

**MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2012
7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION
WOONSOCKET MIDDLE SCHOOL
HAMLET BUILDING - 60 FLORENCE DRIVE
WOONSOCKET, RI 02895**

Call to Order by Vimala Phongsavanh

Roll Call: V. Phongsavanh, Present; E. Nadeau, Present; A. McGuire-Forcier, Present; C. Roberts, Present;
J. Donlon, Absent

Motion to convene into executive closed session in accordance with RI Law: 42-46-5-(a) (1) - Job Performance; 42-46-5-(a) (2) - Litigation (Busby vs. City of Woonsocket); 42-46-5-(a) (2) - Collective Bargaining (Contracts):
V. Phongsavanh 2nd: E. Nadeau Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

Motion to come out of executive closed session: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

Call to Order by Vimala Phongsavanh

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: V. Phongsavanh, Present; E. Nadeau, Present; A. McGuire-Forcier, Present; C. Roberts, Present;
J. Donlon, Absent

Good and Welfare:

Citizens' Memorial - Students Isaiah Arnaldy, Czease Mills, Dereck Navarro, Alex Giron, and Rimel Pena performed Mr. Scrooge's Christmas which was led by their teacher Ms. Linda Barrette.

George Nasuti – Thanked everyone who helped out at the football play off game at Barry Field which included Peter Fontaine, the Facilities Department, Bill Larose, Woonsocket Public Works and Water Department for providing two of the lights, and Tom Brien; the team won and it was a lot of fun. The Martin Luther King celebration weekend starts Friday, January 18th at 6:00 p.m. with a scholarship banquet at Savini's Restaurant; he purchased two tables for the school department; please contact him if you would like to purchase a ticket; Saturday is a service day; all the students working will meet at the Tyra Club and from 12:30 to 4:30 they will be at Coleman, WHS, and the WPD to do some service project activities; at Coleman there will be a major clean up, at the police station there will be a mural painted by Riverzedge, and a mural painted at the WHS gymnasium; all those students and people who volunteered will go back to the Tyra Club to have dinner; this is open to anyone who would like to volunteer; Sunday there will be a Martin Luther King service at the St. James Baptist Church at 4:00 p.m.; Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. a celebration at the new monument at the top of Mason and South Main Street; hopes any member of the WED can attend any one of these events.

Recognitions and Announcements – Superintendent Giovanna Donoyan: Jennifer Maiello, Theater Arts Teacher at Woonsocket High School, has received a grant from Fusionworks for a 12 week residency program which will provide students an opportunity to work with dancers from this professional dance troupe. A recognition dinner was held on Wednesday, December 5th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick. Woonsocket High School, represented by students Mustafa Shaker, Tia Washington, and Kara Renaud, Principal Dr. Lynne Bedard, and Superintendent Dr. Giovanna Donoyan, received a Certificate of Recognition for participating in the Rhode Island Blood Center Donor Program, and earned a High School Hero Challenge Award (second place for high schools with 300+ seniors). Diane Lafranaye, a school librarian who oversees the blood drives at the high school, received the Prestigious Vision Award for her exceptional dedication and commitment to the blood donor program.

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

Approval of Minutes: November 14, 2012 Open/Closed Minutes; November 20, 2012 Open Minutes

Motion to Approve Minutes of November 14, 2012 Open/Closed and November 20, 2012 Open Minutes:
V. Phongsavanh 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Consent Agenda

1. Personnel Actions: Certified Appointments/Non-Certified Appointments
2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000
3. Field Trip/Conference Requests - None
4. Home Schooling Requests
5. Obsolete Equipment

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda as a whole: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

Communications

1. WISE Presentation – V. Phongsavanh did a PowerPoint presentation on the WISE Committee Framework.
2. Parent Leadership Training Institute Presentation – Kyla Foster, PLTI Coordinator at Riverzedge did a PowerPoint presentation on strategies on how to increase parent engagements and how parents can become leaders in their community; she noted she has brochures and applications for anyone who is interested.

Committee Reports - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Update regarding Proposal for Special Education Legal Services and Bid for Special Education Department Audit – G. Donoyan**

G. Donoyan stated she submitted for committee's approval the request for qualifications (RFQ) for legal services for Special Education. C. Roberts stated under the insurance section of the RFQ, which is probably boiler plate language that R. Malafrente is using, a lot of times in these applications it is important that an attorney has errors and omissions insurance; would like to have this line item added.

Motion to Approve: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: E. Nadeau Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Appointment of the Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent of Schools – G. Donoyan**

G. Donoyan read her letter of recommendation to appoint Kimberly Blais to the position of Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent of Schools.

Motion to Approve: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: E. Nadeau, C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

2. **Discussion/Vote on WMS Personnel Changes – G. Donoyan**

G. Donoyan read her letter regarding WMS personnel changes seeking approval from the Committee to promote both assistant principals to co-principals with a stipend of \$5,984.00; she is also seeking approval from the Committee to have the Secondary Special Education Coordinator act as a Dean of Students. Total cost savings with these personnel changes would be \$120,026.00.

Motion to Approve: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: E. Nadeau

C. Roberts agrees in theory with the Dean of Students position assuming most of the focus will be on discipline; however, this position does not exist so there is no job description; feels the Committee needs a detailed job description and expectations for this position; he agrees with the lay out of co-principals but does not agree with the stipend. A. McGuire-Forcier stated she supports the co-principals but said how can two people handle the tasks that we need; she recommends to table until we get a job description and discuss stipends. C. Roberts stated the Dean of Students position should be a \$45,000 to \$50,000 position only.

Motion to Table: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

3. **Discussion/Vote on Principal Intern Program – G. Donoyan**

G. Donoyan read her letter regarding Principal Intern Program at Bernon Heights. She stated for the next several weeks there will be a retired principal covering at Bernon; she is seeking Committee approval to hire leadership from within the system that allows for growth opportunities for teachers. She also suggests to have a senior WED principal as the intern's mentor. Total cost savings would be \$20,547.

Motion to Approve: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: V. Phongsavanh

A. McGuire-Forcier has concerns with having a teacher as an intern; you will have union people supervising union people. G. Donoyan stated the teacher would take a LOA to do this and a long term substitute would be placed in the teacher's position. C. Roberts asked if an assistant principal could apply. G. Donoyan said yes. E. Nadeau stated she does not believe in the stipend to have a senior principal mentor the intern; none of our other principals had a mentor. C. Roberts stated there is no job description for an intern principal and there is no dollar amount value to this position; nothing exists on paper.

Motion to Approve the concept of an intern principal for Bernon Heights authorizing the Superintendent to advertise for the position to see how many apply and in the meantime, work on a job description for an intern principal: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

Conference - None

Superintendent's Report: An article passed my desk recently entitled "distressed schools need help, not blame". Michael Crossley, a Pennsylvania educator, writes that school districts across the country face the same dilemma as we do. For example, "Chester-Upland was barely able to keep its doors open this school year... Duquesne City is sending its middle school students to neighboring districts... New York City was facing a \$19 million budget shortfall for next school year... Harrisburg has eliminated more than 350 teaching and support positions and closed five schools... Allentown, Reading and Erie are projecting multimillion dollar shortfalls for years to come." Why are they in crisis? "They are in crisis because they serve poor communities, have little local tax base and rely heavily on state funding." I share this with you because the WED is not unique; school districts across America mirror our struggles and are forced to meet federal and state regulations without the right tools.

Despite the struggles, I'm proud to say that we are special because of our willingness to find solutions to develop the changes, ideas, innovations, transformations, and efficiencies that will help deliver a better education that will result in higher achievement. Our people, along with the members of WISE, are committed to making things better, building capacity, and designing ways to help all our students. We are committed to improvements and inventing the tools necessary to build a better educational system. So, what do you have to look forward to in the new year? Our primary goal is to bring back full day kindergarten. That will take time, hard work, and the right tools. Those tools will be found in our recommendations for a 5/6 Academy (public presentations will begin shortly), a curriculum/resources/and assessments that align with the Common Core and New Science Standards, federal allocations to determine how we can "stretch" the dollars and innovative models that help our meet our students needs in a better and more cost efficient manner. We are not just saying this, we are doing this, every day... despite the noise of reluctance, blame, and criticism. So the problems we face, everyone faces, but the difference is at the WED we are creating many tools that will help in building a better system, one step at a time. Abraham Maslow, a great psychologists known for his Hierarchy of Needs, stated, "If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail". WED is creating many tools and sees every problem as an opportunity!

A better school system means a more valuable community, one wherein people will want to invest, families want to grow, and businesses want to locate. So, during this precious holiday season, my wish for all is that we return to thinking about building a better system, truly a gift for generations to come. Thank you.

Motion to receive and place on file: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

School Committee Good and Welfare

John Donlon: Absent

A. McGuire-Forcier: Congratulated Kimberly Blais; she said she never had a complaint about her and every director, principal and anyone who has encountered her said she is more than helpful; obviously she is best suited for the job; when it does come up to hire another secretary for Dr. McGee the committee should think to have Kim continue doing both duties for the remainder of the school year to save money and maybe give her a stipend; she has been doing this for over a year now. A. McGuire-Forcier went to professional development on Saturday from 8:30 to 4:15 regarding RI ethics statue regulations, roles of RIDE, BEP, graduation requirements, employee evaluations, open meetings and access to public records, fiscal information and budgets, contract negotiations, the common core, and PAR testing which we do not have the technology for; spoke to Patrick Guider regarding technology and he is hoping that RTTT money may be allocated towards updating technology; we are responsible for the finances and overseeing the budget, they made that clear. She said to V. Phongsavanh she thinks WISE Committee is wonderful because they bring in a lot of non-profits and community people together but they are now talking about creating policies for our schools which is the School Committee's job; this should be a sub-committee of the School Committee; you are avoiding the open meetings law and access to public records by creating a committee away from the School Committee; she feels that the next step is to adopt this Committee as a sub-committee. The SpEd workshop was very informative and maybe we could put this on the next agenda so the community can see this. Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

V. Phongsavanh: Congratulated the football team for making it to the superbowl; a great achievement. As we go into a new year, lets keep the momentum going with focusing on education and making it a priority of this city; let's continue the good work we have been doing; continue to make students successful. She stated she will make the WISE meetings more transparent and if they want WISE to become a sub-committee they will work on this; we want to become a sub-committee so this is great news. Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

C. Roberts: Passed.

E. Nadeau: Congratulated Kimberly Blais; this is a well-deserved appointment and very thrilled for her. Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:55 p.m.: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberly Blais, Recording Secretary