

MINUTES  
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 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 by Dr. Donoyan:**

Anita McGuire-Forcier, Chairwoman	Present
Vimala Phongsavanh, Vice-Chair	Present
John Donlon	Present
Eleanor Nadeau	Present
Christopher Roberts	Present

Motion to take Unfinished Business Item #1 out of order: A. Forcier      2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts  
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS: (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)**

**1. Discussion/Vote for an Amendment of Article II – Bylaws of the Woonsocket School Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> Passage: J. Donlon**

Mr. Donlon read the amendment that was up for 2<sup>nd</sup> passage tonight.

Motion to approve: V. Phongsavanh      2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon  
Roll Call Vote: 3 yes – 2 no (AF/CR)      MOTION APPROVED.

Mr. Roberts stated that he had a discussion with Atty. Ackerman regarding whether or not tonight's meeting was a "special" meeting or a regular school committee meeting. They "agreed to disagree" said Roberts, but he doesn't consider tonight's meeting a regular school committee meeting. To Roberts, any meeting other than on a regularly scheduled meeting date is, therefore, a special meeting. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier added that she thinks this motion is just "political B.S." and she just wants to go forward and get it over with.

Motion to take New Business #1 out of order: C. Roberts      2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier/J. Donlon  
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

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**NEW BUSINESS: (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)**

**1. Discussion/Vote to Remove the Chair and Elect a Replacement: J. Donlon**

Mr. Donlon nominated Vimala Phongsavanh for Chair of the Woonsocket School Committee.

Motion to approve: J. Donlon      2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau  
Roll Call Vote: 3 yes – 2 no (AF/CR)      MOTION APPROVED.

Motion to take New Business #2 out of order: J. Donlon      2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh  
Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (AF)

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**2. Discussion/Vote to Remove the Vice-Chair and Elect a Replacement: J. Donlon**

Mr. Donlon nominated Eleanor Nadeau for Vice-Chair of the Woonsocket School Committee.

Motion to approve: J. Donlon      2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh  
Roll Call Vote: 3 yes – 2 no (AF/CR)      MOTION APPROVED.

**THE MEETING WAS THEN TURNED OVER TO THE NEW CHAIR (VIMALA PHONGSAVANH) AND VICE-CHAIR (ELEANOR NADEAU).**

**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE: None**

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**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Giovanna Donoyan, Superintendent**

Dr. Donoyan extended her best wishes to all staff from the WED who retired at the end of the school year and thanked them for their service. She announced the names of all the retirees. She also recognized all the administrators and principals who have given up vacation time and have put in an enormous amount of extra hours and even came back from vacation to lend their expertise. She thanked RIDE for being a tremendous partner in bringing credibility back to our budgetary needs.

Motion to receive and place on file: J. Donlon

2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh (Unanimously Approved)

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 13, 2012 Closed/Open; June 18, 2012 Closed/Open; June 27, 2012 Closed/Open**

Motion to approve: A. Forcier

2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts

Mr. Donlon noted that on the Open Session Minutes for June 18, they indicate that he and Mrs. Nadeau were not present, which they were, as indicated within the minutes of that meeting.

**Motion to table the Closed/Open June 18, 2012 minutes: V. Phongsavanh 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon (Unan. Approved)**

Motion to approve the remaining minutes: A. Forcier

2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)

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**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve Consent Agenda: V. Phongsavanh  
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon  
APPROVED**

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Ms. Phongsavanh reported that a WISE meeting was held on July 18<sup>th</sup> at McFee. She recapped what the WISE initiative was about and how this committee would work. She explained that it is an advisory board to the school committee made up of about twenty people, including parents, community leaders, administrators, city representatives, and other stakeholders interested in improving education in Woonsocket. They discussed and firmly believe that every child deserves a quality education whether they are rich or they are poor. They feel that there's too much negativity towards our schools and they want to change a culture. Phongsavanh reported that they have had several presentations on reform models that have worked in different districts. She described the four cohorts (or focuses) and the goals of each. Phongsavanh will provide a packet for the WSC at the next meeting. They are moving into the second phase now.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Ms. Phongsavanh reported that the Strategic Planning Committee is requesting that anyone who wants to be part of it should send a short statement to Dr. Donoyan explaining why they want to participate. The Planning Committee will be made up of 20 to 25 people and they are looking for parents, community members, students, administrators, city council members, teachers, etc. The search will end on August 15<sup>th</sup> and the names will be presented for appointment on August 22<sup>nd</sup> to the WSC for approval. They will begin the planning process in September.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**3. Approval of Elementary, WHS, WMS Handbooks – 1<sup>st</sup> Passage- G. Donoyan, C. Henderson, P. McGee**

**WMS HANDBOOK:** Dr. Patrick McGee addressed the WSC regarding changes that were necessary to the WMS handbook. The two main changes were to the Parent Involvement Policy and the Bullying Policy addendum was added. It will be included in the "Parent Pack". Mr. Roberts asked about whether or not this handbook states what a passing grade is. Dr. McGee stated that it says that a student requires a "70" in order to pass because it was only lowered at the high school level. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier said she was glad that the Bullying Policy was put in there because she was told it would be too costly to add the entire state amendment in. "Many of the kids that stay at my house have no computer at home to go onto the website to see it," she said. "Since bullying has become a paramount issue, we have been looking at making that a separate document. This way the children and teachers can use it during school time. We can make sure there's a sign-off sheet for it as well. That's in the works at this time," explained Donoyan. "At the elementary level, there's a form in the back that we used to have to sign and

return. Is that in there now?" asked Forcier. Dr. McGee explained that parents will have to sign-off for the middle school handbook as well. "We can't hold children accountable if they don't have access to the policy and many don't have a computer at home," said Forcier. Mr. Roberts noted that the change to the memorandum for the name of the new superintendent is actually on Page 40, not Page 33 as indicated on the changes page. Dr. McGee made a note of that and indicated that the Bullying Policy and Sign-Off sheet will go out with the Parent Pack. Mr. Donlon said he has had parents question him about the lunch schedule and why some students always have lunch as late as 12:42 p.m. every day. "Has there been any thought to rotating the lunches? That's a long span of time for them to go without eating and can affect their concentration," said Donlon. McGee indicated that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to do that because they go to lunch according to teams. He will look into it, however.

**Motion to approve the WMS Handbook: C. Roberts**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier**  
**APPROVED**

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**WHS HANDBOOK:** Mr. Carnell Henderson reviewed some of the major changes to the handbook, such as on Pg. 18, which indicates that anyone over the age of 20 is not allowed to attend WHS proms. He indicated that it wasn't in writing even though it has been past practice and they had it come up this year. On Pg. 23, a revision has been made indicating a return to a numerical grading system. Henderson indicated that the updated Parent Involvement Policy will be included also. Mr. Roberts noted that later on tonight's agenda there is an item about returning the minimum passing grade to 70 at the high school. "This may change the handbook," said Roberts. Henderson said they could revise it before printing if there's time—if not, they could do an addendum. "Do you plan on doing a separate sheet for the statewide bullying policy?" asked Mrs. McGuire-Forcier. Mr. Henderson said that he and Dr. Bedard had just been discussing it and they are thinking about doing the same thing as the middle school.

**Motion to approve the WHS Handbook: A. Forcier**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon**  
**APPROVED**

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**ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK:** Dr. Donoyan explained that Kim Blais went through and did the editing on this handbook. She indicated that the Parent Involvement Policy is in English and Spanish on Pgs. 28 & 29. Donoyan said they are going to work on making the statewide bullying policy a separate document.

**Motion to approve the Elementary Handbook: A. Forcier**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon**  
**APPROVED**

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**4. Discussion/Vote to Form Temporary Committee – Minimum Passing Grade – C. Roberts, A. McGuire-Forcier**

Mr. Roberts presented a list of proposed members for this committee. "All of these people haven't been approached to be on it yet, but I'm hopeful that they will agree to participate," he said. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier said she was on the Curriculum Committee with Mrs. Majewski and explained that they wanted to lower the passing grade to level out the playing field with other districts. They met back in December to see what was going on and whether kids were just getting 60s to pass. We found that the A, B, and C students weren't affected. They found that there were 20 to 25 kids that stayed in school because they still had hope, otherwise they would have quit. "Now that it has been in effect for a year, we need to go over the data to see what the effect has been," she said. Mrs. Nadeau asked if this should fall under the Curriculum Subcommittee instead of being made a separate committee. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier said that the Curriculum Subcommittee has been dismantled because of the people no longer being here or they have been bumped out of their positions and she isn't sure they would want to still be on the committee. "We need to move on this now," said McGuire-Forcier. Ms. Phongsavanh agreed that this is an important committee and thanked them for taking the initiative to look into it.

**Motion to approve the formation of a temporary subcommittee: C. Roberts**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier**

**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes      APPROVED**

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**5. Discussion/Vote to Adopt the Superintendent Engagement Survey – A. McGuire-Forcier, E. Nadeau**

Mrs. McGuire-Forcier took it upon herself to create this survey, saying that right now, the superintendent does their own self-evaluation. "It's hard for the school committee members to judge because we have a different relationship with her. It's something that can be sent out to principals and directors to fill out and submit and it's totally confidential. It's on Google Docs and the responses go into a big Excel document anonymously. This tool will help us tremendously," said Mrs. McGuire-Forcier. Mr. Donlon said he would like all the results of this survey to be sent to one central location such as Mr. Gallishaw and only be sent out to administrators and principals. Mrs. Nadeau would like it to be very confidential because she doesn't want it to get into the wrong hands. "We do need an accountability

tool and I agree that the confidentiality is very important. If it got out to the media, we could face a lawsuit," said Ms. Phongsavanh. "Every corporation does this, including CVS. My husband gets the results for himself on what he needs to improve on," said Forcier. Atty. Ackerman said that he doesn't have any experience on lawsuits in this kind of situation, but he can research it for her.

**Motion to approve the adoption of the Superintendent Engagement Survey: A. Forcier**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau** **Roll Call Vote: 5 yes** **APPROVED**

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#### 6. Update regarding the Woonsocket Budget Commission – G. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan reported that the Budget Commission has fiscal and employee oversight of the WED. They are acting on the advice and consent of the school committee's decisions. "We will be presenting positions that we want to post tomorrow. The Budget Commission had a very successful meeting with the principals and directors recently, and Mr. Sequino was very happy with the results of that discussion," said Donoyan.

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#### 7. Request to Post for Positions – Dr. G. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan referenced a memo from Kathleen Lombardo, Director of Human Resources, regarding vacancies that need to be posted. But for the Budget Commission to act, she said that they want the school committee to look at the sheet that she provided to the WSC and the timeline. She noted that there were three columns on the sheet for positions being requested. The first column contained positions that are from a limited candidate pool. The second column contained positions required for school opening. Dr. Donoyan is concerned that they won't be in place if they don't act quickly on these positions. The third column contained positions that are undergoing a needs assessment and may possibly be eliminated. "We would like the WSC to approve the posting of these positions so we can bring them to the Budget Commission tomorrow. We can't wait any longer," said Donoyan. Mr. Donlon asked if the Attendance Officer was in addition to Mr. Barnes' position. "Absolutely. It would be for someone district-wide as needed," said Donoyan. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier asked to consider each position one at a time.

Motion to consider each position separately: A. McGuire-Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau RCV: 5 yes

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**Assistant Superintendent:** Mrs. Nadeau was not in favor of hiring an Assistant Superintendent as they had discussed at the last meeting. In place of that, she would be in favor of a Director of Curriculum at a director's salary. She feels that is more important and would like that title changed. Mr. Roberts agreed with Nadeau and asked what the Director of Curriculum would do versus a Deputy Superintendent at only \$10k less. Dr. Donoyan explained that what's not happening now is the consolidation and consistency of curriculum that has to be updated in reference to the common core standards. "This person would look at curriculum alignment. There are less than six people in the state that are qualified to do that. RIDE recommended the Assistant Superintendent based on our district's needs and size. The Assistant Superintendent is much more flexible and a lot more responsibilities that person can absorb, as well as oversight and evaluation of principals. A curriculum director cannot do that. We really need to find people who can do the job and do it right," said Donoyan. "If there are only six people in the state that do this, how do other districts do it?" asked Roberts. "Some of the other districts are small and only have a superintendent and deputy superintendent." "Any of you who were at the Budget Commission meeting would know that Carolyn Dias said it's basically just a title change," said McGuire-Forcier. Forcier spoke about the S.T.E.M. Coordinator that Dr. Donoyan put in from Title II funds for \$117k who would be taking care of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math curricula. Dr. Donoyan explained that the S.T.E.M. Coordinator would be at the high school working with those areas, not district-wide. She explained what the Curriculum Director does. "We need to restore the professionalism of the education department. No matter what you call it, we need someone right now. Carolyn Dias said that we need someone in this position in a district of our size," said Donoyan. "If RIDE is recommending it and they have been helping us out in preparing the budget. We need this person in there. I will approve an Assistant Superintendent," said Donlon. "At the last meeting, you said that you wouldn't be hiring someone for Assistant Superintendent. What made you change your mind?" Ms. Phongsavanh asked Dr. Donoyan. Dr. Donoyan said that RIDE told the Budget Commission that we are very lean in leadership positions. "That was their recommendation," said Donoyan. Phongsavanh asked what the salary difference is between an Asst. Supt. and a Curriculum Director. "Usually it's commensurate with experience. Some assistant superintendents make \$75k a year and there are some that make over \$150k. It all depends," said Donoyan. "We need someone to do curriculum and someone to evaluate. I don't care what the title is as long as that person is a Director as opposed to second in command. A director can make less and we can set that salary accordingly. I don't care if you change the title so that person can evaluate as long as the job gets done. I don't care if RIDE says we need it. They say we need a lot of things but aren't providing the funds for it. I also don't understand why a RIDE representative isn't on that team," said Nadeau. "I hear you. In the real world, like CVS, there's a difference between the director and assistant director. What matters more in education is the job description. We are so far behind in everything. We can do better. I am requesting that you take the recommendation of RIDE, that oversees 37 other districts, that we need someone. A

director is not the same thing as someone who needs to be second in command," said Donoyan. "Who would be doing curriculum if there is no Curriculum Director?" asked Phongsavanh. "We wouldn't have anyone this year. We had Instructional Leaders that had to be eliminated and we can't supplant Title funds for. A lot of their work last year was dedicated to evaluations. A Curriculum Director is just based in curriculum. An assistant superintendent would serve in many roles," explained Donoyan. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier reminded the committee that B & E's consultant report said that the principals needed to be more involved in curriculum. Mr. Roberts didn't think they could approve something such as a Director of Curriculum if there's no job description.

Motion to approve posting for an Assistant Superintendent: C. Roberts  
2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh

Roll Call Vote: 4 no – 1 yes (VP) FAILS

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**Controller Position:** Mr. Roberts noted that they voted to advertise this position a few weeks ago. Dr. Donoyan said there's a very shallow pool of candidates and some candidates declined a second interview because they didn't want to come to Woonsocket. Roberts thinks we need to advertise in the Boston Globe and spend some money to expand the search if it's necessary. Dr. Donoyan believes it's \$300 to place an ad in the Boston Globe and at least \$600 for a lengthy period of time, according to Kathleen Lombardo. Donoyan added that the items in the newspaper are also posted to Monster.com, saying that it might be an additional unnecessary expense. Mrs. Nadeau asked what happened with the Executive Director of Finance position being posted. "There's talk of consolidation and it falls under the Needs Assessment column. "How long is this going to take? They know the need is there. We don't have a finance department! How do they expect us to operate? I think this needs to be addressed immediately," said Nadeau. Forcier asked if this has to come before the WSC again and again every time it needs to be reposted. Atty. Ackerman said it doesn't. We can just repost the position. "Historically, any school position that had been vacated didn't have to come before the WSC to be approved for posting. This is an added step because of the Budget Commission," said Donoyan. "Any job description that changes needs approval by the school committee," noted Forcier.

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**Principals for Coleman/Fifth Avenue Elementary & Pothier Elementary:** Dr. Donoyan read her memo recommending that Donna Coderre be transferred from Pothier to Savoie Elementary. Ms. Phongsavanh asked about the Principal for Coleman and Fifth Avenue schools. Dr. Donoyan explained that they are undergoing an assessment to see if they can move some of the classrooms to consolidate schools, because they received the safety report on Fifth Avenue and "it's pretty much a fire trap". "To bring it up to code will cost a lot of money. We may end up closing that school if we can consolidate. It's a big undertaking and we are looking at it with RIDE," said Donoyan. "Since the principal at Pothier has opened up and that school has a high concentration of special needs students, you will need to be looking for someone who can handle that type of student population. I think we need to decide quickly as to what's happening with Fifth Avenue," said Mrs. Nadeau. Dr. Donoyan said there's a good possibility that we may have to close Fifth Avenue because of the fire code violations. "If someone comes in from another district and was making \$65k as a principal, who makes the offer of \$89k for them to work here? How does that work? Is an offer made or they are told that is the budgeted amount?" asked Mr. Roberts. "We would try to make sure there is equity among the principals. I don't know the practice here, however," said Donoyan. When Roberts asked Atty. Ackerman, he said that it's up to the WSC. "If two people are doing the same job, do you pay one less to do the same job? That's up to you. It's based on past practice and what's practiced in the professions. Previously we had everyone making different amounts of money and then we ended up giving everyone the same so we wouldn't be accused of favoritism," said Ackerman. "Back in the day, principals were paid differently based on the enrollment of the school they served. I think what happened along the way was that they wanted to have a pay that was higher than a top step teacher's salary," said Mrs. Nadeau. C. Roberts noted that he doesn't have a problem with the positions.

Motion to approve to post and look into putting on the job descriptions that the pay is commensurate with experience:  
C. Roberts  
2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh

(Unanimously approved)

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**Motion to approve the remaining positions under Limited Candidate Pool and Positions Required for School Opening under that column up to and including the WHS School Resource Officer position: C. Roberts**

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes APPROVED

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**Attendance Officer:** Mr. Donlon feels it's impossible for one person to do this for the entire district and that we definitely need another person. Mr. Roberts agreed with him about the importance, but won't approve it because they had a discussion with Mr. Barnes about having the court become more involved and he wants to see the outcome of that. Mrs. Forcier agrees with Mr. Roberts and doesn't think we can afford it. "Now that we have the WISE group to

work on this, I would like to give them the opportunity to work on it with the non-profits," she said. "Does this person need a Master's degree like Mr. Barnes or is it just someone who will be chasing kids?" asked Mr. Donlon. Dr. Donoyan stressed that Mr. Barnes is not just someone who chases kids. "If he's in court, then he's not doing that," she said. Donlon wanted to know if a retired police officer could do that. Mrs. Forcier recalled that it had been considered at one point and it would cost too much. Ms. Phongsavanh added that they can't expect WISE to do anything without a policy in place. Mrs. Nadeau remembered when they had requested two part-time retired officers with no benefits to do this. "This is one of the biggest problems we have. You see the kids hanging around in Cass Park. Everybody sees it, but you can't expect to have one person policing the issue and expect to get results," said Nadeau. "Mr. Barnes doesn't go tackling kids in the park. He can't do that because of the law. We could get sued. Maybe the police can do it, but he can't. He goes to the houses," said Mrs. Forcier. "The police department is understaffed also," noted Donlon. Dr. Donoyan stressed that attendance officers aren't just people that chase kids out of Cass Park. They do a lot of outreach also. Forcier said she would like to see the job description and she wants a copy of it sent to them in their packets. Roberts agreed with the superintendent's thoughts, but he doesn't feel they should be acting as the parents of every student in the schools. Ms. Phongsavanh said she would support the position. "The WISE committee is currently working on the attendance policy and will present it when it's done, but to expect them to solve all the world's issues without even a policy in place is quite a task," she said.

Motion to approve posting for Attendance Officer: J. Donlon  
Roll Call Vote: 3 yes – 2 no (AF/CR)

2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau  
APPROVED

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**INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST FOR WACTC/WHS:** Dr. Donoyan said that this was Jonathan Fantasia's position.

Motion to approve to post this position: V. Phongsavanh  
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon  
APPROVED

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**CONFIDENTIAL SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT:** Mr. Donlon asked if this was Kim Blais' position and Dr. Donoyan explained that Kim's title is Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent. "This is for Dottie DeRemer's position because she retired. Legally we have to post this position. This would be my secretary and the secretary to the school committee," said Donoyan. Mr. Roberts asked if this was a non-union secretarial position and Donoyan confirmed that it is. "From what I understand, because of the sensitivity of the information that goes in and out of my office, I believe that is the reason she is not in the union," said Donoyan. "So we don't need to advertise?" asked Roberts. "Yes. It's a vacant position. I would like to see it posted internally first," said Donoyan. "Why isn't the school committee recording secretary combined with this position like we had discussed before?" asked Mrs. Nadeau. "We have been offering the recording secretary an hourly stipend because the individual doing it now is not the confidential secretary. The confidential secretary would have it as part of their job," said Donoyan. Nadeau doesn't think they can expect that person to do it without any extra pay with all the meetings the WSC has just because they are on salary. Roberts indicated that they put a \$5,000 stipend in the budget for that person. He also noted that if the confidential secretary doesn't want to do it, maybe it can be posted as a separate position. Roberts wondered if there is some reason they are running circles around this position. "Is there a problem? I assumed that Kim was the executive secretary and have always thought she was professional and competent," said Roberts. Dr. Donoyan asked that because this is a personnel issue, that they don't speak about it in public. She said she would be happy to discuss it with him privately.

Motion to table posting of Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent and School Committee Recording Secretary:  
C. Robert

2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

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**Positions Pending Needs Assessment:** Dr. Donoyan asked that they approve these now because if the needs assessment shows they are necessary and need to be posted, they will already have been approved and ready. Roberts thought that it was premature to approve them without the needs assessment being done.

Motion to Table the positions under needs assessment (2<sup>nd</sup> page): C. Roberts 2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier  
Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

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## 8. Request for School Printing Needs for FY13 – G. Donoyan

Dr. Donoyan said that the request has been scaled down and Mr. Webb has done a great amount of analysis of his rates and the cost of doing it in-house is much less than having it done outside. Unfortunately, Mr. Webb is not available this summer but she is looking into having the Department of Corrections do it. "Would it be less expensive

if everyone just used the same letterhead?" asked Roberts. Donoyan explained that we have a generic letterhead that everyone uses. Roberts asked if all the report cards are the same size. Donoyan said they are not. Roberts suggested looking at that in order to save money. Donoyan noted that different levels have different requirements.

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

2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh  
APPROVED

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**CONFERENCES: None**

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Donoyan reported that the difficult road to present valid financial data to the public and the school committee is finally being cleared. These past 10 months have caused much angst within the school system and the City. Numbers were inaccurate causing much of the negativity. Whatever should be the Community's perception of the "reason" for the school deficits of the prior 2 years, let me state that the FY12 budget was unrealistic. We did not "overspend". We just simply did not have enough money to meet our contractual, mandated, and legal obligations. Those are the hard facts that are difficult for many to hear. The intricate questions that we are being faced with we welcome. However, I wonder if they had been addressed years ago, if we would be in this position now. Did you know that we expect revenues for this upcoming year from several sources? Specifically, 74% comes from the State of RI, 21% comes from the City of Woonsocket, and 5% from varied tuition, grants, and Medicaid reimbursements. It's the gap between revenues and projected expenses that remains the crux of the problem. How we bridge the gap is the problem. Intelligent people are trying to figure that out. But, can this system sustain further cuts? The downturn in the economy has hurt RI deeply including the school department. The school department is like an accident patient in an emergency room. WED Leadership along with RIDE has triaged the situation, stabilized the patient, diagnosed its injuries, and now is close to prescribing the medicine and strategies that will bring it to full health. WED plans a prescription and strategy that will chart its course to full health. We are going to present a budget that reflects reality, identifies the truth of what it costs to maintain a very complex system based on student need. We will start looking at a strategy that will chart our course for the next five years. We can set our sights on educationally and fiscally sound solutions to make the schools better and improve the community. This, too, will take some time. There has been much blame, criticism, bullying, and negativity toward the WED. Yes, it took a long time to figure out what is a baseline and realistic budget for our complex urban school system. It took time because we want to get it right. We cannot fall prey to another round of deficits due to inaccuracies and unrealistic budgeting. That is why my team, along with the RI Department of Education are forming the solutions to restore the WED. Safety and instructional resources are priorities. Soon we can begin to rebuild this school department focusing on strategies, educational initiatives, and programming that benefits the students we serve and the community at large. The scrutiny of our work will result in re-establishing the respect of this wonderful district and the smart people who devote their energies to educating our students. An equitable educational system that focuses on student achievement and makes a conscious effort to raise the rigor of instructional delivery, models intellectual curiosity, advances science, and improves our "typical" classification will raise the bar for all children allowing them to thrive. This City should expect no less.

Motion to receive and place on file: J. Donlon

2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:**

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**J. Donlon:** Congratulated V. Phongsavanh on being elected the new Chair of the School Committee and thanked Mrs. McGuire-Forcier for her time and service as Chairperson. Congratulated Mrs. Nadeau as well on being elected Vice Chair. Said that he had a friend say to him that our budget of \$66 million comes out of the city budget and he corrected him saying that only \$12 million comes out of the city budget. He explained that we went over budget last year because not enough money was appropriated. "There's a lot of misinformation out there and I urge people to contact me or anyone on the school committee for clarification."

**E. Nadeau:** Reported that she just returned from a trip to South Carolina and discussed the school system with the people there. "Many of the people at the community pool were teachers and this is a community beyond belief and has one of the best school systems in the country. Most of the people are transplants. People move there because the education system is so great. It's the key to attracting people to a location. It makes me sad that our system is under-funded and our kids don't get the education they deserve. When people say they are going to relocate to a community that they don't look at the school system—don't believe it because they certainly do. We don't have the advantages that other systems in the state have and it's unfortunate for our young people. Every kid deserves that kind of shot. I thought parents always wanted better for their kids than they had for themselves—not in this community."

**C. Roberts:** Passed

**A. McGuire-Forcier:** Passed and left early.

**V. Phongsavanh:** She announced that she will be declining the extra stipend that comes with the Chairperson's position. "Maybe we can make a scholarship out of it." Thanked the members who voted for her tonight to become chair of the school committee, saying "it's humbling to imagine that for a former ESL student who hated school could become the chair of the school committee. It's come full circle. Being chair doesn't mean just showing up at meetings and speaking on behalf of the committee. It really means being a leader for education in this district." Phongsavanh promised that she will do her best and work especially hard to bring credibility back to this school system to rebuild this district brick by brick. As Chair, she will be setting very high expectations for this committee going forward in the areas of professionalism and governance and in developing policies to move the district forward. She said it's evident in this community with the school committee and the City Council that we need to stop arguing, we need to stop blaming. That's not what she's about. "Those are roadblocks to progress. That's not my mission. My mission is the success of our students. Nothing really matters but the success of our students."

Motion to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.: E. Nadeau

2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh (Unan. Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, Substitute WSC Recording Clerk