise their school committee agendas in the neighborhood newspaper every two weeks. A bill was heard last week and passed by the Attorney General that The Valley Breeze will now be classified as a newspaper we can advertise in. "It's something worth exploring to see if we can save money."

L. Majewski: Thanked everyone for coming and thanked Stacey Busby for all her hard work and for doing a great job. Thanked Dr. Gerardi for his work and said they are very pleased with the job he has done. "During his first

superintendency he has handled all his tasks very well.” She noted that there are many events coming up and they can’t attend them all even though they wish they could. Thanked everyone for their invites.

A. Forcier: Pass.

E. Nadeau: Pass.

V. Phongsavanh: Thanked everyone from the Health and Wellness Committee for coming to support them tonight. Congratulated Citizens and Bernon for improving their NECAP scores enough to be removed from “Needs to Improve” status.

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.: L. Majewski

2nd: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary