

**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2013
7:00 P.M. – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet, 60 Florence Drive
Woonsocket, RI 02895**

Call to Order by Vimala Phongsavanh

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

V. Phongsavanh stated the individual whose job performance is under review has been given notice to have this meeting in public or closed session and has not indicated that she wants this meeting in open session.

**Motion to convene into Executive Closed Session in Accordance with RI Law: 42-46-5-(a)(1) – Job Performance: C. Roberts
2nd: E. Nadeau Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes**

Motion to come out of Executive Closed Session: C. Roberts 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

V. Phongsavanh reported that the Committee voted in Executive Closed Session to continue the matter at a future date.

Call to Order by Vimala Phongsavanh

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Good and Welfare:

Lynn Kapiskas, Resides on Prospect St – Stated she has two children in the WED system; concerned with the policy that was given 1st Passage regarding Letters of Recommendation with restrictions and prohibition on WED staff members from completing any and all questionnaires, surveys, etc; concerned that children with IEPs have documentation from their physician, social workers, etc that need to be filled with regard to children’s behaviors, how frequently counseling should be conducted, medication management, etc; the policy prohibition is so broad that it would prohibit WED staff from completing these forms; would like to recommend considering modifications to the prohibition so it will not make it so narrow; spoke to C. Roberts today regarding her concerns and emailed same to the other School Committee members; they bounced around the idea of making it a prohibition but with the ability to give certain staff members/administration the ability to approve certain forms for completion; parents have submitted forms to the teachers which they in turn submitted to administration and they never came back; some children are waiting medication management since the fall because the forms still have not been filled out; we need a rapid turnaround, forms need to be completed. She has asked C. Roberts to deny or table this policy in order to narrow its constraints; this policy also prohibits communication logs for teachers and parents; this also might be a problem with Title I in regards to the parent involvement policy; consider all these issues before 2nd passage tonight, either deny it or table it for possible amendments.

Denise Auclair – Stated she is concerned with the communication between parents and administrators and anything to do with doctors and private information; wants to make sure before the Committee passes the policy for the second time that they think about title money like with the kindergarten moving to a half day. She suggested to Dr. Donoyan that she goes around the community to get input for the 5/6 academy and RIDE suggesting that we close an elementary school; suggested to invite someone from RIDE or even the Commissioner to come down to discuss this and maybe more people would attend and they should explain why we should be closing another elementary school or even how they see where Woonsocket is going with all the budget constraints; when she sees the Governor or the Commissioner come on TV with those commercials where they promise this and that, she would love for them to tell us what all these promises mean.

Carole Lerner – Announced for the Child Outreach Department that WED is conducting health and development screenings for all Woonsocket children ages 3, 4, and 5 as required by federal regulations IDEA; screens are a brief look at a child’s vision, hearing, speech, language skills, social and emotional development, and general development; screenings will take place on January 29th and 30th and February 25th, 26, and 27th at Citizens’ Memorial School, 250 Winthrop Street; please call 767-4643 to schedule an appointment.

Recognitions and Announcements – None

Approval of January 9, 2013 Open/Closed Minutes:

**Motion to Approve the Open Minutes of January 9, 2013: C. Roberts 2nd: E. Nadeau Roll Call Vote: 2 Yes (CR, EN)
1 Abstain (VP)**

V. Phongsavanh stated the Committee voted to Approve the Closed Minutes of January 9, 2013 in Executive Closed Session

Consent Agenda – Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda as a Whole: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh (unanimously approved)

Communications:

1. Project Update of 5/6 Academy – G. Donoyan, P. McGee

G. Donoyan stated she and P. McGee will give the Committee an update and request approval of going forward with this idea in public forums. G. Donoyan would like to ensure that transportation, the union, teachers, curriculum, directors, and principals all have been doing different parts of this program; it is a work in process. P. McGee handed out projected enrollment data for Grades 5-8 through 2013 to 2018; column 2012-13 gives what the enrollments are this year and kept the numbers the same for the next five years even though they will not stay exactly the same but it will give you an idea; he stated the charts below gives you the total of projected enrollment of Grades 5&6 and 7&8 for the next five years. Earlier this year he and other directors looked at the feasibility of the 5/6 academy with respect to where the district is moving; looked at the curriculum and the success that our students have at the middle and the high school; there is a lot of area for much more improvement; they feel that the 5th and 6th graders should be housed in the same school so there is an opportunity to have common curriculum accountability; having all these teachers and students in one building would make it easier to provide that opportunity for greater success. What we need to know is if the 5th and 6th graders and the 7th and 8th graders with the projected enrollment numbers will fit in the buildings; the capacity of the buildings is 850 children who could comfortably fit in each building; Gilbane told the Building Committee that 850 is a comfortable number but the buildings could fit up to 1000. G. Donoyan said Gilbane gave those numbers when they based it on the team numbers, the team approach design at the middle school level which is a different kind of model than the elementary model that would allow more children to be in the school safely.

C. Roberts requested a workshop because the Committee probably has a significant number of questions which would be nice to do before we have any public discussions; in 2016-17 we are talking about 1100 kids and a 1000 is uncomfortable. G. Donoyan stated they want to advocate for what is in the best interest of our students and the data shows a certain amount of our students are not meeting proficiency; we need to get these children ready for the high school to really succeed and have a higher graduation rate; she welcomes any and all input and you can call Kimberly Blais at 767-4068 who will tell her or P. McGee what your concerns are; email address is on the website. V. Phongsavanh asked if they have an elementary school in mind that would be closing. G. Donoyan said they considered one school on the recommendations of RIDE which is the oldest school and does not have a gymnasium and is not handicapped accessible. C. Roberts stated for the record that the Committee in no way made a decision to close an elementary school; he personally voted not to close Fifth Avenue, thinks RIDE's information was inaccurate and thinks we are paying the price now with art teachers having mobile carts, etc; does not want people to think that we are on the verge of closing an elementary school. E. Nadeau asked if the 5/6 academy is for the reason of curriculum or for the fact that the Budget Commission hinted that they want to close another elementary school. G. Donoyan said WED wants to ensure that we put children first; people outside of this table wants us to cut but we all know how much WED has been cut; we are ensuring that we meet the needs of our students. E. Nadeau said with these projected enrollments we will be over capacity at the middle schools, they will not be comfortable and we just created a different situation and they were built to eliminate that from happening. G. Donoyan said they are looking into an 8 ½ grade which means they were retained because of proficiency in the 8th grade but should be in the 9th grade at the high school but this does not mean that they cannot be at the high school working towards proficiency; it is a transitional program.

Committee Reports - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Vote on WMS Personnel Changes – G. Donoyan

G. Donoyan stated we all recognize the importance of maintaining student and staff safety and discipline in all of our schools; she is recommending the transfer of R. Ferguson who is currently the Secondary Special Education Coordinator to become the Assistant Principal at the WMS; he will be retaining the same salary level and contractual obligation; he will also oversee the special education department at the WMS; C. Lerner is identifying someone at the WHS who can take over R. Ferguson's load at the WHS; she is requesting approval by the School Committee to transfer R. Ferguson to the WMS.

Motion to Approve: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: None - Motion Failed

G. Donoyan stated she has to advocate for the safety of the children; we currently only have one administrator in each building; by law we need to have someone other than teachers because they cannot do discipline; if it is not R. Ferguson she will request to post for the position and go out to hire someone. C. Roberts stated he would look forward to seeing a job description for a dean of discipline or an assistant principal or whatever it is we are calling this person; does not see this position as what it currently pays R. Ferguson so he has an issue with the salary; he is on the same page with the Superintendent that discipline is important and we need someone at the WMS but there is no job description and the Committee has not set a salary commensurate with those expectations. G. Donoyan said we currently have assistant principal job descriptions that she will forward to the Committee and this position will not be referred to as dean of students.

Motion to Approve: V. Phongsavanh No one seconded therefore the motion failed.

2. Resolution to include Woonsocket's Innovation Solutions for Education (WISE) as a Subcommittee – V. Phongsavanh
V. Phongsavanh stated two meetings ago a School Committee member requested that WISE becomes a Subcommittee to the School Committee; there is one edit that needs to be made so will not sign this evening but looks for the Committee's support.

Motion to Approve: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: C. Roberts

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

3. Discussion/Vote on Policy P4-11.5 Letters of Recommendation – 2nd Passage – C. Roberts

C. Roberts is asking for 2nd passage tonight; did receive an email and had a phone discussion with L. Kapiskas; both recognizes challenges on each side; in no way was forms associated with an IEP a target of this; we have a much more expansive problem in the school department with surveys and questionnaires that are taking the time of our staff; this policy is honoring the request from administration; he did speak with C. Lerner and with passage of this policy tonight she and the Superintendent creates a field memo that shows interpretation of the policy. He stated for the record this policy was also reviewed by David Kane who is our legal counsel for special education.

Motion to Approve 2nd Passage: C. Roberts

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Vote on Copier Lease Agreement – G. Donoyan, R. Malafronte

R. Malafronte stated we would save approximately \$10,000 a year leasing some multifunctional devices as well as six print controllers; he met with Konica to discuss the opportunity to bring these copiers in our schools; staff will use the copiers to print rather than hp printers which would be a substantial savings of more than what is projected but it will have an immediate savings of \$10,000; administration recommends that you approve this lease and the next step would be that we bring this to the budget commission for their approval.

Motion to Approve: C. Roberts

2nd: E. Nadeau

C. Roberts stated this has come up when they did the first pass of the draft budget prior to yourself and RIDE; do we have other leases. R. Malafronte said we have other leases but when they come due, we will have more proposals for the Committee.

Motion to Approve: C. Roberts

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

2. Financial Update – R. Malafronte

R. Malafronte stated we have had an opportunity to take our December 31st financial reports or expenditures to take a snap shot; we are not at this point talking about a projection of expenditures for the entire year; we are continuously working on this and as of 5:30 today we were still working on this; we are six months into this fiscal year and if you look at our expenditures we are at our half way point in our expenditures so from the point of view saying we are on target, he would say yes; if you look at total expenditures we are at 50.73% which includes expenditures and encumbrances year to date; in terms of a positive, if you look at some the personnel decisions that the Committee has made in terms of the central office we are looking at a substantial balance at the end of the fiscal year because the Committee moved an individual from the central office into a director position there a savings in that line; because certain positions were not filled in the beginning of the fiscal year there is also a savings in the director line; there is also a savings in the principals and assistant principals as of December 31st; the current nursing staff based upon attrition of one individual and we are looking at a modest savings in that line; one of the biggest unknowns in a school system is your out of district special education tuition and if you look at that line as of December 31st that line is expected to be over by almost \$300,000; this is a snap shot and this line could change by \$100,000 by two students moving out or into the district; in is their intention for preparation of the FY14 budget that the encumbered year to date column would be an encumbered projected column so that we would have an amount in every line and have an idea at what that projection may look like, a snap shot on June 30, 2013; if you have any questions, he is prepared to answer and apologizes for not having this to them in advance. C. Roberts said thank you. V. Phongsavanh stated the only line that we really need to keep an eye on going forward is the out of district. R. Malafronte said as we go along there may be other line items; within the next week or so we will be working on the teacher line and that is a very important line in terms of looking at attrition.

3. Discussion/Vote on Policy P3-8.6 Relating to the Education of Students Experiencing Homelessness – 1st Passage – G. Donoyan, L. Filomeno

L. Filomeno stated the McKinney-Vento Act which is federal legislation requires that we have a policy in the district regarding educating students experiencing homelessness; we do receive the McKinney-Vento Grant and is also part of the Title I requirements. V. Phongsavanh asked what is the policy so the public can know. L. Filomeno said the policy would require that we follow the law, we have a process in place for identifying the students that we have and we comply with all of the regulations regarding transportation, access to afterschool programs, access to all educational activities regardless where a student lives.

Motion to Approve the Policy for 1st Passage: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: C. Roberts

C. Roberts said the policy mentions a WED liaison. L. Filomeno said the liaison is herself, Director of Title I; we are not creating a new position. C. Roberts asked how much money do we receive. L. Filomeno said we should get \$32,000 and this policy is also part of Title I requirements which we get close \$4M.

Motion to Approve the Policy for 1st Passage: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: C. Roberts

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

4. Discussion/Vote on Resolutions Relative to State Legislation Affecting Education – C. Roberts
 a) Resolution in Support of House Bill #5066 and Senate Bill #49; b) Resolution Against House Bill #5068;
 c) Resolution Relative to Bus Monitors; d) Resolution Relative to Full Day Kindergarten; e) Resolution Relative to Compulsory Attendance; f) Resolution Relative to Advancement of the Funding Formula

V. Phongsavanh stated she would like letter e) Resolution Relative to Compulsory Attendance taken out separately for discussion; E. Nadeau stated she would like letter d) Resolution Relative to Full Day Kindergarten taken out separately for discussion.

Motion to Approve Resolutions 4 a, b, c, and f: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

Motion to Approve Resolution Letter d) Relative to Full Day Kindergarten: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh

E. Nadeau stated she has concerns of the funding for this; do you think they will fund full day kindergarten or give us start up money. C. Roberts said this is a duplicate of a resolution from last year that Senator Cote introduced to legislation on our behalf that did not make it out of committee; this would recognize those half day students as full time students for the immediate academic year; the challenge is the state aid formula is a year behind so we always have the challenge of those kids being half day kindergarten; we will never be able to close that one year gap so we are asking them to legislatively recognize those kids as full time kids; however, it does specifically asks for the funding to bring full day kindergarten back.

Motion to Approve Resolution Letter d) Relative to Full Day Kindergarten: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

Motion to Approve Resolution Letter e) Relative to Compulsory Attendance: C. Roberts 2nd: E. Nadeau

C. Roberts stated this is a duplicate from last year asking the general assembly to reverse the change they made to the compulsory age of attendance; historically it has always been 16 and in RI they made a move to 18; we are asking for consideration to move back to 16; we want to spend the limited amount of dollars on students who are eager to learn; he is looking for Committee's support.

Motion to Approve Resolution Letter d) Relative to Full Day Kindergarten: C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 2 No (VP, EN)

Conferences – None

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Donoyan said at yesterday's Budget Commission meeting, the State department of Revenue released its baseline projection for the City of Woonsocket, including the School Department. The schedule shows the baseline or present position as well as projections for FY14 through FY17, both for the City and Schools. The report is under review by the BC. What is helpful to note is that the document by the State gives the citizens of Woonsocket a document that paints a conservative picture of our future. I will leave the discussion of the City to the Mayor who, I am sure is as concerned about the future as I am. We heard this evening from Mr. Malafronte who describes the hard line we take on controlling current expenses at the WED. I remind everyone that we can do this because we finally have a realistic and justified budget of what are our basic educational needs. What we can control we do, though there are uncontrollables. The District Management Council, national educational and fiscal experts indicate the K-12 financial future is undergoing structural and long-lasting changes that require a fundamental rethinking of resource allocations. There continues a fierce battle for the limited resources between healthcare, pensions, and the federal debt as they dual with education. Despite the battle, we still must educate our children. To provide for the educational needs of our children in accordance with state and federal mandates will require everyone to wrestle with values. Nationally, people appreciate value for money spent. The WED must manage the tensions of competing values while respecting all stakeholders sets of values while ensuring student achievement. I can tell you that philosophically, I value education and how it alone raises self worth and opens doors to opportunities and success. So the WED will continue to advocate for the education of our children while being a fiscal steward of the taxpayers investment in education. With thoughtful compromise and sound data, we will find ways to reallocate resources, roles, and responsibilities in order to improve student achievement.

Motion to Receive and Place on File: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes

School Committee Good and Welfare

C. Roberts – Passed.

J. Donlon – Absent.

E. Nadeau – In regards to the 5/6 academy she would like to see some figures as of this school year if you were to extract the 5th graders that are special education students that are probably not ready for the 5/6 academy to see where those numbers come in.

V. Phongsavanh – Passed.

A. McGuire-Forcier – Absent.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:05 p.m.: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberly Blais, WSC Recording Secretary