

**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2013**  
**7:00 P.M. – OPEN SESSION**  
**Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet, 60 Florence Drive**  
**Woonsocket, RI 02895**

**Motion to convene into executive session in accordance with RI Law 42-46-5-(a) (2) Litigation: V. Phongsavanh 2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts, J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)**

**Motion to come out of executive session: A. McGuire-Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)**

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**Call to Order by Vimala Phongsavanh**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**V. Phongsavanh stated to the public that the North Smithfield School Department currently owes the WED money for tuitions charged by the WED for educating North Smithfield Students; the amount owed to WED from North Smithfield is \$232,383.26; she stated the Committee voted unanimously to send a letter from this School Committee to the North Smithfield School Committee to notify them about this and how we need this money immediately.**

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**Public Good and Welfare:**

**Lynne Bedard, WHS/WACTC Principal:** She introduced Brittany Plante who baked cupcakes for the Committee this evening. Brittany Plante is a senior at the culinary arts department at the WACTC; she has won the gold medal in commercial baking and is going to Kansas City to represent RI in SkillsUSA. **Brittany Plante** said she has a full scholarship to Johnson and Wales University for culinary arts and management; two years after that she will be going for hospitality. G. Donoyan thanked Brittany and added that she is also one of our Strategic Planning members.

**Mike Davis, High School Street:** He said Hearts of Hope was formed by a Woonsocket Alumni, the Class of 1988; it is a nonprofit organization dedicated to assist current students and graduates of the Woonsocket High School with serious illnesses; it is known as the pay it forward movement. This group is having a yard sale this Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 to 4:00 at the WMS. If you are interesting in donating or volunteering please call Ellie at 766-2588.

**Anthony Cosentino:** He announced that the Woonsocket Social Studies Department will be hosting a fundraiser for the advanced placement classes; these students will take the advanced placement exam in May; it is \$82.00 per student; this Sunday a fundraiser will be held at the Social Club Par-X from 8:00 to 12:00 for breakfast. If anyone is interested you can see him tonight or you can buy tickets at the door.

**Jeffrey Partington, President of the WTG:** Stated he testified this evening at the State House; he said there is a petition before the Committee tonight to change the WHS schedule to a seven period schedule; he knows the guidance department and the principal put in a tremendous amount of effort and work to try to make this become a reality; he knows that the six period day is absolutely unworkable; he said to the Committee, no matter what the hurdles are please do not let that stand in your way of approving this because they will make it work; a seven period day would be far more beneficial to the students of Woonsocket and he stands here tonight fully in support of this petition.

**Denise Auclair:** She said as a parent and here for other parents the seven period day is really the only way to go; please let this go through; we have experiences right now where kids cannot do the NECAP and they need help with extra math or language; passing the seven period would be greatly appreciated.

**Superintendent Recognitions:** G. Donoyan stated Rob Desrosiers, Principal at Globe Park Elementary would like to recognize Teacher Jennifer Polacek who has been awarded the opportunity and will be representing Woonsocket and Globe Park at the 2013 Earth Science Leadership Academy on June 23-28 in Houston, TX, directed by the American Geosciences Institute. Congratulations and we wish her the best for continued success.

**Motion to receive and place on file: V. Phongsavanh 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)**

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**Approval of April 10, 2013 Open Minutes:**

**Motion to Approve April 10, 2013 Open Minutes: A. McGuire-Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)**

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**Consent Agenda:**

**Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda as a whole: A. McGuire-Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)**

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Communications – V. Phongsavanh said E. Nadeau is not here tonight because she is sick with bronchitis.  
Committee Reports – None.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **Approval of Elementary/WHS/WMS Handbooks – 2<sup>nd</sup> Passage – P. McGee, C. Henderson, R. Picard, S. Boss:**

**Motion to approve handbooks for 2<sup>nd</sup> Passage: A. McGuire-Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts**

**Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes**

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2. **Discussion/Vote on Human Capital Policy – 1<sup>st</sup> Passage – K. Lombardo**

**Motion to Table: V. Phongsavanh**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: A. McGuire-Forcier**

**Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes**

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3. **Update from Director of Curriculum: P. McGee**

P. McGee read his memo which outlines curriculum initiatives for the WMS and WHS. A. McGuire-Forcier would like to see more work done with assertive discipline.

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#### NEW BUSINESS

1. **Presentation of the Seven Period Schedule at the WHS – G. Donoyan, P. McGee, L. Bedard**

L. Bedard handed out and presented a proposal for a seven period day at WHS; they discovered that they can run a seven period schedule with the same amount of staffing and this would benefit all the students greatly; this schedule has a lot of opportunities; they have a lot of creative ideas and the WHS is looking for the Committee's support. A. McGuire-Forcier thanked everyone who came up with this smart schedule and will be supporting this. C. Roberts asked when the decision was made to come off of a block schedule how come you just didn't go from block to the seven periods. L. Bedard said the stipulation was to lose a certain amount of teachers to balance the budget that year so at that time we could not have done this; over the last couple of years we were able to get a couple more teachers due to enrollments and our projected enrollments for the next couple of years for students coming from the WMS to the WHS are also lower. C. Roberts will be supporting this and thanked everyone for their hard work. G. Donoyan recognized Lynn Hawkins' dedication to this project. J. Donlon asked what would the learning time be cut back to. L. Bedard said no learning time will be cut back. J. Donlon said it sounds like a win win situation for everyone and he will be supporting this. V. Phongsavanh thanked everyone for their hard work; this is a very well thought out process and she will be supporting this. A. McGuire-Forcier asked L. Bedard to look into introducing 9<sup>th</sup> graders to the WACTC when they review the ideas of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy. L. Bedard said they will look into this now with the opportunity of having a seven period day.

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2. **Discussion/Vote on the Seven Period Schedule at the WHS – G. Donoyan, P. McGee, L. Bedard**

**Motion to approve a seven period schedule at the WHS: V. Phongsavanh**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: A. McGuire-Forcier**

**Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes**

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3. **Presentation of the WHS FATE/FOCUS Program – C. Lerner**

C. Lerner stated she is here to tell the Committee about the work in progress and invite the Committee's input; she said G. Donoyan asked her to look at special education programs and look at ways to increase our pathways and graduation rates; she handed the Committee a special education department high school partnership program draft; they have been speaking with some of our community partners who provide wraparound services to many of our students and asked for ideas that they may be able to expand our partnerships with them. The handout shows some of the ideas that came to them from three different community partners; she would like the Committee to review the matrix and feel free to call her at any time with any concerns, thoughts, ideas. V. Phongsavanh asked if they went with any of the partners would the WED grant funds be allocated somewhere else. G. Donoyan said R. Malafronte is investigating this; there is IDEA stipulations that we can use grant funding only if it is not allowed or billable under Medicaid; we have to make sure we are not supplanting. C. Lerner said they are meeting on the CRP tomorrow and it looks like some of those funds could be applied. V. Phongsavanh said under Medicaid billable can our social workers bill. C. Lerner said our social workers bill Medicaid. C. Roberts said when we look at the total cost for partnership A is that for 48 students and if we do less are they billing us a cost per head or the dollar amount is to offer us the program at 48 students. C. Lerner said we still need to ask these questions to fine tune so we can negotiate and discuss. C. Roberts asked if everyone who is part of this program received a layoff notice. G. Donoyan said yes. A. McGuire-Forcier said when we had Feinstein in a separate building RIDE frowned upon this and made us merge them; when you look at partner A the potential rental of Fifth Avenue, RIDE might look at this and say they don't want them separated, they want them with their peers. C. Lerner said this is different because they are their own establishment and they are not part of us. G. Donoyan said they will give the Committee a week to review and ask any questions; by next Friday C. Lerner should receive more feedback from these partners to move forward. We should have something by the end of the school year that the Committee will be able to act upon.

**Discussion only. Not vote was taken.**

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**4. Discussion/Vote to support the City Council Resolution 13R44 – Petitioning the General Assembly to Amend RIGL 45-9-1. Et/seq. – J. Donlon**

J. Donlon said at the City Council meeting earlier this month all seven members of the City Council endorsed this resolution; this resolution is asking the General Assembly to Amend RIGL 45-9-1; he feels that this Committee should be supporting the City Council.

Motion to approve: V. Phongsavanh 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon

C. Roberts stated he was at the Budget Commission meeting when this came up and the Chair said it was his opinion that they should ignore this; does not see how this will have an impact; the Budget Commission is here to stay but will be supporting this because he thinks it is important that we continue to send the message which is a lot of our problem is driven by a lot of the decisions made at the State House. A. McGuire-Forcier agrees with C. Roberts.

**Motion to approve: V. Phongsavanh 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes**

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**5. Discussion of Legal Counsel – V. Phongsavanh**

V. Phongsavanh stated Attorney Ackerman will be leaving the School Committee on June 30<sup>th</sup>; she is looking for a process in selecting a new attorney; to begin this process she would like to appoint a subcommittee to put together a job description/proposal to send out by May 22<sup>nd</sup> so they can make a decision by June 19<sup>th</sup>; C. Roberts said the Committee needs to agree if they want a firm or an individual first; he stated he would like to be on this committee. G. Donoyan stated she would like to be on this committee as well.

**Discussion only. Not vote was taken.**

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**Conferences – None.**

**Superintendent’s Report** – G. Donoyan stated restructuring the WED is like walking a high wire tight rope. Everything we do is a balancing act: balancing priorities with funding resources, controlling costs in meeting federal and state laws, maintaining high standards while critics oppose progressive change, and upholding contractual obligations while keeping our schools open for business. The balancing act is evidenced by several educational situations. For example, you are aware that Rhode Island has implemented a statewide diploma system. Its goal is to ensure that public schools support multiple pathways toward a high school diploma including career and technical education and blended or online learning; Provide each student with individual learning plans and a personalized learning environment to help them succeed; Provide multiple opportunities and measures for students to demonstrate proficiency and graduation readiness; And Promote an aligned system of state and local policies. We can agree that it’s important that our students graduate from our schools ready to face the next steps in their growth as a citizen either enroute to college or career and certainly in life. We need a valid measure to assess their proficiency. While reading rates are acceptable, mathematics scores remain far too low! How to balance the supports to prepare our students for success requires us to reallocate funds, redesign programs, and rethink our teaching strategies. Accountability is important, raising the failure score from 60 to 70 is a start, and improving attendance would help as well. Here’s where the City must uphold the value of education. It is a social necessity, if the City balances how a strong and vital a public educational system - that is adequately funded – can add value to the City, the return on investment in education could be realized. Educational excellence is an economic driver that this City desperately needs. The public schools are an asset to the community. Imagine if we had the problem of balancing whether we should offer gifted and talented classes rather than Advanced Placements courses? Another example of the balancing act is ensuring our students meet proficiency in order to graduate. Mathematics is in the balance here. Mathematics is more than the multiplication table. Math is about solving problems, being persistent in solving a problem, Algebra, geometry, and calculus are concerned with the study of number, quantity, shape, and space and their interrelationships by using numbers. WED must do a better job at balancing resources to meet students who need support in reaching proficiency. A mathematics curriculum must balance rigor and relevance with personalized opportunities to help our students meet higher levels. We are working on a math curriculum that does just that! Time and finances play a role in walking the tightrope. We remain persistent in balancing our steps because our students must reach the other side ready to embark into a world that requires thinkers, innovators, and solution makers. The students and their families deserve a public school system that supports the opportunities to make students successful, earn a diploma, ready for college, career, and life. It’s time to drive economic value to this City by focusing on improving the public schools! Let’s stop walking a tight rope and begin building strong bridges to the future.

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**School Committee Good and Welfare:**

J. Donlon – Passed.

E. Nadeau – Absent.

A. McGuire-Forcier – Passed.

C. Roberts – Thanked Brittany Plante for the cupcake.

V. Phongsavanh – Passed.

**Motion to Adjourn at 8:30 p.m.: A. McGuire-Forcier 2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh (Unanimously Approved)**

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**Respectfully Submitted:**

**Kimberly Blais, WSC Recording Secretary**