

**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2013
7:00 P.M. – OPEN SESSION
Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet, 60 Florence Drive
Woonsocket, RI 02895**

Motion to come out of recess at 7:00 p.m.: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)

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, Present.

V. Phongsavanh stated to the public that the Committee met at 4:00 p.m. today in closed session and there was a unanimous decision to support the recommendation of the Superintendent and an unanimous decision to seal tonight's closed session meeting.

Good and Welfare:

Mike Davis, High School Street: He serves on the Feinstein Committee at Harris Elementary School; they are planning a pasta and meatball dinner to support the Rwanda Trip for the Global Citizens' Group at the WHS; this dinner will be held on Saturday, February 23rd at St. Agatha's Church Hall from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; the cost for adults is \$8, children \$4 and under 5 years old is free; please contact the Feinstein Chairperson Denise Phillips at woonsocketschools.com or call 767-4855.

Dr. Lynne Bedard, WHS/WACTC Principal: Stated she would like to recognize and showcase a WHS Senior Jacob Chipppo; Jacob was recently accepted into the 2013 National Association for Music Educators All Eastern Honors Chorus; in April, Jacob will be joining other students from RI and eleven other eastern states for 3 days of rehearsals at the MEMC Eastern Division Conference in Hartford, Connecticut; the All Eastern Honors Ensemble will take place on April 7th; this evening Jacob will be singing the national anthem.

Peter Fontaine, Director of Facilities: He thanked Dick Plante, Henry Trudeau, Tom Lambert, and the whole custodial and facilities department because they put in a tremendous effort to get the schools ready for today; they worked incredible hours under difficult circumstances and he is proud of them; thanked Chief Carey and Chief Lataille for keeping him informed all weekend of the conditions and what was going to happen; thanked Rick Lambert from the Highway Department for their efforts for getting the streets ready; thanked everyone again for a terrific job and it shows Woonsocket pride coming together.

Jeffrey Partington, WTG President: Stated tonight the Committee has personnel recommendations to lay off 41 people; last year the Superintendent went through the entire exercise to justify every position and believes the School Committee was part of that to make sure that every single position was accounted for; since we have not lost any enrollment and our financial fortunes are looking up, he finds it difficult that this has to be done this evening and that 41 people will receive layoff notices; disappointed because everyone knows we are running on bare bones and losing these people would be difficult especially giving our ability to retain and attract people; thinks it is unfortunate that this is even on the agenda tonight.

Recognitions and Announcements – G. Donoyan said thank you to Jacob Chipppo for doing a wonderful job singing the national anthem; he has made us proud. She complimented the facilities and maintenance staff and stated there are some of the most devoted people here 24/7; a lot of people thinks it's their job but they went above and beyond; thanked Peter Fontaine for leading that job, he did a phenomenal job. Brittany Plante, a senior in the Hospitality/Culinary Arts program at Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center, has won a full-tuition scholarship to Johnson & Wales University. Brittany plans to major in Baking & Pastry Arts at the North Carolina campus. She is also a state officer in the SkillsUSA organization serving as the secretary. Congratulations Ms. Plante and we look forward to hearing about your continued success with your future endeavors. Culinary Instructor Paul Jalaf from the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center was on the Rhode Show on Friday, February 1, 2013 and did a 'shout out' to his students. Chef Paul and his students won the "The Best Side of the City" award at the "I Heart Providence" competition at the State House on February 5, 2013. Their entry was Post Modern Waldorf Salad. The Woonsocket School Department is pleased to inform you of kindergarten registration. Any student turning 5 years of age before September 1, 2013 is eligible. Registration will take place on Saturday, March 2, 2013 at the Woonsocket Middle School – Hamlet Building from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please refer to the school's website at www.woonsocketschools.com for documentation needed to register. You can also find registration forms on the website and please feel free to fill them out and bring them with you to save time.

Motion to receive and place on file: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Approval of January 23, 2013 Open/Closed Minutes:

Motion to approve open/closed minutes and seal the closed minutes of January 23rd: C Roberts

2nd: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes (VP, EN, CR, JD)

1 Abstain (AM)

Consent Agenda – J. Donlon requested to have the Mt. St. Charles Athletic taken separately for discussion. A. McGuire-Forcier requested to have termination/non-renewal taken separately.

1. Purchases over \$2000: J. Donlon said he would like to address the \$11,465.00 for ice rental fee at Mt. St. Charles; last year was \$9500 which is an increase for about \$1800 which he thinks is unacceptable; he will not support paying this bill.

Motion not to pay this bill: J. Donlon 2nd: E. Nadeau

C. Roberts said for clarification, the intent is not to pay the bill so are we cancelling the hockey program. J. Donlon said if we have to; he cannot see paying them an additional \$1800 and he did not want to give them \$9500 last year; stated the hockey program is not doing well in the first place. C. Roberts said they should look into combining this with another community. J. Donlon thinks the athletic director should look into this. A. McGuire-Forcier agrees but this is a short notice and we will disappoint the children and asked G. Donoyan if there is money in our budget for this. G. Donoyan said at this present time, yes; A. McGuire-Forcier will support paying this but they should look into joining with other teams. C. Roberts asked if we are paying for ice time already used or are we paying for next year's ice time; if we used the time then we have to the obligation to pay the bill.

Motion to table: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

2. Non-Renewal/Terminations: A. McGuire-Forcier asked G. Donoyan if she feels that 41 teachers, which is the lowest number of teachers they ever had for layoffs, would be enough not to effect the bumping; she does not want to see unassigned teachers and if they close another school, is this number going to work with that; she asked G. Donoyan if she is certain that 41, even if we close a school, is the number. G. Donoyan said they have taken a look at personnel, staffing, and the crisis that they went through last year to justify; we went through each and every position to justify their salary and position based on student need; as we roll forward they recognize there will be efficiencies and programming, there may be efficiencies with moving, perhaps, to a 5/6 academy; it is not likely to be losing a lot of teachers because teachers have to go with the students. The report you have are the people who are non-tenured, one year substitutes for individuals that are coming back from leave of absences, and we have to by law to let them know that they do not have a job next year. G. Donoyan stated she is looking for the School Committee's direction in regards to something that happened this afternoon; the Budget Commission suggested that we terminate all personnel this year because of the uncertainty of funding and the possibility of lack of funding so that uncertainty was important enough to ask her to ask the Committee to terminate all personnel; she is looking for the Committee's direction on what to do next; do you want her to go forward and terminate everyone like last year or stay with the 41 teachers. A. McGuire-Forcier stated she will not support terminating all the teachers like they had to do last year; last year was a different situation and no one was offering to help us and the Superintendent talked daily with the Commissioner; this year the State will front us the money again if needed; however, she does not want to find out in March that they should of given out 10 extra notices so she wants to make certain that 41 is the right number. G. Donoyan stated they have done their due diligence and this is the number they came up with at this point in time. A. McGuire-Forcier asked R. Ackerman if the Budget Commission can override the Committee and say terminate all teachers. R. Ackerman stated the Budget Commission Statute is unclear; he does not see anything that says that the Budget Commission can direct the School Committee to do something but if the Commission feels that they have the authority to send out notices or to determine the number of personnel to operate the schools properly then that would be for them to decide; he does not feel that they can order the Committee to do anything; the Budget Commission authorization gives them control over hiring, firing and fiscal matters. V. Phongsavanh stated there will be two votes on personnel actions; one would be to layoff the original 41 and the second would be for the recommendation of the Budget Commission. J. Partington stated we lost a lot of difficult to replace personnel as a result of that mass layoff last year; if you want to keep stability within this school system there are acceptable things like what you are asked to do tonight; this Committee and they have been through a lot together but the things that are the most difficult are after the votes and everyone goes home the people start to make their own individual decisions whether or not they want to work in Woonsocket; another shock like this would probably drive away the best and brightest people that have stuck with the Committee, with him, and this community through thick and thin. V. Phongsavanh agrees with A. McGuire-Forcier and this is shocking that they would ask us especially without notice to anyone; she will not be in support of this; we need to bring support and stability back into our schools. E. Nadeau said she will never support this; we have 6300 kids and we need teachers in front of them.

Motion to approve the personnel recommendations that the Committee received for 41 layoffs: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Motion to vote on the recommendation of the Budget Commission to layoff all the teachers: C. Roberts stated technically we do not need this vote because we just voted unanimously 5 to 0 so this is telling them that we are not doing this; he thinks they have the power to override the Committee.

With the exception of personnel actions and the Mt. St. Charles ice rink, motion to approve the consent agenda: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: J. Donlon, A. McGuire-Forcier Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Communications – None.

Committee Reports: V. Phongsavanh said they announced at the last meeting that they received a grant from the RI Foundation to have a facilitator for the five year plan; they will be working with the Brown University Educational Alliance to help consult in the process. G. Donoyan said they are extremely thrilled to be partnering with a great organization of that magnitude; thanked RI Foundation for the \$10,000 and their support. A. McGuire-Forcier stated the Grading Committee met along with P. McGee; asked P. McGee if the surveys have been sent out yet. P. McGee stated he will be meeting with J. Gallishaw and two other members of the committee to make sure those questions go into the surveymonkey; they are looking to get this out when they return from vacation. A. McGuire-Forcier encouraged everyone to fill this out because it will help with the grading policy for the district.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Vote on Policy P3-8.6 Relating to the Education of Students Experiencing Homelessness -2nd Passage – G. Donoyan, L. Filomeno

G. Donoyan stated the policy is presented for 2nd passage and L. Filomeno did explain the necessity of this policy for the WED; it is required by law; requesting approval for 2nd passage.

Motion to Approve: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: C. Roberts Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

2. Discussion/Vote for an Amendment of Article V (Meetings) Section I – Bylaws of the Woonsocket School Committee – 1st Passage – V. Phongsavanh

V. Phongsavanh seeks support by the Committee to amend the bylaws to carryout our regularly scheduled meetings to the second Wednesday of every month which will result in one meeting a month; under the current bylaws they still have the power to call an emergency meeting or interim meetings for matters that need to be handled in a timely manner; the recommendation to change these bylaws is based on the fact that since we have had the Budget Commission we have not had too many things on our agenda and after many months of this, 30 minute meetings are not effective and efficient for any of us; moving to once a month would really bring it all together and most of our work is done outside of these meetings.

Motion to approve the passage of this amendment: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: J. Donlon

C. Roberts stated he will be voting no; thinks that even with the presence of the Budget Commission he has the opposite thought process and thinks it is more important to meet and have regularly scheduled meetings so they can work as a team on a number of items; just tonight you can take a look at the consent agenda and when it comes to approve transfers, terminations, layoffs and hiring, thinks that a month span is too long of a time; when people elected us they knew and expected us to meet every two weeks; we need to stick to the commitment that was originally made; therefore he will not be supporting this. A. McGuire-Forcier agrees with C. Roberts; she stated January has always been a slower month but now we have layoff notices, budgets and everything else that is coming their way; last year they had their two a month meetings plus special meetings one after another; she would consider this more if they can change the bylaws to calling special meetings if we have super majority of the votes or hold special meetings on Wednesday nights; at this time she will vote no because this is the busiest time of year. J. Donlon stated he thinks it's a good idea to meet once a month and if something comes up we can have a special meeting on a Wednesday; he will be voting in favor of this tonight. C. Roberts stated with the talks of special meeting he can make two comments; one comment is that a special meeting can only be called by the chair and he is not comfortable with this because if you have a view point different from the chair then you will have to wait a month because he does not think a special meeting is going to get called and second he doesn't think they have looked into how this connects with other bylaws; bylaws are very specific about other actions that can only be taken in regularly scheduled meetings and certain actions that cannot be done in special meetings; a policy could take us two to three months to accomplish; he mentioned these two points for consideration for a no or at least table to see how modifying that language would work. A. McGuire-Forcier asked R. Ackerman his opinion. R. Ackerman said C. Roberts makes a good point and it would make sense for someone to look at the rest of the bylaws; if there is nothing that prohibits that he would suggest that the Committee do this for a period of time prior because it is not clear to him whether or not there will be some loss of communication between the public at large or continuity; do this on an experimental basis and if after 3, 4, or 6 months things are fine then maybe that is the way to go.

Motion to approve the passage of this amendment: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: J. Donlon
Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes (VP, EN, JD) 2 No (AM, CR)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Vote on Superintendent Performance Review Process – V. Phongsavanh

V. Phongsavanh stated she is not seeking a vote on this tonight; would like to introduce to the Committee the different processes that are in your binders for review about a performance review for the Superintendent because after reviewing our bylaws although we require an annual review of the Superintendent we do not actually have a process for this; for years each Superintendent has done a self evaluation; she does believe in outcome driven performance reviews and believes in the fair and balanced approach for both the Committee and the Superintendent; we do need a fair timeline and to begin putting this process in place because she does not think every Superintendent who has walked out has been spectacular and that is what their review says; looking for discussion and recommendations to bring back to the Governance and Policy Committee. A. McGuire-Forcier stated she and Allen Auclair pushed this issue for many years and were voted down; we not only need a Superintendent evaluation but also School Committee evaluations because we are the only ones that do not have one; the Committee needs to be held accountable also along with the Superintendent; the Committee did work on a survey for the Superintendent but Mr. Sequino of the Budget Commission put it on hold which he does not have the authority to do; would like to do the survey still to find out the opinions of the directors, principals, and people who work day to day with the Superintendent. V. Phongsavanh asked how do other School Committees evaluated themselves. A. McGuire-Forcier stated there are forms, just call Tim Duffy.

2. Discussion/Vote for Appointment of SPED Legal Counsel – G. Donoyan

G. Donoyan stated three proposals were received by the WED; she is submitting for the Committee's recommendation awarding the services to the Law Firm of Brennan, Recupero, Cascione, Scungio and McAllister.

Motion to approve: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: J. Donlon

C. Roberts said there was no information in their packets regarding the three firms and would like to table this for two weeks so they can get copies of the bids.

Motion to table: C. Roberts

2nd: A. McGuire-Forcier

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes.

3. Discussion/Vote Resolution Relative to Administration Transfers – C. Roberts

V. Phongsavanh stated she will make a motion to table because she has no information on this resolution. C. Roberts stated there is no written resolution; he has it on as an agenda item for discussion.

Motion to table: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: J. Donlon

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes (VP, EN, JD) 2 No (AM, CR)

Conferences – None

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Donoyan stated she would like to explain a grant WED received from the Teaching Studio; our teachers and principals need to be thanked and recognized for their hard work they have done; she read the press release: The Teaching Studio, the professional development consulting group of The Learning Community, today announced new public school partners in a ground-breaking initiative to improve reading achievement. The Teaching Studio's innovative approach, which achieved national recognition in Central Falls, is led by consulting teachers at The Learning Community, a high poverty, high achieving charter school. Supported by a \$1.8 million investment from the Rhode Island Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation, the partner schools announced today at a celebration at The Rhode Island Foundation are:

- Globe Park Elementary, Harris Elementary, Leo Savoie Elementary, Governor Aram J. Pothier Elementary, and a neighboring school in Smithfield. These schools will receive training and materials to advance achievement in reading, including:
- Grade-level professional development sessions to support implementing Units of Study, units of Study in Reading that are aligned to new national Common Core standards, quarterly consultant support in analyzing reading assessment data, training for Reading Specialists on reading safety net support services, an on-line resource center of units, lesson plans, teacher tools, video clips and discussion forums, support from a master scheduler to help align the school day to maximize instructional time, and \$20,000 in materials to support the work at the school level; we are so extremely thrilled to be part of this initiative; Neil Steinberg, who is the President and CEO of the RI Foundation was quoted and said "The Rhode Island Foundation is pleased to see the nationally-recognized work and "We know that strategic investments in public education will be a lever of change for our economy." In its first year this work will engage up to 150 teachers and 23 reading specialists across 11 schools in grades K-5. These teachers reach over 3000 students. Christine Alves, Director of The Teaching Studio and architect of its work in Central Falls, told the crowd, "It is critical that we put the voices of teachers in the center of school improvement efforts. I am thrilled to be launching this new phase of work gathering more teachers to work collaboratively on the latest teaching techniques and using data to inform instruction. This work is a central part of The Learning Community's mission to share best practices with other public schools." G. Donoyan stated she is extremely privileged to be able to lead this district; kudos to everyone who came forth including the teachers and the administrators.

Motion to Receive and Place on File: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

School Committee Good and Welfare

J. Donlon – Thanked Jacob for singing the Star Spangle Banner this evening; he did a great job and hopefully we see him singing at Graduation; Jacob represents the VillaNovans very well; thanked the facility staff for the excellent job they did in getting the schools ready to reopen for today; he drove around this weekend and could not believe what an excellent job they did with the equipment they have; we don't have new equipment or big equipment and they did excellent with what we have.

E. Nadeau – Thanked everyone who helped with the cleanup; they always do a great job and they are the reason we should never go into privatization.

A. McGuire-Forcier – Thanked Jacob and congratulated him on his accomplishments; he has a beautiful voice. Thanked the custodians for their hard work. She could not make the meetings in January because she was in the hospital for four nights and a relative of hers has a serious health problems. On MLK service day, many went into Coleman School and scrubbed hallways, windows, removed trash, and removed a piano; thanked Principal Lisa Jacques for organizing this who we are now losing to North Providence as Deputy Superintendent such as G. Donoyan was once there; she knows Ms. Jacques will stay active in our community and in our schools and hopes someday she could be here on the School Committee. She does not support laying off all the teachers and hopes the Budget Commission realizes that this would be a really bad move for this community as a whole.

C. Roberts – Recognized Jacob for the job he did; he recognized Jacob from a fundraiser they did for Michelle Beausoleil and he sang a song by Journey which was quite remarkable; hopes to see him on the field at graduation. He sends his condolences to the Beausoleil family and her two little boys; when we talk about the Woonsocket community the Nova pride definitely rallied around them and has done a lot to offer assistance and sympathy. He would like to recognize the promotion that Ms. Lisa Jacques received; she is going to be the Deputy Superintendent in North Providence; congratulations to her for a personal advancement even though he thinks it is a huge loss to WED; while A. McGuire-Forcier maybe looks forward and envisions her to one day serving on the School Committee, maybe we will also see a Woonsocket native here as Superintendent.

V. Phongsavanh – The NECAP scores came out and asked G. Donoyan if there will be a presentation on this. G. Donoyan said yes at the next meeting. She attended the Learning Community Teaching Studio press conference at the RI Foundation; this is a very exciting grant; there is no local money or state money to do these kinds of projects so for the RI Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation to invest millions of dollars into Woonsocket is huge not just for greater success for our students but also to have other foundations look at us to make sure we continue this charge of looking for the best education for our students; \$20,000 for supplies for each of our schools is huge; she doesn't even think we put \$20,000 in for supplies from our own budget; these opportunities are there we just have to work on it and network with different communities; there are different resources out there. Last night during the State of the Union Address by the President he made the announcement that he wants all students to have Pre-K education which is huge; if this passes this is going to change the future of our country and also transform high schools to have better higher education; this is exciting and hopes that all the kids here can have a Pre-K education because it is the most important thing we can invest in.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:15 p.m.: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberly Blais, WSC Recording Secretary