

**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2012
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**

**WOONSOCKET MIDDLE SCHOOL
HAMLET BUILDING - 60 FLORENCE DRIVE
WOONSOCKET, RI 02895**

**Call to Order
Moment of Silence
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call**

Chairwoman McGuire Forcier:	Present
Vice Chair Phongsavanh	Present
Mr. Donlon	Present
Ms. Nadeau	Present
Mr. Roberts	Present

**COMMITTEE WILL SEEK TO CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE CLOSED SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH
RI LAW: 42-46-5-(a)(1) Job Performance**

Motion to Convene into Executive Closed Session for discussion and possible vote: No Motion.

Attorney Ackerman will handle the matter in Open Session.

**Mr. Ackerman read the letter into the record to the Committee sent to Ms. Stacey Busby by the
Superintendent on March 9, 2012.**

Dear Ms. Busby:

My letter dated January 27, 2012, I informed you that you will be placed on Administrative leave with pay pending an investigation of charges of misfeasors and malfeasants in your position. Be advised of the following:

1. You are suspended without pay.
2. I will be recommending the termination of your employment as Director of Administration and Finance.

The duties and responsibilities of your office include advising the Superintendent on the status of the school budget, preparing annual budgets, submitting a monthly statement to the School Committee detailing the status of each appropriation, including budget forecasts, interpreting the financial position of the school system to the community at large. You have failed to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of your office as follows:

1. You have misrepresented the fiscal affairs of the Woonsocket Education Department to the substantial detriment of the Woonsocket School System and the people it serves. Specifically,
 - a.) At the conclusion FY2011, you assured the School Committee that the year would end with a surplus of approximately \$100,000 dollars. In fact, FY2011 ended with a deficit of approximately 2.7 million dollars. Your failure to recognize this discrepancy is unacceptable.

- b.) You were a named defendant in the legal action brought by the City of Woonsocket and were aware of an order issued by the Rhode Island Superior Court mandating that you and the School Committee, "Adopt and adhere to a balanced school budget for FY2011. Prepare a correction plan that that limits spending to the amounts actually appropriated for FY2011 and otherwise complies with all statutory requirements."

The amended budgets that were submitted subsequent to the issuance of said order were based upon your figures and your forecasts. Rather than limiting spending to the amounts actually appropriated as depicted in your amended budgets, the education department actually spent substantially more money than was appropriated.

- c.) Throughout the first half of FY2012, you assured the Superintendent and School Committee that the FY2012 budget was balanced. That is, spending for the fiscal year would be limited to the amounts actually appropriated. You were incorrect again. The projected deficit for FY2012 is 7.3 million dollars. Your failure to recognize this gross disparity between expenditures and revenues is obviously unacceptable.
2. Upon discovering that you misinterpreted the financial position of the school system as described above, City and education department officials could no longer rely on your projections and forecasts. The City of Woonsocket was forced to pay for an independent review of the books and records of the education department. It has taken many weeks to realize that, rather than having sufficient revenues to cover expenses for the balance of FY2012, the Woonsocket Education Department will likely run out of money in approximately one month, or three months before the expiration of the current fiscal year. As a result, there is little, if any, latitude to cut expenses or seek increases in revenue to avoid a collapse of the school system or bankruptcy for the City.
 3. One of the options considered by the School Committee to cut the budget was to reduce all-day kindergarten to partial day kindergarten. The School Committee did not want to deny this service but reluctantly voted to do so based on your advice that doing so would save money in FY2011. Cutting all-day kindergarten did not save money. Your advice was incorrect. Money was not saved. This mistake caused a substantial deficit in FY2011.
 4. The duties and responsibilities of your office also require you to prepare financial reports as required by local and state agencies. Assume responsibilities for an appropriate accounting procedure to record in detail the budget of the education department and to compile necessary statistical data for the preparation of the fiscal budget. While an ongoing review of the financial books and records of the education department may reveal additional failures, you have failed to perform those duties and responsibilities in the following respects:
 - a.) You failed to file IRS Form 941 for September 2011, as required by law.
 - b.) The Rhode Island Form TX17 filed for September 30, 2011, was inaccurate and incomplete. The wrong amount was paid to the state resulting in penalties to WED.
 - c.) Coding errors were entered in the UCOA (Uniform Chart of Accounts) for FY2010-11 and 2012, and the recorded UCOA expenditures for FY2010 were overstated by at least 4 million dollars.
 - d.) You failed to provide timely or correct information to the City and Finance Director.
 - e.) You failed to provide timely information requested by the Rhode Island Department of Education and by the Rhode Island Director of Revenue.
 - f.) The financial books of the Woonsocket Education Department reflect numerous accounting and budgeting errors.

5. Your contract with the Robert Haeff Agency required a payment to them of \$12,000 dollars for their services in your finding employment with the Woonsocket Education Department. The WED was unwilling to pay this fee. You said you would pay the \$12,000 dollar fee to the agency but asked WED to advance the payment on your behalf, which it did, and you agreed to arrange for repayment of said amount via deductions of \$1,000 dollars from your paycheck of each pay period until the education department was fully reimbursed. You never arranged for the repayment and to this date you remain indebted to the department for the full amount of \$12,000 dollars.

Each of the separate items described above is sufficient cause to terminate your employment collectively they amply demonstrate your failure and inability to perform the duties of your office. My recommendation that your employment be terminated will be considered by the Woonsocket School Committee on March 28, 2012, at 6:00pm, at the Woonsocket Middle School Hamlet Building, 60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI. The School Committee may seek to convene this matter in Executive Session. If you wish to have the matter considered in open session, please contact me or my secretary on or before March 23, 2012.

Prior to taking final action dismissing you from employment as Director of Administration and Finance, be advised that you have the right to a prompt hearing, at your election, and the right to be represented by counsel at the hearing. Should you request a hearing, please do so prior to March 23, 2012. Prompt notification stating the time and place of the hearing will be given, which will allow sufficient opportunity for you to prepare without undue delay.

Very truly your,

Giovanna M. Donoyan, Ph.D.

Superintendent

Mr. Ackerman stated that he has informed the Committee that Ms. Busby has retained Council. He received a letter today from council that neither he nor Ms. Busby would be at the meeting. They were not asking for a formal hearing. Mr. Ackerman stated that he wanted to ask the Superintendent a couple of questions.

Mr. Ackerman asked Dr. Donoyan, "If there was anything in the letter dated March 9, 2012, which will become part of the record which is inaccurate today or would lead her to change her recommendation of termination of employment."

Dr. Donoyan answered, "No Sir."

Mr. Ackerman said that he knows that Dr. Donoyan was not present during FY 2011. He said that he gathers that Dr. Donoyan has spoken to the Finance people including Ms. Dutremble and has reviewed the books that are under her purview and that you have determined that the omissions to file forms as alleged is accurate.

Dr. Donoyan stated that, "This is correct."

Mr. Ackerman asked Dr. Donoyan, "With respect to representation regarding fiscal affairs of the School Committee's budget for FY2011, which is the year extended from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011; you came on sometime in September 2011." Correct?

Dr. Donoyan responded, "Correct, September 1, 2011."

Mr. Ackerman asked Dr. Donoyan if she had occasion to ask Ms. Busby what was the status of the fiscal year that ended prior to June 30, 2011. Did it appear that the year would be ended with a surplus budget or exactly in balance. Did you ask the question and did you get a response.

Dr. Donoyan responded that she did ask the question and she was advised that on numerous occasions that the School Department would have a \$68,000 surplus at the year end.

Mr. Ackerman asked if there was another occasion or statement when you were pleasantly surprised by another prediction or statement that Ms. Busby made regarding the status of FY2011 Budget.

Dr. Donoyan stated that, "During a Director's meeting, Ms. Busby came into the conference room and the Directors were present and stated that there was a surplus in the range of \$400,000 at that time, and that she was so excited she said that I just love you." Dr. Donoyan said she remembers this.

Mr. Ackerman said to Dr. Donoyan, "In fact that this was a gross overstatement and that there was a substantial deficit." Correct?

Dr. Donoyan said "Yes."

Mr. Ackerman stated that the Education Department began to question the figures being presented or forecast when the City Auditors looked at the books that was Braver & Company. "Is this correct?"

Dr. Donoyan answered "Yes, correct"

Mr. Ackerman asked Dr. Donoyan, "That when Braver indicated that there would be a substantial deficit than a small surplus, did you or I, in your presence ask Ms. Busby what the story was for FY2012, January 2012, the fiscal year would have started on July 1, 2011, so we would have been into the seventh month of the fiscal year. Were you present when Ms. Busby was asked what the story with the 2012 budget?"

Dr. Donoyan answered, "In fact, it was a meeting between you, me and Ms. Busby, in my office, when both of us asked her the questions.

Mr. Ackerman asked. "What was the answer?"

Dr. Donoyan stated "That she was adamant that everything was ok."

Mr. Ackerman asked if she indicated that there might be a little imbalance in the substitute teacher account?

Dr. Donoyan said, "That she did, in reference to the fact that the substitute teaching account in the budget had been reduced to an unrealistic level. She did point out that the substitute level alone.

Mr. Ackerman asked other than that caveat, she assured you that at that moment, while it is impossible to predict how things will end up at the end of the year, at that moment, the budget was in balance. That is, monies that had been spent, and monies that were projected to be spent, at that point until the end of the fiscal year equaled revenues.

Dr. Donoyan state, "You are correct."

Mr. Ackerman asked in respect to the agency fee of \$12,000. You talked with people in the department about that arrangement. "Is that correct?"

Dr. Donoyan stated, "Yes, I have."

Mr. Ackerman said "You've been told by Ms. Dutremble, that in fact, that it was agreed to by Ms. Busby."

Dr. Donoyan said, "Yes."

Mr. Ackerman asked if Dr. Donoyan checked the books, and inquired and if she had determined that, in fact, the \$12,000 fee was advanced by WED on Ms. Busby's behalf.

Dr. Donoyan said, "Yes."

Mr. Ackerman said that it has not been reimbursed through payroll deduction or otherwise to this point?

Dr. Donoyan said, "Yes, that is correct."

Mr. Ackerman said that he has nothing further.

Ms. Forcier said that she will make the Motion to adopt the Superintendents recommendation of the termination of Ms. Busby.

Seconded by: C. Roberts

Discussion: None

ROLL CALL: ALL YES

Mr. Ackerman asked if this was effective immediately. Ms. Forcier said "Yes, immediately."

GOOD AND WELFARE – PUBLIC –

Lorraine Corey, Huntington Avenue, Woonsocket: It is not very often that we come with Kudos. I am here to do just that. Listed on tonight's agenda is a request to have State Police investigation. Congratulations. As the news about the deficit continues to spread, I have been listening to online media and broadcasts thought the state. The perception of Woonsocket is not good. Asking the State Police to investigate should show everyone that there is nothing to hide or fear. I'm sure our own Woonsocket Police would do a great job too. Would the people in the State believe the truth, if the results were, if there was no wrong doing. I can hear our WPD taking a lot of heat, and they don't deserve that. I think that Mr. Donlon can appreciate that. This investigation will help all to understand how we got here once and for all.

- a. It will cast a better perception of our City and our School Committee.
- b. The taxpayers of Woonsocket deserve an answer.

I will conclude by saying, congratulations for doing the right thing.

Donna Coderre, 137 Crawford Street, Principal, Gov. Pothier: Thank you for suffering through these hard times it is very stressful at work. Teachers, custodian and lunch ladies are all nervous about loosing their jobs. We are looking to make more cuts, when there is nothing left to cut. The lunch ladies are the lowest paid employees in the department and now you want to cut them too. So if we cut one, or all of them it effects what we do in our buildings because I don't think that there are any Principals with the new evaluation system, and dealing with the stress that we are all under to be in the lunchroom for 2 – 3 hrs because there is not enough staff, so before we cut this, please consider that you are putting more pressure to save a few dollars. We need revenue and we cannot create revenue so you are looking to cut the lowest paid employees that make a big difference in our day. Please look at the schedules. I serve 400 children under the age of eight years old. It takes us 10 minutes to just open the milk cartons. Please consider this when you are making more cuts. Think of the long term. Thank you.

Jeff Partington, President, WTG: Tonight there are many items on the agenda I would like to comment on.

1. Is the discussion of employee retirement medical plan? We support efforts painless ways to redesign the medical plan to save money for the City and we hope changes of this plan will be shared by all workers in the City. We are not supporting changes in the plans at this time because we have not seen the details. We support work to keep the health care affordable to the City and co-paying employees.

2. House Bill 7272, we do not support this bill, but continue to support Senate 2424 that moves back the notification date to May 15th and rehires by seniority. We do not support House 7272 as it includes language that puts notice of termination at June 1st. This will not allow for any appeals if there are any. May 15th would be tight but would allow for such appeals.

3. The agenda includes cutting one lunch monitor from every school to save money. Many decisions have been made in the interest of fiscal responsibility but not taking into account the effect of safety on the schools. It may make more sense to develop a formula of monitors to students to determine the needs for each school and perhaps the needs for the district. You may find that there is not enough for what we need. Thank you.

Thomas Lambert, President, Local 1137: I'm here to speak on behalf of the lunchroom aids. Who is going to cover the lunchrooms? Each lunchroom now has about 3-5 aids in each school. It can't be the custodians, this would be impossible. With the 10 job cuts that we took in the last four years, custodial staff as is would not be able to take on cleaning tables, wash floors, take care of emergencies, emptying trash, and doing their regular duties. There is also a safety factor with the children. Thank you.

Christine Rogers, Lunch Aide @ WHS: I go to other schools and I feel bad because I can't be convenient to them. Cutting our jobs would not be good. I have personal relationships with other lunch aides. I hope you don't cut our jobs, but this is your decision and there is nothing we can do. Thank you.

Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street, Woonsocket: I have two things to talk about. First is the lunch monitors. At the last school committee meeting, Ms. Forcier, you said you would have to close schools because you would not send children to schools with a teacher in front of a classroom. Well, I think putting 150-200 children in a lunch room with a monitor is a safety issue. You need to think about this. Secondly is the Police investigation. I think you need to think about this. You can't put this blame on two people. You can't blame the last Superintendent or Ms. Busby. As you said at the last School Committee meeting in 2008-09, you had 47 million coming from the State. After that it was reduced to 42 million. Well, in 2009-10 that is 5 million dollars difference, 2010-11, 5 million dollars difference, 2011-12, 5 million dollar difference. Now that is 15 million dollars. You have made cuts to Kindergarten, custodians and you have had union concessions that have made up some of these differences. There is your 10 million dollars. You cannot put the blame on two people. This blame does not come from us and I think this investigation may need to be done, but I think it needs to be done at the City because we robbed and were level funded for many years and robbed by the State because of funding cuts. Instead of looking at these two people, you need to look at the City and State. Thank you.

RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Donoyan

The WHS Percussion Ensembles performed at the 12th Annual Day of Percussion at the University of Rhode Island, and nine schools from Southern New England participated in the festival. The beginner ensemble received a rating of Excellent and the advanced ensemble received a rating of Superior.

At the **Future Business Leaders of America** Awards ceremony held last Monday, Woonsocket High School students won a total of 32 medals: 12 First Place, 11 Second Place, and 9 Third Place. Many of the students will compete in the national competitions in San Antonio in June. Good Luck to them.

Kailey Fugere, Senior at Woonsocket High School, has been selected by Gatorade to be the 2011-2012 R.I. Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Kailey is the first Woonsocket girls' basketball player to receive this prestigious award that recognizes athletic excellence, academic achievement, and exemplary character.

Katelin St. George, Junior at Woonsocket High School, scored 4's on all three of the NECAP tests. Great job!

The Woonsocket Career students are gearing up to build dugouts for the city's baseball fields. The project at Dunn Park is a collaboration between students at the Career Center and Northern Bernon Little League. The league gathered the supplies from local businesses and the students are pitching in. They started building the

dugouts on Wednesday, March 21st. They project should be completed by the end of April. Thank your for your community service.

Today, the school department received a wonderful donation of 40 cases of copier paper to be distributed to each school from the Woonsocket Lions Club. Thank you very much for your sincere generosity.

Thank you Madam Chairwoman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 29, 2012 OPEN; March 14, 2012 OPEN

Motion to Approve: C. Roberts Seconded: J. Donlon

ALL IN FAVOR: YES

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Personnel Actions
 Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments
2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000
 Keough Kirby Associates, Inc./Insurance Policy/WACTC/Perkins Grant
 NCS Pearson/Licenses/WHS/IDEA Grant
3. Field Trip/Conference Requests
 National Catholic Education Association Conference, Boston, MA/Mt. St. Charles, Catholic
 Regional/Title II

Add'l **UNIVERSITY OF RI, Kingston, RI/WMS/SMILE PROGRAM/SMILE GRANT

4. Home Schooling Requests

Motion to approve the entire consent Agenda: C. Roberts Seconded by: V. Phongsavanh

Discussion:

Mr. Donlon in regard to the grant for Mt. St. Charles and Catholic Regional to go to conference, why does it cost \$67.50 per person for Mt. St. Charles and Greater Woonsocket cost \$84.82. I don't understand the difference. I understand that this is grant money but they are going to the same conference.

Dr. Donoyan stated that the Grant's Coordinator looked at the schedule and according to Title II, Federal Grants, we can only pay for non-religious professional development. What she did was look at the grades of these teachers in addition to the schedule of workshops that they were attending. There were differences in the schedules so therefore; some got a pro-rated amount of \$67. and some \$80. Thank you.

FURTHER DISCUSSION: None

ROLL CALL: ALL YES.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

COMMUNICATIONS: NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Roberts: The Finance Committee met last night. We had a couple hour meeting with the Insurance broker from Keogh Kirby who gave us a summary of our current medical offerings of both current employees and retirees and who is working on a number of options, alternatives, and modification that the Finance Committee put forth to him. He will be coming back to us in the next week with hopefully additional information.

Ms. Forcier: I received a letter from City Council/City Clerk asking us to support Mr. Ward's resolution of Senate Bill, S2406 and House Bill H7895. We have done that at the last meeting. This will be heard on Wednesday. Mr. Ward will give us the time and this will save us over 3 million dollars. Once we know the time we will start announcing it on Monday at City Council and on the Radio. We will make sure that Jeff Partington and the Union Rep's get an e-mail on this. This way we can get as many people down to the State House to support this.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Parent Involvement Policy Revisions – 2nd Passage –L. Filomeno

Dr. Donoyan said that Linda Filomeno is at a conference in Washington, DC.. She asked Dr. Donoyan to request the approval of the Parent Involvement Policy for second passage. This policy is necessary to insure that our Title I mandates are fulfilled and that we receive our Federal allocations going forward.

Motion to Approve: V. Phongsavanh
ROLL CALL: ALL YES.

Seconded: E. Nadeau

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Vote of Change to Policy P.2-3.1 Contracts – 1st Passage – A. McGuire-Forcier, V. Phongsavanh

Ms. Forcier read into the record.

P2-3.1 Contracts.

"All contracts of employment entered into by the Woonsocket School Committee shall be in writing. No original contract of employment, amendment, extension or renewal thereof, shall be binding upon the Woonsocket School Committee unless first presented to the committee for its review and approval at a regularly scheduled meeting. The School Committee members will have a copy of the contract prior to the meeting in enough time to review it. [adopted 1/11/05]

The Woonsocket School Committee's attorney must review all contracts of employment, all of which shall have a signature line to prove his/her doing so. Notwithstanding any state laws to the contrary, the School Committee hereby declares all contracts be treated as public documents. (Amended 3/14/12)

Mr. Ackerman suggested to the Committee the following amendments.

Mr. Ackerman asked the Committee what was meant by in the line that suggested that the School Committee will have a copy prior to the meeting in enough time to review it. Please define in enough time. Do you want it to mean 48 hours, or 5 hours, or a week?

Ms. Forcier said that they get their items on Friday, but it doesn't always happen, so it would only give us five days before the meeting. Usually we get it Friday night before the meeting.

Mr. Ackerman asked Ms. Forcier if she wanted it to say that they would receive contracts not less than five days prior to the meeting at which it will be considered.

Ms. Forcier said that this would be fine.

Mr. Ackerman said ok.

Mr. Ackerman said that, "The WSC Attorney must review all contracts of employment." Please insert "for form, not for content." It is up to the Committee to decide the content, but the form. The content is up to the Committee.

Ms. Forcier said ok.

Mr. Ackerman then said that there should be a signature line and date.

Mr. Ackerman said you could have a signature line and not act on the matter until a later date.

Ms. Forcier said to add signature line and date.

Mr. Ackerman said yes, I would do so.

Mr. Ackerman also said that he is reluctant to say that this policy is ok if it violate State Law, which it does. I would suggest that I discussed last time, that instead of saying, "Notwithstanding any state laws to the contrary," which means we don't care what the state law says, which you should care, you should say; "Unless contrary to state law." Because state law may change, and contracts may be all public, not just portions of them. I feel more comfortable if the idea is to make contracts public documents. We don't know how the law may change. There is talk about changing it. Unless we said contrary to state law, this Committee declares all contracts to be public documents, you are in compliance.

Ms. Forcier said that she would be comfortable with these changes.

A. Forcier: I would like to make a motion to approve all the amendments that Mr. Ackerman added.
Seconded: V. Phongsavanh

Discussion:

Ms. Nadeau asked Mr. Ackerman to explain "form" not "content."

Mr. Ackerman said the form would be; does it appear to be illegal, does it appear to violate a law, does it appear to be a contract that was properly approved at a proper meeting. It would be the "form" at which it arrived to the Committee is appropriate. The content is the substance. The substance is what the council should not weigh in on. The terms and content of the contract is the weight of the Committee. You want to be sure someone has looked this over and it appears to be appropriate. It says what the Committee voted and there are no typographical mistakes, and it appears to follow all the laws. You don't have the lawyer writing the contract.

Ms. Nadeau asked, "What does the lawyer do if they don't write the contract?"

Mr. Ackerman explained that he does not put in the contract the terms, the money, vacation days, what the terms are, etc. When he sends a contract to the School Department, when requested, he will leave out these portions. He said that the Superintendent is to fill in these blanks. He does not know what the Committee wants to pay people. He does not know how many vacation day, sick days, life insurance, Blue Cross, etc., unless you want me to fill it in, which you don't, that is the prevue of the School Committee. You want the lawyer to sign the contract to say that it appears to be in the proper form, but I want it to be clear that the substance of the contract is not to be reviewed by the Attorney.

Ms. Forcier said she doesn't like that.

Mr. Ackerman said then you can delete that.

Ms. Forcier said she would like to delete this because they hire the Attorney to protect the School Committee

Mr. Ackerman said that he will protect the Committee. The form means he will protect you. Mr. Ackerman said "you will be protected." He will not let anything happen, Madam Chair.

Ms. Forcier stated that she is not 100% comfortable with this.

Ms. Nadeau said she understands what Mr. Ackerman is saying, but there are other things that have occurred. Form is not always standard; there should be in every contract certain clauses that are standardized. Correct?

Mr. Ackerman stated, "Right."

Ms. Nadeau said she understands the substance and I know what you are saying because we set the salary and benefits, etc. These are basically the standard benefits that everyone gets. How often do contracts change in their form? The basic foundation of the contract, how often does it change?

Mr. Ackerman said it changes whenever the School Committee changes it. When the School Committee enters into a three year contract, rather than a one year contract, and it has a rollover clause, then that's a change. That change is voted by the Committee, not by Council. That is a perfect example of how the content or the substance of the contract is up to the School Committee. Not to the Attorney. Sometimes those contracts do not get put before me and if they did, do you want me to correct you and say don't do it? Don't' do a three year contract.

Ms. Forcier said yes.

Mr. Ackerman said that the Committee is the one who decides on the contracts. It has to stop somewhere. If you agree to a three year contract, I will not tell you, "No don't do it." Unless it is illegal, I don't know if you want a one year contract, or a three year contract. That is the kind of substance that is in your discretion. You want Council to be certain that the contract has been looked over at some point and it appears in its form to be proper. I would have been at the Committee meeting; I would have heard you say that contrary to your policy of no rollovers, you want to have a rollover. If you didn't say that and the contract were inadvertently sent with a rollover, I would contact the Superintendent. Is this what you want? You want me to look at the contract to be sure it looks o.k. I am not deciding what it is going to say. You want me to sign it to say, the Lawyer has looked at the contract and on its face it is not improper or illegal and it won't get us into trouble?

Mr. Ackerman said he doesn't want to get hung up, but he would not create a contract for employee X and decide how much to pay employee X.

Ms. Forcier said if the contract said it was for \$50,000 and the contract said \$100,000, you would be responsible to bring it to their attention.

Mr. Ackerman said that he would hope that he would see the discrepancy and point it out.

Mr. Ackerman said that there would be six or seven sets of eyes looking at the contract and everyone should see the discrepancy, if it said \$50 and it should be \$150 then they should all see it before anyone signed it.

Ms. Forcier said that maybe there would be another way of saying it instead of form and not content. She asked if Mr. Ackerman would read out any changes of the content at a meeting. So any changes from an old contract to a new one, it would be highlighted and read it out to the Committee. This way there wouldn't be any errors.

Mr. Ackerman said that the problem would be what is defined as the "old contract." because they are not all the same.

Ms. Forcier said a new contract would not have changes, so you would still want to make sure there was not an error in salary.

Mr. Ackerman said, "Whatever the Committee feels comfortable with will be fine with him." I will be able to work with this.

Ms. Forcier said, "You will work with it." I don't want to put only form; I want the Attorney to be responsible to know if there are changes to bring it to the Committee's attention. Any legal loopholes, which you know are easy to do, where we read it one way and can be interpreted another way. I want this prevented. This is why we hire an Attorney.

Mr. Ackerman said "he agrees."

Ms. Forcier said if we and get rid of this.

Mr. Ackerman said fine.

FURTHER DISCUSSION:

Mr. Donlon said he see nothing on the policy that all contracts must be signed in blue pen. The blue should always be an original. That should be in the policy somewhere that all contracts need to be signed with blue pen. They recently changed to only blue because black is easy to copy in a machine.

Mr. Ackerman said fine with him.

Ms. Forcier said "blue pen" will be added to the policy. All contracts of employment shall be signed with blue pen.

Ms. Nadeau said part of what has to be included in a contract, in every contract, is the standard phrases. Other than the substances, every contract should basically say the same things about just cause, termination, all of the things that should be included in the guts of the contracts should remain the same. We had an incident where things were removed from a contract.

Ms. Forcier said she is aware of this. This would be the Attorney's job to make sure it is correct.

Ms. Nadeau this would be standard for each contract. Other than the things that were just mentioned, other than the salary, terms of the contract, so that there are no exclusions in the contract. That should be on the template. The form should be the form and never deviate from the form.

Mr. Ackerman said this is a good point. He has sent templates over and they don't always get followed, and he is not the final word. When new School Committees' get voted and elected, and new Superintendents get hired, procedures are not always followed. So you could present a contract to me

and I could approve it, and at the next School Committee meeting, for example, if a contract is presented to you and I am not at the meeting, how will I know what that contract said if it has been changed. This is a cooperative process. I think the Committee before it signs contracts, should read the contract. If I read the contract and sign it with blue ink, it will be ok and it will comply with the law. Then the School Committee will say, that is exactly what we voted, and he has it right, he will tell you that there are no loopholes, or if there are, he will point them out to you. You will then decide whether you will sign the contract or not.

Ms. Forcier said that he would be working with the Personnel Sub-committee on these contracts. Whatever is decided there will then be brought before the School Committee. If there were any changes then you would know what was discussed. Personnel, School Committee, and then you sign to make sure it is exactly what was decided. Do you understand what I am saying?

Mr. Ackerman said "yes."

Ms. Forcier asked if he was comfortable with this.

Mr. Ackerman said he is comfortable and that is the process that was followed with the last Superintendent and the last several Superintendents'. I was present with the Personnel Sub-Committee and we made notes and we got it right.

Ms. Forcier said that she would like it if there were any changes on a second contract that they are read out loud publicly at a meeting. So, if someone had 10 sick days and they raise it to 20, that part gets read. How does everyone feel about this? This way every one knows and there is no secrecy. It gets read out loud at a public meeting.

Ms. Forcier asked if everyone was ok with all the changes.

****Note from Good and Welfare: Ms. Forcier asked Mr. Ackerman to initial each page of the contracts along with the Chair and Superintendent. She will bring it up for the next passage. Dottie please make a note.**

Motion to approve by Ms. Forcier

Seconded by: V. Phongsavanh

ROLL CALL: All Yes.

2. Discussion/Vote of Change to Policy P3-6 –Progress Reports and Promotions – 1st Passage – V. Phongsavanh

Motion to table until next meeting: V. Phongsavanh

Seconded: C. Roberts

ROLL CALL: All Yes.

3. Discussion/Vote of Bus Contract – C. Roberts, P. Fontaine

Mr. Roberts said that Mr. Fontaine was an amendment to the agreement with Durham Bus. There were a number of changes and is available for everyone to look at. As of tonight, I am going to request that we table this. We are not in the position to extend our contract with Durham Bus. In fact, quite the opposite. We received on March 23, 2012, a demand for payment from Durham Bus. So the public is aware, the letter reads: Please be that if Durham does not receive payment for services in the amount of

\$506,599.19 by April 5, 2012, we will discontinue ALL transportation services in Woonsocket on Monday, April 9th, 2012. In addition to payment of past due amounts owed, Durham will require an acceptable guarantee in timely payments on a going forward basis. Durham is also requesting payment for services from March 1st, 2012 through April 5th, 2012 and the estimated transportation costs for that time period is \$213,452.18. As an effort to keep our employees informed, we will be providing communication to our staff, drivers and monitors on Monday, March 26th, 2012.

As of right now unless there is a windfall of cash, Durham is in a position to cancel transportation services for the City on April 5th.

Motion to table the addendum to their contract: C. Roberts
ROLL CALL: All Yes.

Seconded: J. Donlon/E. Nadeau

4. Discussion/Vote to Terminate Lunch Monitors – C. Roberts

Resolution Relative to Lunch Monitor Termination

Whereas, the school lunch fund has experienced a diminishing fund balance over recent years, and given that the intent of the fund is to support all day-to-day school food operations/costs, and

Whereas, the fund also must maintain an adequate balance to cover the replacement of necessary equipment so as to not require emergency, unplanned requests of the WED general fund, and

Whereas, review has shown that the use of lunch monitors appears to lack a systematic approach and costs the fund approximately \$185,000 annually,

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

Section 1: The Superintendent shall immediately issue notices of termination to one lunch monitor per school, with an effective date of termination of March 23, 2012.

Section 2: The Superintendent can reassign the remaining lunch monitors through buildings as necessary.

Section 3: This resolution will take effect upon passage.

Mr. Roberts said based on the discussion from School Committee and public comment from Good and Welfare he would like to table for further review on the budgetary balance of the lunch fund. There is only two ways that this can improve and that is reduction in expenses or increase in revenue. I would like to defer and have further conversations with the Superintendent as far as modifying the schedules.

Motion to table: Mr. Roberts:

Seconded: A. Forcier

ROLL CALL: AF/VP/CR – Yes.

JD/EN: No

5. Discussion/Vote to Request State Police Investigation – C. Roberts, A. McGuire-Forcier

Mr. Roberts said that this is a draft letter to RI State Police and read the letter into the record:

March 28, 2012

Colonel Steven G. O'Donnell

Superintendent
Rhode Island State Police
311 Danielson Pike
North Scituate, RI 02857

Colonel O'Donnell:

We write to you today as the Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police requesting you launch an immediate investigation into two very serious issues.

No doubt you have heard through the news that the Woonsocket Education Department is in financial turmoil. As we cope with a recently discovered deficit, what is most troubling is questions remain as to whether or not the Woonsocket School Committee was being provided with the full and accurate financial condition of the District, or if important data was being manipulated and/or falsely presented. A quick review of the minutes and audio of official, public meetings lends one to question, and we call upon the full investigative resources of the State Police to assist in making a determination if Rhode Island General Laws have been violated. As you can see below, there is a liability for school officers who engage in misconduct. If there was a misappropriation of Federal, State, and City funds based on 'false certificates,' there should be swift and appropriate action as outlined in the law.

§ 16-38-9 Liability of school officers for misconduct. – Every school officer who shall make any false certificate, or appropriate any public school money to any purpose not authorized by law, or who shall refuse for a reasonable charge to give certified copies of any official paper, or to account for or deliver to his or her successor any accounts, papers, or money in his or her hands, or shall willfully or knowingly refuse to perform any duty of his or her office, or violate any provisions of any law regulating public schools, except where a particular penalty may be prescribed, shall be fined not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) or be imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months, and shall be liable to an action of the case for damages to be brought by any person injured by this violation.

Second, there have been accusations that the contract for employment of a former employee of the District was modified without the consent of the School Committee. The possibility exists that someone changed a page of the contract of employment after having been signed by the then Chairman of the Woonsocket School Committee. This is a truly serious and troubling thought and again, your expertise in investigating these matters is urgently requested.

If either or both of these scenarios are true, they represent illegal behavior and a violation of the public trust by appointed school officials. The truth must be discovered, and in the event of any illegal behavior, those responsible must be brought to justice. Your investigative experience and ability to subpoena (if necessary) are tools not at our disposal alone.

The Woonsocket School Committee offers its full cooperation on these matters, and looks forward to your immediate involvement.

In anticipation of your response,

Anita McGuire Forcier, Chair

Christopher M. Roberts

Vimala Phongsavanh, Vice Chair

John Donlon

Eleanor M. Nadeau

Dr. Giovanna Donoyan, Supt.

Discussion:

Mr. Roberts said he put this on the agenda as a technicality. He said he is sure that the full School Committee in knowing the full truth. Confirming that the School Committee was provided with accurate information about the financial picture of the district. As we saw in a letter presented tonight regarding employment, we were under a court order for a balanced budget, and I think there are some questions as to whether or not any of these are false certificates the general law references were created or passed or presented as part of that. I'm not saying that anyone is or is not guilty. I believe we owe it to the City taxpayers to be investigating this.

Mr. Roberts said he noticed a gentleman in the room who had just bought a piece of property in the City a day before the deficit was discovered and everything was on tract. He thought he was moving into a community that had its act together. The municipal and school side was both projecting surpluses. As you can imagine the crowd that night felt for him. We have a duty to make sure that nothing illegal happened. If a School Committee can't trust the information being presented to them, they cannot effectively do their job. Let's reset the image of Woonsocket and I think this will put us on a fresh course. I will be asking passage of this.

Dr. Donoyan stated that she welcomes any help whatsoever to rectify the ship and make sure that there is continued credibility within the WED. So if the State Police do indeed come to investigate everything is open, all doors are open, all files are open, all computers are open and anything they need we will give them.

Ms. Forcier said that when Mr. Roberts and she discussed this at the Sub Finance Committee meeting, we realized how serious this is. This is not the first time Woonsocket has been through something like this. This is not a matter of blame. I believe that no one stole money. That is not what we are looking at although some people think there may have been. As, Dr. Donoyan said, I want our doors wide open. I want the public to know the truth and I want the truth to come out. This is one step we can take to reassure the public's trust that we are going to do what is best for the community. So I will be supporting this along with Mr. Roberts this letter to go out to the State Police. This does not mean that they will act on this. However, we are trying to see what they can do.

FURTHER DISCUSSION:

Motion to send the letter: CR
ROLL CALL: AF/CR: Yes

Seconded: AF
VP/JD/EN: No

Motion dies 2-3. No letter will be sent.

6. Discussion Relative to WED Employee/Retiree Medical Plans – C. Roberts, J. Donlon

Mr. Roberts mention that the Finance Committee went over options to the medical plan. Mr. Roberts would like a motion to mail out an introductory letter to the retirees

Mr. Roberts read the letter into the record:

Motion to Approve: C. Roberts:

Seconded: VP

Discussion:

Mr. Roberts said that this is just an introductory letter to retirees. We have over 200 members that we are providing healthcare for. There is a cost of around 2 million dollars between regular health care and dental and this will have to be part of the discussion in order for us to get out of the hole. So we would

be sending this out in advance that we need to have this discussion and that more information will be coming so that no one will be caught by surprise.

Ms. Forcier added that when you negotiate contract the retirees are not part of the contract and you have to negotiate individually with them. I think that it is very considerate to give them the heads up before any discussions take place.

Mr. Donlon said he is on the Negotiating committee and he just received the letter today and has not had a chance to review it. I asked to have this tabled until the next meeting. By this time they should have figures and agree to sit down with the retirees if they so wish.

Motion to table: J. Donlon

Seconded: EN

ROLL CALL: AF/VP/CR: No

JD/EN: Yes

Further Discussion:

Ms. Nadeau asked how do you get a consensus when you have retirees all over the place. It is not like going to the Union when your members are working.

Ms. Forcier said you start with a letter like the one proposed.

Ms. Nadeau said what do you expect them to voluntarily say ok. They will take a 20% co-pay. How are you going to gather that information?

Mr. Roberts said he would hope that they would come up with something amicably. He said that everyone sees that the decline has been precipitous and we are just hanging on. He said he has a similar letter from the Office of the Receiver in Central Falls which was an affidavit as part of his refinancing. His retirees were receiving free health care and went to a BC/BS 2000/4000 dollar deductible and 20% premiums and this is much higher than what we will be asking for. It may sound that I am wishing for the best, I would like to think that everyone can work together and that we will get a positive response to the letter. The flip side will be the challenges that we will or will not have. This letter serves two roles.

Ms. Nadeau asked if you don't get the desired response, then will you move forward and set up a plan?

Mr. Roberts said he would guess that the committee would have to decide if they would take unilateral action or if we are in bankruptcy the receiver would take action.

Ms. Nadeau does not see how this will come together and that people will just step up to the plate.

Ms. Forcier said we can try.

Mr. Roberts said he would go back to Judge Flanders and said you can get a hair cut or get beheaded.

Mr. Donlon said we are not in receivership and no where close.

Ms. Forcier said that people don't understand the process. It's not; I give up, come and take over. It doesn't work that way.

Ms. Forcier asked if Mr. Partington would like to add information on retirees.

Mr. Partington stated to Mr. Roberts that he may help him in this regard.

Mr. Roberts said they will be doing that.

FURTHER DISCUSSION:

Ms. Phongsavanh said she will vote in favor to get the conversation started.

ROLL CALL TO SEND LETTER TO RETIREES ON MEDICAL PLAN.

ROLL CALL: All Yes. 5--0

7. Resolution to Support Bill H7272-Changing Teacher Notification Date – V. Phongsavanh, A. McGuire-Forcier

Ms. Phongsavanh said that this resolution is to move the date from March 1st deadline to June 1st. They made a decision to lay off almost 600 teacher/employees and this bill will make it more convenient because the March 1st deadline comes in the middle of the school year. June 1st will hopefully provide more time flexibility with the budget. I researched this bill and it did not make it out of the House Labor Committee and was recommended for more study. I still want to support this bill either way.

Ms. Phongsavanh read into the record:

**Woonsocket School Committee Resolution
Changing Teacher Notification Date**

WHEREAS: Chapter §16-13 of the Rhode Island General Laws entitled “Teacher Tenure” requires school districts to notify individual teachers by March 1st that their contract for the following year will not be renewed and;

WHEREAS: All school districts have not yet had their budget request ratified by their respective city or town councils and;

WHEREAS: This uncertainty requires school districts to issue more layoff notices than are necessary and;

WHEREAS: This creates unnecessary anxiety and stress for teachers receiving layoff notices and;

WHEREAS: Most, if not all, of the uncertainty, stress and anxiety resulting from the early layoff notice could be remediated by moving the date from March 1, to June 1, therefore be it;

RESOLVED: That the Woonsocket School District urges the General Assembly to pass 2012 – S 2158, H 7272 & H 7863 by Senator DiPalma and Representatives Jackson & Brien respectively, moving the teacher layoff notice deadline from March 1 to June 1, be further resolved;

RESOLVED: That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to every Rhode Island Municipality, School Committee, State Senator, State Representative and the Governor.

WHERETO: The following bear witness:

Motion to Approve: VP

Seconded: AF

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Roberts asked if this was disregarded by the Committee

Ms. Phongsavanh said it has been recommended for further study, I don't think it will be passed this year.

Mr. Roberts said he is in favor with the date change, but feels that he shouldn't waste this resolution on one that is gone, because there may be others.

Ms. Phongsavanh said she did have other resolutions but did not feel that it was the time to fight on tenure. She believes that teachers should be called back based on performance and job evaluations.

FURTHER DISCUSSION: NONE

ROLL CALL: AF/VP/JD/EN: Yes

CR: No

7. Approval of 2012-2013 School Year Calendar – 1st Passage – Dr. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan: As required by State Law we need to have a couple of passages of the intended school calendar for the 2012-13 school years. This is presented before you. Please be assured that it shows 180 school days for our students and all of the Holidays and no school days identified.

Motion to Approve: AF

Seconded: JD

Discussion:

Mr. Roberts: Dr. Donoyan we discussed the cost effectiveness of buildings being closed in the middle of the winter and I thought that it would lead to a discussion of the current vacation system. Whether December, February, April is the best way for cost savings.

Dr. Donoyan said he brings up a very good point. We are at a point that we need to right the ship. If we look at the short term, which is this school year coming up; I think it would be a wise decision to maintain the status quo. Next year and the following years we will have a five year plan put into place and over time significant changes may be made to insure efficiencies and cost savings. I think it is too early to change a schedule like this. It requires more foresight.

Mr. Roberts asked if she knew the number for all properties for shutdown in December or January.

Dr. Donoyan said Mr. Fontaine did a study and it was around \$15,000 dollars per week. It was noted that it was \$15,000 per day previously.

Mr. Roberts asked to clarify.

Mr. Fontaine answered that Dr. Donoyan was correct and it was around \$15, to 18,000 per week because you can't literally shut the buildings down. You have to leave some heat and electricity for fire alarms and safety concerns.

Mr. Roberts said \$15,000 per week is much different than \$15,000 per day.

FUTHER DISCUSSION:

Dr. Donoyan said that it is important that the School Committee and community know that they are doing there best to the hemorrhaging of the school department, at this point, and believes for the 2012-13 school year that with the talented people that they have they can change the delivery of instruction,

and it could be in the manner of the days or hours, but it takes time, effort an agreement by the teachers and community and it would change family schedules as well. We don't want to change too much to fast.

Advance notice would be appropriate so everyone can make changes.

Ms. Forcier said she agrees and that everyone should be involved before making changes. Ms. Forcier stated that the first day is August 29th and the last day would be June 13th, as long as there are no make up days.

FURTHER DISUCSSION: NONE

ROLL CALL: All Yes.

CONFERENCES:

Ms. Forcier stated that she went to a 2 day Conference at Bryant College. The conference was on accountability. On Friday, Dr. Donoyan and Vimala showed up along with Mr. Ward. We were able to work with the Town Administrator of Lincoln and two people from their school committee. It was extremely interesting. The assignment was to put yourself in the shoes of the School Committee, Mayor, Superintendent and City Council. There were many people from other communities that attended.

On Saturday, the assignment was to come up with a 10 year vision for education. We worked with Lincoln and Woonsocket and came up with a vision for Rhode Island. Ms. Forcier said that she feels that this could have promise in Rhode Island if they make education the number one priority and within 10 years could serve for the model of education in the United States. Rhode Island is small enough and is capable. There are steps on how to get there. I believe that this should be moved forward and it may be a good time with the Fair Funding. We need to make children our number one priority no matter where you live in Rhode Island. Massachusetts's did it and it is working for them. We need to come together and make education number one.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee and public tonight.

We are in a fiscal crisis. Each day presents another priority, cancellation of services, threats, hate messages from the public, legal letters, and inquiries from the community regarding our plans and schedule. There continues to be an enormous amount of rumors based on inaccuracies, hostility and stress. While the WED continues to educate the students of Woonsocket, I am balancing the job of Superintendent, Deputy, and Finance Director. This opportunity has provided substantial evidence of how the WED has been systematically reduced to a thin core over time. The WED is a complex system, but the fiscal crisis is making it crumble. Make no doubt about it; we are doing our best with nearly nothing. Our dedicated teachers and staff are faithfully doing their best. Our community based partners are faithfully providing FAPE to our students, under mounting debt. This crisis is not about overspending; it is about a lack of revenues.

In fact, according to the RIDE, since FY 1997, state support to the WED has increased 70.6% from \$27.9 million to the current year amount of \$47.6 million. That is a total increase during that time period of \$19.7 million. During the same time, the local appropriations to education have increased 19.9% from \$10.8 million to \$13.0 million. That equals a total increase of \$2.2million. Kindly note that The State of RI allocated funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as a means to stabilize funding during 2009-11 in an effort to compensate for state aid that had been reduced during the same time. WED used that money to fill the funding gaps since our expenses could not be covered by local appropriations. Once the grants expired, the expenses needed to be paid out of the local appropriations. In the past, budgets were court ordered to be designed for

unrealistic and unattainable amounts. We know the community is in distress, but I repeat, this is not about overspending; it is about a lack of revenues.

The present situation we face at the WED is like responding to a five alarm fire without water. Distressed communities in RI seek help from the General Assembly, and State and National leaders. While I recognize that there are competing forces for state revenue, no longer is it fair for educational leaders and parents to BEG for the fair funding needed to provide a public education to our children.

Thank you.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE

V. Phongsavanh: I want to thank Bernon Heights for giving me the opportunity to read to Ms. Olivier class. I read The Giving Tree which is one of my favorite books and has a great message. They were a bright and alert class and they gave me many ideas for the Education Department.

C. Roberts: Mentioned that Mr. Ward said that S2406 is up for a hearing next week. This bill will have the biggest impact on Woonsocket to the tune of 3.3 million dollars. Everyone needs to support this and I will be there that day, and other members will be there to support this and we will hand deliver the resolution and testify. I hope we have a strong turnout from the City of Woonsocket.

Mr. Roberts asked Dr. Donoyan do you have any statement relative to the cheating on NECAP.

Dr. Donoyan stated that was old news and it happened in the year of 2008. This was a one time event due to the lack of test security and there was a new way of assessing children. The new procedure caused irregularities in security and the administration of the test. There were no tests where children were provided answers or answers erased and no fraudulent behavior. This was a one time anomaly. It has never happened again.

Mr. Roberts said he read to a second grade class at Bernon Heights and he enjoyed it.

Mr. Roberts said that he disagree with Ms. Phongsavanh and some of her statements. I wish that it was brought up in discussion on the State Police matter. Good and Welfare is not the place. He said it always comes back to elected to serve the children of the district. That is what we are all elected to do and when a Committee makes decisions because they are not been given proper financial information that has a detriment on the kids. So would Woonsocket kids been better off if accurate information provided to them from day one or do we wait until the end of the year and now we have a 10 million dollar hole that everyone is going to suffer from and all of a sudden we will throw our hand up and say, I'm really not interested in what happened, I'm here for the kids. The kids deserve people up here asking these questions. You can't keep going back to that statement. If you are not willing to make these decisions to protect the money that funds their investments, you can't make both claims. We are going to our teachers, employees and retirees for concessions because people weren't asking these questions. I could not let this go unresponded to. We will be the embarrassment of the State of Rhode Island tomorrow that we were not willing to have someone check this out. You cannot play the kid card. It is the exact opposite. If you have an interest in the kids of Woonsocket and have every opportunity they deserve, then you are here to protect that money. Thank you.

J. Donlon: I want to explain my vote this evening. There was no probable cause to call the State Police. They need probable cause or they will not come in. We have a Police Department in the City that is outstanding and they can handle this as well as the State Police. I cannot see any malfeasance here. There is no money missing and no money that has been re-appropriated. We just don't have the money. That is what the problem is. I went to Savoie School today and met Principal Mr. Wojack. The bathroom problems have been rectified. They fixed the stalls and plumbing problems and the janitor said he would replace the tiles. He noticed that some of the air vents need cleaning. A professional company needs to come in and clean them. Thank you.

A. McGuire-Forcier: **Note: Ms. Forcier asked Mr. Ackerman to initial each page of the contracts along with the Chair and Superintendent. She will bring it up for the next passage. Dottie please make a note.

Ms. Forcier stated that the bus contract is a very serious issue. Dr. Donoyan met with RIDE and they are going to be tapping into our State funds that are allocated to us monthly. We are not sure how much they will take or if they will pay the outside vendors in full, which will devastate us. We will continue to do whatever we can to provide bussing for our students. This is a fact and it could happen. Also, although the lunch monitors were tabled, I spoke to Mr. Roberts and I would not be able to support this because of the safety issue. Mr. Roberts agreed and we will work towards a solution. As far as the State Police investigation, this is not the first time it has happened to our Community. This is called accountability. We need to hold people accountable. This is not just about money but also about contracts. I want people to know that this has to stop. We want professional people and have nothing to hide. So I am ok to open our doors. I want to give the community piece of mind to know that nothing was taken, but there are issues that need to be looked into. It's about accountability and everyone else should be too. I want to apologize for not going to Bernon to read, but I was at Governor Pothier with my sister to facilitate the Good Touch Bad Touch program. We have reached about 500 children in grades K - 2nd and we did it in about two weeks. Now we want to go and finish grades 3-4 so Principals get ready for my phone calls. Thank you.

E. Nadeau: I am inclined to agree with Ms. Phongsavanh. What disturbs me is our agenda's no longer reflect educational matters. There is no talk of curriculum or anything that resembles education. I would like to get back on track. As far as the investigation, everyone is missing a very important point when they are pointing fingers. We had professionals that were all over McFee in the form of auditors. They missed all of this. We have people know that can zero in on where the short comings occurred and everything that happened they will be able to tell us. It doesn't change anything. We are under funded to begin with and we are asked to work miracles with no money and that is the problem. If we don't get the proper State and local funding we will have a deficit every year because we have children to educate. We have to have teachers in front of the classroom and we can get concessions. I am in favor of all that. We still have to do the job and we don't have the money to do the job. It doesn't matter who the Business Manger is, they cannot perform miracles. There may have been a lot of mistakes along the way by a lot of people, but there were people in the past that should have been investigated and they got a free ride. They are sitting on a beach in Florida and they will never be made accountable. Where does it begin and where does it end. We need to have stronger financial oversight. It can't be auditors because they missed the boat and everyone gives them a free ride, but I don't. They are the paid professionals. If the paid professionals didn't find the errors, how are we as individuals suppose to find them. We have a lot to work on and I want to get through this because I wasn't elected to run the school department financially. I was elected to serve the children in this City. We have not done anything to serve the children. We are willing to take things away, but when it comes to what our job is, I don't think any of us are doing our jobs that we were elected to do. We don't raise the taxes, we are not the City Council and we can't pretend we are. We are the School Committee and we have a different set of rules to govern by and it is what it is. We are off track and need to get back on track quickly. Thank you.

Motion to Adjourn: A. Forcier

Seconded: J. Donlon

ALL IN FAVOR: Yes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorothy DeRemer
Recording Secretary