

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

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.

Good and Welfare:

Grade 5 Teachers Linda Bouley and Sean McClelland of Leo A. Savoie School introduced her students Katherine Allard, Hunter Beausoleil, Nicholas Dubois, Gracie Keosykhao, Sophia Faria, Sean McClelland, Zachery Sgambato, Katie Dion, Nadia Castillo who presented poster board projects that will be on display for Health Fair at Leo A. Savoie School on Saturday, March 16th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Recognitions and Announcements – G. Donoyan announced that WHS Senior KayLnn (KK) Pitts won the high jump event with a leap of 5'5" at the New England Indoor Track and Field Championships on Saturday at the Reggie Lewis Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Her awesome efforts have brought regional recognition and pride to Woonsocket High School! WHS Juniors Lauren Rochefort and Amy Fink have been chosen to serve on Congressman Cicilline's Congressional Youth Cabinet. They attended their first meeting on Saturday in Providence along with student representatives from around the state. The purpose of the Cabinet is to actively engage students in open discussions about federal legislation's effects on the lives of young people in Rhode Island. Many WHS students who recently participated in the state Future Business Leaders of America competitions earned medals: 9 students placed Second; 9 students placed Third; 4 students placed Fourth; and 3 students placed Fifth. Twelve students achieved first place and will be traveling to Anaheim, California in June to compete nationally. The first place winners are: Ivette Torres (Business Financial Plan); Bonirath Chay & Lauren Rochefort (Business Presentations); Jacob Sennick (Business Procedures and also FBLA Principles and Procedures); Kyle Richard (Cyber Security); Jimmy Nguyen & Jesse Rochefort (Desktop Publishing); Jacob O'Connor (Economics and also Personal Finance); Janessa Syhabouth (Parliamentary Procedures); and Jesse Rochefort (Technology Concepts). Congratulations to all the students who participated. G. Donoyan recognized Ralph Malafrente, Interim Business Director and Tricia Mallozzi, Controller for working diligently in verifying our financial position; she said Ralph who only works two days a week has been instrumental in ensuring that the operations on a daily basis are strengthened; he has been working with the Budget Commission staffers in preparation for the FY14 budget; from our stand point and from the Budget Commission staffers there will be a Woonsocket School Committee workshop on March 20, 2013 at the McFee Building which will be the first overview at the budget; the School Committee will meet on March 27th or in the early part of April to ensure first passage of the budget; there are proposed joint workshops with School Committee, City Council and the Budget Commission and the actual dates will be announced as soon as we get them; the Budget Commission staffers have proposed a Budget Commission approval of the budget by mid April.

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

Approval of February 27, 2013 Open/Closed Minutes:

Motion to approve open minutes of February 27, 2013: V. Phongsavanh 2nd: J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Consent Agenda:

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda as a whole: C. Roberts 2nd: A. McGuire-Forcier, J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Communications:

1. Wireless for the Classrooms Presentation – J. Gallishaw

V. Phongsavanh said this agenda item will be presented in mid April.

Committee Reports:

- C. Roberts stated the Finance Subcommittee met; he said the Superintendent outlined the dates that that committee put together with R. Malafrente; we are actively working on the budget; workshop on March 20th with School Committee passage on March 27th; he noted that the workshop on March 20th is open to the public and will be held at McFee Administration Building; it was a good first workshop for the Finance Subcommittee and they talked about many high level changes that they might be expecting.

- P. McGee said the secondary grading report committee sent out today the survey for WMS and WHS teachers; he stated on April 3rd at 4:30 p.m. at McFee there will be a School Committee workshop to discuss and review the NECAP data analysis for this past year.

- V. Phongsavanh stated the WISE Committee met this week, no notes were taken but one outcome of that meeting was the discussion and the starting stages of the sandbox summit; the summit will be a four hour workshop for all the non-profits in Woonsocket to look at all the resources that are in Woonsocket for grants and different resources; as a school department and different social service organizations we all have that common mission of really seeing children and families thrive within the city; the first meeting will be April 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Train Depot in Woonsocket. She also stated that she and C. Roberts met with the Governance and Policy Committee and they will be working on the policy manual to look at what policies are outdated and recommend some policies that makes sense for this community and the city; the Committee is also reviewing the Superintendent evaluation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Vote on Facility Fees – P. Fontaine, G. Nasuti

G. Nasuti handed the Committee a copy of the City's Policy for Fields; he noted on the policy that there are multiple tiers but the WED has two tiers, we charge and we don't charge. He advised the Committee that WED should align their fee schedule with the City's. C. Roberts asked if there is anybody using Barry Field that pays zero. G. Nasuti said yes, Redskin Football but if a custodian is on duty, there is no charge for the custodian services; if it is an off day, they have to pay for the custodians. C. Roberts asked if we are charging fees according to the fee schedule that was approved 6 to 8 months ago. G. Nasuti said yes. J. Donlon asked how much is Mt. St. Charles charging us for ice time. G. Nasuti said approximately \$11,000 a year. J. Donlon asked who sets the rates. G. Nasuti said the arena. J. Donlon asked if they are using any of our athletic fields. G. Nasuti said no, they use city fields. G. Nasuti and P. Fontaine will keep the Committee updated accordingly.

Motion to place file on record: V. Phongsavanh

2nd: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion/Presentation on Policy P4-11.5 Letters of Recommendation – A. McGuire-Forcier, C. Roberts, C. Lerner

C. Roberts stated there were two passages done on this update to this policy; one of the things that came following second passage is that there should be a follow up memo that outlines exactly how this would play out with a process point of view inside WED. C. Lerner stated RIDE contacted them and asked for a copy of the policy; they asked us to put a process and procedure in place for implementing the policy; C. Lerner and T. Andrews-Mellouise put the process and procedures in place, forwarded to RIDE and RIDE called back and said it passed their legal department; C. Lerner stated they also got help from Robinson Law Firm. A. McGuire-Forcier asked why do you need the surveys/questionnaires from the mentoring program when most of them are not special needs children. She also stated she does not know why everything has to be sent to the special education office. C. Lerner said it doesn't have to but at the time we put this together we needed to see what we were actually dealing with; she believes the School Committee asked them to come up with a list of what forms needed to be completed. Therefore they asked for everything to go to her office so they could review it. After the process and procedures are in place, it does not have to go directly to special education and it can be reassigned elsewhere now that we have a system in place but right now special education is the central location. A. McGuire-Forcier asked if she had a copy of RIDE's approval. C. Lerner said it was done over the phone. A. McGuire-Forcier requested her to get this in writing. At this time, C. Lerner and T. Andrews-Mellouise handed the Committee a copy of the process and procedures and went over some of the same. A. McGuire-Forcier requested a list of all forms that are being requested to be filled out and then we can update this policy that states what forms go to special education and what forms go directly to the school. C. Roberts stated it took special education to be the point person to develop the process; this process should be up for review within another 30, 60, or 90 days. J. Donlon said on the first page it states that the parent needs to sign a release in order for information to be given out and then when you go to second page it says the parents are prohibited from getting information without a signed release; is the child going to have to sign the release in order for the parent to receive the information. C. Roberts stated faculty and staff members are prohibited from completing any survey handed to them by those groups which includes parents; if a parent walks into a building and says I want you to fill this out that is prohibited. T. Andrews-Mellouise stated what they are asking is that releases go from agency to agency so when a parent goes to a health care provider they fill out a release. The agency or healthcare provider will share the information with the parent and that is what a release is for. No vote was taken.

2. Strategic Plan Update – G. Donoyan

G. Donoyan said with the \$10,000 WED was awarded by the RI Foundation, they have secured the research and analysis personnel from Brown University Education Alliance; they have designed a survey which is based on school data; it will be disseminated to the members of the Strategic Planning Cohort; the data will be brought forward and goals and actions will be analyzed; they plan that by the end of the school year they will have some kind of timeline as to what the Strategic Plan will look like; we are guided by the fact that what we want to do is also based on the fiscal condition of the City and WED; happy that we have professionals facilitating the conversation.

3. Discussion/Vote on Appointment of Finance Director – G. Donoyan

G. Donoyan read her memo she submitted to the Committee. C. Roberts stated there has been numerous communications between this Committee and the Budget Commission over this topic; he takes extreme umbrage the way this memo was written and the way it makes it appear as if he abdicated interviewing people for this position; there was originally a team appointed when we did the first round of interviews for a finance director which included members of the School Committee, members of the Budget Commission, a member of RIDE, City Finance Director, WED Human Resource Director, and WED Interim Finance Director; there were no right candidates in that first grouping that we were satisfied with; there were remarks from that interview group that they wanted certain parts of the job description modified, wanted to re-advertise, and the team was to be brought back together; that process was not followed. In this round there were five potential candidates and it was left up to R. Malafronte to shrink that group down; it appears that now they are seeking our permission to change this process; we need to return to the original plan with the original members of the interview team; after discussion by the Committee he intends to make a motion that all of the original resumes be forwarded to the members of that team and they determine who they would like to interview and then that team will interview who they have chosen and determine if there are qualified people; we need to follow the process that formerly existed. A. McGuire-Forcier referred to G. Donoyan and said in her opinion when we refer to the Budget Commission it is not just Mr. Sequino; he is only one member and she should offer this to all the members especially Dina Dutremble who knows our district; she finds it disturbing that Tom Bruce or any City Council member was not invited; she agrees with C. Roberts to go back to the original process and interview team; she does not like what is going on and it needs to stop; she thinks what is going on now by choosing only certain people will cause a rift between the city and the School Committee again.

E. Nadeau said if we go back to the system where we have the interview committee in place and after the selection of two candidates those names go forward to the Superintendent, and then it needs Budget Commission approval so why do we need to have a member of the Budget Commission sitting there. The first time around she sat in for the Chairwoman and the interview committee did not find anyone; she asked if we are going to follow the process and forward the candidate to the Budget Commission and they have the final say or not. G. Donoyan said to C. Roberts that she did not mean for him to take any umbrage for the memo so if that's the way he feels she apologizes she was just stating the facts. In reference to the process itself the conversation was with Mr. Sequino and he also sat on the original interview committee; he was curious as to the process; she invited him to review the initial candidates; this was the process she decided upon only because of the extreme nature of the time that we need to find someone and to ensure a joint effort by the School Committee and the Budget Commission and releasing her managerial duty to bring her recommendation for your advice and consent of a particular candidate; she will revert back to the very arduous task of getting all of those people together which will take another month or so; in the interim we still have to have the budget completed and reminded them that R. Malafronte is here only two days a week and we are teetering on an awful lot of financial issues and thought this would be an easier way of ensuring that we would get the final candidate as soon as possible. J. Donlon stated he sat on the last round of interviews with G. Donoyan; they interviewed two candidates; out of the two, one clearly stood out and after speaking to the Superintendent he thinks that they should meet with the Budget Commission with these two individuals and make the choice at that time. E. Nadeau said our first priority from the Budget Commission was to hire a controller and a finance director; we can't fool around with this if we have a viable candidate who is a good match to the system because if we make them wait too long for a decision, we will lose that candidate. We will have to move forward or convene immediately with the interview committee and speed up the process so we do not lose a candidate. V. Phongsavanh asked how long does R. Malafronte have left to be here. G. Donoyan said he is only allowed to work 90 days a year. E. Nadeau said with R. Malafronte's schedule if the interview committee can only meet on a day he is not here, we should have T. Mallozzi who works for the system and knows her stuff fill in because she is qualified to sit on the committee.

Motion to contact the original interview team, provide the interview team with copies of all the resumes of all that applied, the interview team will meet in an expeditious manner to determine who they wish to schedule for an interview, and then they will recommend one or two people and forward to the Superintendent: C. Roberts 2nd: V. Phongsavanh Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Conferences – None

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Donoyan – Passed.

School Committee Good and Welfare:

A. McGuire-Forcier – Thanked everyone for all the prayers, well wishes, shout outs on the internet, flowers, plants, fruit baskets, and cards when they heard she was struck by a car last Wednesday after she testified at the State House; she testified on two bills; one bill was to change 180 days to minutes; thanked everyone again and said it shows her how her hard work is really appreciated. Wished everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day.

V. Phongsavanh – Stated to A. McGuire-Forcier that she is glad to see her here and that you are okay even though you are limping a lot. It was refreshing to hear from you and seeing that you are okay especially after testifying on bills for the city. During this time of year especially for the seniors it is the acceptance letter time; she has a couple of mentees that she has been writing letters of recommendation for hoping that they would get scholarships to get into schools; good luck to all the seniors out there with this whole entire process because she knows it is a stressful process and wishes them a great success for the future.

C. Roberts – Passed.

E. Nadeau – Passed.

J. Donlon – Thanked A. McGuire-Forcier for going to the State House and for recovering so quickly; some may not remember that years ago her mother was involved in a hit and run with a sad result and his first thought was that this cannot happen again and luckily it did not; he thought the children from Leo Savoie School did a very good presentation this evening; the children tried their best and put a lot of work into it; hopefully other schools will come forward to participate in these meetings. Last week he was asked to be a judge at Globe Park School for the door decorating contest; it was amazing to see how well the children did decorating the doors; he was very impressed with Ms. Jessica Frechette's class; they are severely handicapped children and she took the time to show him how the children did this thing with shaving cream, they painted, etc; he was glad that her class won the contest for the best decorated door.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:22 p.m.: A. McGuire-Forcier

2nd: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberly Blais, WSC Recording Secretary