

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, January 25, 2012
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet
60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895

Call to Order by Anita McGuire-Forcier
Moment of Silence
Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:	Anita McGuire-Forcier, Chairwoman	Present
	Vimala Phongsavanh, Vice Chairwoman	Not Present
	John Donlon	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Christopher Roberts	Present

Mrs. McGuire-Forcier said that Vimala Phongsavanh could not be here tonight because of a medical issue.

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

George Lacouture, 180 Crossing Drive, Cumberland: Here to talk about Title II professional development in schools and equity. In the 90's, as a new mathematics department head at Woonsocket High School, he & the staff wanted to see how to implement the use of graphic calculators. With the assistance from the grants department at the administration building, they applied for grants to buy TI graphic calculators & have professional development for the math & science staff. This was Mr. Lacouture's first experience with Title II professional development. In 2000, as a new director of grants & assessment, the responsibility rested in the office to implement the professional development of Title II. At that time, Title II was only for math & science. Today, Title II has changed professional development & core curriculum areas beyond math & science. Two and ½ years ago, the deputy superintendent & the administrators developed a system wide focus on where the district needed to go. In the federal audit, we were told we had to have accountability for the staff being paid through grants. These staff members would sign an affidavit twice a year that they knew they were being paid with federal funds and fill out a calendar on a monthly basis what they were doing to get paid through these federal funds. Mr. Lacouture's concern is that there is a violation of Title II paid staff being used to perform other duties and this could be placing ½ million dollars in federal funding in jeopardy. In conclusion, the majority of the school committee is shortchanging the staff, parents, and students of Leo Savoie School. We need to hire a principal for that school.

Linda Barrette, Citizens' teacher & Cathy George, assistant: Their students would like to do a small presentation for the school committee tonight. Ryan Alvarez said he was a student in their class for three years & will attend the middle school next year. Rimel Pena said he will be in a play called Bully Magnet in May. The whole class read a poem titled "If Peace Is".

Janet Lacroix, 380 Second Avenue: Has one child in Coleman School & one child in 5th Ave. School. These schools are being run in chaos every day. The principal is argumentative. He has the children at Coleman doing the pledge in Spanish but they are not allowed to celebrate Christmas or Halloween because of religious beliefs. She has been asking about her daughter's 504 since last year. She went to

the superintendent's office to discuss the problems but Dr. Donoyan was too busy to meet with her. She left the information with Dottie. The principal called her an hour after she went to the superintendent's office. She would like to meet with the superintendent or any member of the school committee.

Netvilai Vixaisak, 312 Robinson Street: Would like to see all day kindergarten return. Students are not being prepared for 1st grade with ½ day kindergarten. They are not learning enough. Bring back all day kindergarten for the kids.

Ron Celio, Principal of Coleman & 5th Ave. School: Would like to address the pledge being said in other languages. Fairmount is a multicultural community.

Brenda Galvin, 73 Carey Court: They need a permanent principal at Savoie. She picked up her daughter from school today & there was one student in the office for fighting. Her daughter then told her that three other classmates were suspended for fighting. It is chaos at that school right now.

Lorraine Corey, Huntington Avenue: In 2006 when Dr. D'Acchioli resigned, Dr. Macera the assistant superintendent accepted the position to be the superintendent with a raise but without an assistant. She left in 2008 & Dr. Gerardi was hired as superintendent. The first year he worked without an assistant. In 2010-2011, we hired Mr. Garceau as an assistant superintendent for \$115,000. Now Dr. Donoyan is requesting a new assistant superintendent be hired. It was tabled at the last school committee meeting. It is back on tonight's agenda to be appointed. There are not enough books in the classrooms, we are in a budget deficit, the teachers took concessions & they haven't gotten a pay raise in four years. How can you justify hiring an assistant superintendent? Please withdraw this request.

Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street: In the past, under new business the previous chair would read the agenda item which is being discussed. It was very confusing at the last meeting to follow which item was being discussed.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Giovanna Donoyan, Superintendent

Dr. Bedard, WHS principal, has informed us that WHS graduate Emily Luther sang on the Ellen show today. Congratulations Emily. Special & honorable recognition goes to ROTC instructor Sargeant Dan Pinkney's novel being published. It is titled "Journey to the Cat Skills". Special recognition goes out to two WHS teachers, Karen Barbosa & Sophie McGarrity, for being selected to participate in RI Save the Bay Project Narragansett Teacher Academy. This opportunity will provide teachers with professional development.

Motion to receive and place on file: C. Roberts 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: January 5, 2012 Special Meeting OPEN; January 11, 2012 OPEN

Motion to approve: C. Roberts 2nd: J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Personnel Actions

Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments

2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

None

3. Field Trip/Conference Requests

LRP National Institute, San Antonio, TX/Sp. Ed/I.D.E.A. Grant

4. Home Schooling Requests

None

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve consent agenda: C. Roberts 2nd J. Donlon

***Discussion:** E. Nadeau is questioning the yearbook advisor position at WHS. She was under the impression that we already eliminated that position. Dr. Donoyan said we did but we still need a treasurer. It is a stipend position which will be after school not during school hours. This is necessary. Mrs. Nadeau questioned how much 5.25% of bachelor's degree maximum would pay. Jeff Partington, union president, said it would be \$3,500. Dr. Donoyan said this would be prorated from now until the end of the school year.*

Roll call vote: 4 yes – 1 absent (VP) APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. Donlon attended a PAC meeting with Mrs. Nadeau last week. One thing that was mentioned was Savoie's traffic problems. We need a principal there to take back control. In the past only busses were allowed to drive in the yard. Mrs. Nadeau said that parents from Savoie want stability.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: Mrs. Forcier and Mr. Roberts attended a meeting Monday about the audit recommendations. Chris Roberts said Braver PC provided a 15 page report. They will meet again in two weeks.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. FY2012 Year to Date Budget Review – S. Busby, G. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan said that Stacey Busby is out ill and could not attend tonight's meeting. She said that Dina Dutremble is doing a phenomenal job. Mrs. Forcier said that she understands we have no control over the information we are given. When we look at these numbers it looks like we are over budget. We can't get the proper information. Mrs. Forcier is requesting this gets put back on the agenda. Chris Roberts said on page 1 there is no budgeted amount for building monitors or clerical subs. John Donlon said the city should be paying for sewer use charges because they own the buildings. Anita Forcier said that many people have brought this up because we are also paying for water. Mrs. Nadeau said this is an ongoing issue. Dr. Donoyan said it is a usage fee. Mrs. Nadeau said that the bottom line is when we vacate a building the city gets the income. Chris Roberts said it is enterprise funds.

2. Appointment of Elementary Principal and Reassignment of School Administrators – G. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan would like to reassign Donna Coderre to Savoie. She has done a tremendous job at Pothier. She begs that a principal be appointed to Pothier and transfer Donna Coderre to Savoie. Mr. Donlon said we need to appoint a principal to Pothier and let Mrs. Coderre go to Savoie because we are out of compliance. Mrs. Nadeau will support this also. She voted last meeting against using federal funds. Pothier is early ed./special ed. Does this recommended person have a background with this and will this person be able to communicate with the parents like Mr. Diaz can at Citizens'? Dr. Donoyan said yes. This individual has started with early ed./special needs. He does not speak Spanish but he does speak Italian. He would make a good team with Mr. Diaz. Mrs. Forcier agreed with Mr. Donlon and Mrs. Nadeau but it was the superintendent's choice. At any time she wants to put in a retired principal. Mrs. Forcier will not appoint or hire anyone. Mrs. Coderre can go to any school. This person to be hired seems wonderful.

Motion to approve: E. Nadeau 2nd: J. Donlon

Roll Call: AF-No, EN-Yes, JD-Yes, CR-No VP-Absent 2-yes, 2-no Motion Dies

3. Appointment of Deputy Superintendent/Ex. Director of Teaching & Learning – G. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan recommends Dr. McGee to be appointed. She said the position is more than being someone's assistance. There are special programs, grants, special ed., parent phone calls, etc. This will benefit the welfare of the children if we restore this position.

Motion to approve: J. Donlon 2nd: C. Roberts

Mr. Donlon agrees with Dr. Donoyan. There is money in the budget for a deputy superintendent and Dr. McGee is the right person for the job with no increase in salary for this budgeted year. Mrs. Nadeau questioned if Dr. McGee goes to this position what will happen to his position at WMS. Dr. Donoyan said that both assistant principals will be promoted to co-chair principals. The positions of the assistant principals will remain open. There are 300 teacher evaluations to be maintained. The instructional leaders could help with this. Mr. Roberts said he will not support this tonight because there are too many unanswered questions. He is willing to table this. Mrs. Forcier supports to table this and 2nd the motion to table this.

Motion to table this for the next two meetings: C. Roberts 2nd: A. Forcier

Roll Call: AF-Yes, EN-Yes, JD-No, CR-Yes VP-Absent 3-yes/1 –no Motion Approved

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of Education Programs – A. McGuire Forcier/V. Phongsavanh

Mrs. Forcier would like to table this to the next meeting because Vimala Phongsavanh could not be here tonight.

Motion to table this for next meeting: A. Forcier 2nd: C. Roberts

Roll Call: All Yes-4, VP/Absent Motion Approved

2. Resolution Relative to Bus Monitors – C. Roberts/E. Nadeau

Mr. Roberts read the Resolution Relative to Bus Monitors:

Whereas, the State of Rhode Island currently requires bus monitors through an unfunded mandate as part of Rhode Island General Law 16-21-1; and

Whereas, providing this service represents a significant expenditure for the Woonsocket Education Department (WED); and

Whereas, the State of Rhode Island is the only State in the country with this law; and

Whereas, research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that school children are eight times safer riding in a school bus than with their own parent or guardian to school;

It is hereby resolved by the School Committee of the City of Woonsocket as follows:

Section 1: The Woonsocket School Committee (WSC) requests that the Rhode Island General Assembly introduce and pass legislation “authorizing the School Committees of the Cities and Towns to utilize bus monitors at their discretion.”

Section 2: The WSC requests of our local elected officials their introduction/support of this type of legislation.

Section 3: The WSC, realizing the strength of numbers, supports other School Committees throughout the State making the same request of our legislature, including but not limited to a resolution recently passed by The Chariho School Committee.

Section 4: The WSC instructs the Superintendent to ensure that the upcoming bid package to provide bus transportation for the WED, and any resulting contract, specifically spells out the costs associated with maintaining bus monitors and contain language which allows the WSC to, at its discretion, eliminate/modify the use of bus monitors subject to a change in State law, if enacted, and that the WED be entitled to savings associated with the elimination or modification of the use of bus monitors.

Section 5: A copy of this resolution is to be sent by the Superintendent to the Mayor of Woonsocket, the Woonsocket City Council, the local legislative delegation, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, and a representative of each School Committee in the State.

Section 6: This resolution shall take effect upon passage.

Mrs. Nadeau said that her name was put on this resolution but it should have been on the next resolution. Her personal feeling is they should have bus monitors K-5. We have not had any fatalities because this is in place. She does not want to take that risk. Mr. Donlon agrees that K-5 needs bus monitors but he has seen special ed. students picked up in wheel chairs and then the monitor checks the bus tires. Mrs. Forcier said they bus special ed. students with general ed. students. They save money by doing this.

Roll Call: 4 – Yes, VP/Absent

3. Resolution Relative to Compulsory Attendance – C. Roberts

For the record, Chris Roberts wants it known that Eleanor Nadeau co-sponsored this resolution.

Roll Call: 4 – Yes VP/Absent Motion Approved

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:

V. Phongsavanh: Absent

C. Roberts: Passed

J. Donlon: Wants to commend Ms. Barrette's class for representing their school. Mr. Lacouture was interesting this evening.

A. McGuire-Forcier: Attended the community forum last night. She also went to Central Falls to speak about uniforms. They were taking advice from two charter schools. They need to start with state reps and get approval. She was invited to reading week at Citizens'. Mrs. Dube's class was well behaved and respectful. She would like to keep all children in school until they graduate.

E. Nadeau: Thanked Mrs. Warnick's class. She read to them at Citizens' for reading week. It was suggested to put a retired interim principal tonight. Would this be at Pothier? Dr. Donoyan said the instructional leaders were at Savoie less than two weeks total. It was ½ time and less than 10 days. She may have to get a retired principal for now. A retired principal will get \$300 a day with no benefits. We tabled the deputy superintendent for four weeks and we tabled the principals for the budget. Top priority is to get a principal.

Motion to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.: E. Nadeau

2nd: J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Gatta, WSC Recording Secretary Sub

