

WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2013
Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet, 60 Florence Drive
Woonsocket, RI 02895

Meeting called to order by Vimala Phongsavanh at 6:30 p.m. in Open Session.

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

Motion to convene into Closed Session in accordance with RI Law 42-46-5-(a)(1) – Job Performance at 6:30 p.m.:

V. Phongsavanh 2nd: J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

No Votes were taken in Closed Session.

Meeting called to order by Vimala Phongsavanh at 7:00 p.m. to reconvene in Open Session.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Public Good and Welfare:

Peter Fontaine, Director of Facilities – He stated that for opening day the bussing went reasonably well; however, from 1:30 yesterday until 1:30 today we received 130 changes which is directly related to people who moved over the summer, didn't report their new address, and showed up for the first day of school today and wanted bussing; it will take some time to straighten out bussing for the first week of school. The schools looked great for opening day especially the inside and the guys did a great job; the outside of the schools do not look as good but we are catching up on this and doing the best we can. He encourages the Committee to go and look at the gym floor at the high school; this is something to be really proud of and the company did an outstanding job. We had a new roof put on at the high school and a section of the roof was also done at Bernon Heights. We also had two parking lots replaced; one at Citizens' and one at Bernon Heights. We did a lot of work over the summer; it all came out very well and we also came out under budget. There will also be a lot of road closures tomorrow for the City's celebration and he already contacted the bus company; doesn't think there will be an issue but wanted to make the Committee and parents aware and be patient if the bus doesn't arrive at home as the normal time.

Jonathan Gallishaw, Seekonk Massachusetts – He said for almost 18 years his second home has been at 108 High Street in Woonsocket; he wanted to thank everyone for the 17 years and 9 months that he has been here because he has had a wonderful experience. He has seen a lot of different people come through the school system like Superintendents, Business Manager, etc. Again, he just wanted to say thank you and it has been a wonderful time and experience introducing technology to this district. He thanked Josephine Callager and Michael Jolin for hiring in 1995.

George Nasuti – He stated he is proud of the gym floor and the work that was done; he thanked the Committee and P. Fontaine for making this a capital improvement because this was a real issue at the high school. He said yesterday at Orientation with the teachers he introduced his new plan, which is a personal campaign with a lot of help from other people, which is called curb appeal campaign. After seeing how wonderful the gym floor came out he said we can have Barry Field, the high school, and other schools look wonderful. He has a small amount of money that he has fundraised to begin this project. The first project that will be worked on are some repairs at Barry Field; first to be done at Barry will be the soccer field; we will split seed it, fertilize it, kill the weeds, and get this up and running for next fall season. He introduced Dan Dailey who kick started his enthusiasm; he was hired as a custodian and a grounds keeper at Barry, he has experience in taking care of athletic facilities, a lot of connections, and has more ideas than he does. Dan has already given him two grants that he needs to write, he has talked to others about writing another grant, and has asked for favors. George has pushed the paint for the goal posts and Dan plans on painting it before the scrimmage on Saturday. George has a meeting at the Rotary Club tomorrow to begin this process, he is really excited, and he needs everyone's help. He would like to have a meeting with Dan, Peter, himself and maybe a member from the School Committee to sit down and talk about some ideas on how we can pay for this. He thanked Dan, Peter and the Facilities Department.

Superintendent Recognitions: G. Donoyan thanked P. Fontaine and his crew of folks; if you walk through the schools they look absolutely remarkable; they are safe, clean, and sanitized. She also thanked G. Nasuti who worked tirelessly throughout the entire summer not only as the Race to the Top Teacher Evaluation Coordinator but also for all his love and passion and all of his dedication to this district. She received an email from Amy Thibeault and the PTO at Bernon Heights stating that the Bernon playground equipment has been ordered and they are quickly moving forward with plans for the community build; they appreciate P. Fontaine, the Superintendent and the staff who have given their support to this project. The community build will be scheduled for Saturday, September 28th at 7:00 a.m. at the school, rain or shine; volunteers are needed and this is a tremendous opportunity for the community to get together and help the school. A couple of weeks ago the leadership team at WED had a retreat which

generally costs money; thanks to J. Gallishaw's connection with the NE Institute of Technology in East Greenwich that school offered us two days worth of their beautiful conference room, all of their technology, and they also fed us; they were tremendous partners in helping us; thank you to the NE Institute of Technology and your generosity was truly appreciated. She asked everyone to recognize J. Gallishaw; it becomes an emotional thing when we know someone like Jonathan who has such tremendous respect throughout the state not just within the district leaves us for greener pastures; she wishes him well and his legacy will be here for a long, long time. On behalf of all the teachers, administrators, parents, children, and the residents of Woonsocket, thank you for the remarkable job you have done for all of us.

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

Approval of August 14, 2013 Open Minutes:

Motion to approve August 14, 2013 Open Minutes: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: J. Donlon

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Consent Agenda:

C. Roberts said on the personnel recommendations we have a teacher for Grade 4 at Citizens' who has a master's plus 15 and asked if there is any special certification or is this ESL? He thought we would put someone in there with a bachelor's plus 1, 2, or 3 from a cost perspective. G. Donoyan said this is a high needs classroom with ESL certification. C. Roberts said he would like to put on the record that the Committee received both amended copies so when we vote we are voting on the two amended versions and also an announcement of the vacancy for the Technology Director. A. McGuire-Forcier wanted to let the Committee know that even if we approve this we may be stopped by the Budget Commission because they may want us to share the City's Technology. G. Donoyan stated she and J. Gallishaw have an appointment on September 4th with the Director of Revenue and the Budget Commission to discuss this; at a previous meeting a few months back they had discussed the importance of having an individual director who is thoroughly knowledgeable about education technology, curriculum work and all the needs that are necessary for WED. A. McGuire-Forcier asked J. Gallishaw to be on the interview committee if he is available. J. Gallishaw said yes.

Motion to approve the consent agenda in its entirety as amended and allot the Superintendent a \$1000.00 for advertising the Director of Technology position: C. Roberts 2nd: J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Communications – A. McGuire-Forcier stated she received an email which generated from Steven Robinson's office regarding the Fair Funding Lawsuit. There is a person named Jason Becker who is one of the architects of the Funding Formula that the State came up with and if you go on blog.jasonbecker.com you can read what he blogged; his blog explains that the formula needs to be fixed because it did not take into account ESL, Special Education, Building Maintenance, Bussing, and many other factors because it was solely based on free and reduced lunch which was not fair to the urban communities. Please go online and share with everyone you know.

Committee Reports – None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Vote on Administrative Contracts – C. Roberts

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Presentation and Discussion of the Rwanda Field Trip – G. Donoyan, J. Marzini

G. Donoyan said for the past two years J. Marzini and A. Cosentino have spearheaded an incredible learning program that brings a number of our high school students to Africa. J. Marzini stated the students have brought into the schools their presentation of the trip; they have brought their presentation to North Smithfield School Department, the elementary schools, and have a display at the Woonsocket Museum of Work and Culture. The dates of this field trip are February 2, 2014 through February 22, 2014; at this time they have nine students who will be participating. He is requesting the School Committee to approve this field trip and they will also pay for the substitute teachers unless the Committee could provide funding for this.

Motion to approve with no funding: C. Roberts 2nd: A. McGuire-Forcier, J. Donlon Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

2. Discussion regarding Barry Field – J. Donlon, P. Fontaine, G. Nasuti

J. Donlon said last week he met with P. Fontaine and D. Daley at Barry Field to look at the conditions; he expressed his concerns about the goal posts which he is happy to hear will be painted soon, the fence near the grandstand on the home side needs to be fixed; P. Fontaine told him they will take care this. He stated D. Daley is doing a wonderful job maintaining the field. He asked where the money is that was raised last year for the rental fee for the circus tent last year. G. Nasuti said that money is part of the fund; the City gave them the \$5000.00 for that rental fee and the Interscholastic League returned money to each school department this year based upon the money made off of an athletic contest which is \$2000.00 so our current kitty is at \$7000.00; we used a few hundred to get some grass seed but that money will be used to do all these repairs. J. Donlon asked if we used the money from the

Cricket League. G. Nasuti said they did not use any of the money from the rentals yet; he will be meeting with J. Spagna, the Superintendent and P. Fontaine to discuss this. J. Donlon said he has some ideas to bring in some revenue so after the meeting he would like to sit down with him to discuss this. G. Nasuti said there is the Nova 5K Road Race on September 22nd put on by the gym at Diamond Hill and all proceeds will go to the Woonsocket Athletic Department. A. McGuire-Forcier commended P. Fontaine and his staff for all the work they do especially working understaffed. P. Fontaine said they are ten less people than they were three years ago; in addition, with the new contract it requires them to take half their vacation time during the summer. She also thanked G. Nasuti and D. Daley for all their hard work. G. Nasuti stated he has a landscaper who will start doing the landscaping in front of the high school; a special education teacher at the high school contacted him and she wants to get on board with her group to help out.

Discussion only. No vote was taken.

Conferences – None.

Superintendent's Report – G. Donoyan said there are a lot of treasures in this school department and we see three of them today who are J. Gallishaw, P. Fontaine, and G. Nasuti; the school department is forever grateful for these guys. At this time she read the orientation day speech she gave the teachers yesterday. Welcome to the 2013-14 school year. The beginning of the school year is most exciting time full of hope, promise and even Plato remarked that the “beginning is the most important part of the work”, which leads her to the work we do. How we begin our morning, our class, our journey...the beginning is most important. Today was important as the first day of school. What will our children look like, act like, need, or bring to class. The beginning of the year starts with the first introduction, the first glance, the first smile. It's going to be a great year. She knows that everyone is renewed and rested because we need to be ready to continue our fierce loyalty to doing what is in the best interest of our students, to do the work of educating our youth. With that said, let me begin with what I believe...She believes that we have a collective force to ensure each child succeeds from the beginning. The beginning is in our hands...How we continue to be resolved to do the best for all our children. She heard the loudest applause from the teachers yesterday when she asked them if they believed in full day kindergarten; that full day kindergarten is a moral obligation that we have for our students in Woonsocket. This year we will continue to have the community hear our collective voices that full day kindergarten is giving our students a solid beginning to achieve success. We feel that together we are special forces constantly ready to march through whatever obstacle. She thanked the WTG teachers and paraprofessionals, Jeff Partington and his board, Local 1137, Lori Teper and her board, for their continued respectful conversations that sought to find solutions for the greater good. With that said, we have a collective force to ensure that each child succeeds from the beginning. This starts my third year with you and many lessons have been learned. We managed to realign the district, reach a tentative agreement with three unions, kept our schools safe, and celebrated joys of learning. There were some agonies of defeat but we continue because each day is a new beginning for us. The greatest lesson learned has been that with each situation presented we start at the root of the issue, the beginning, the baseline, with our laser-like focus on the child. Every child, parent and Woonsocket resident should know that we are protecting public education as they learn to become responsible and productive citizens of this great State and nation. We believe in the worth of the children who pass through our doors and believe that our children should have the equal opportunities that lead them to success. The WED is their champion throughout their learning. We are powerful champions of public education so much so that together there is no obstacle that we cannot overcome as a team. Yesterday, the Commissioner of Education joined us on opening day and acknowledged the political and fiscal burden that we have worked under. In spite of it all, we continued to educate all our children. Michael Jordan said that “talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championship!” We must continue to work together as a team and there is no doubt that we will continue our instructional delivery, no doubt that we will get our students to reach their highest potential, and there is no doubt that we can do this. Today is the first day of school and we have 179 days to affect our students. We have the most important work to do and we will do it and do it exceedingly well. She is extremely proud of this district and knows this is going to be a great year.

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

School Committee Good and Welfare:

A. McGuire-Forcier – She stated she just learned that blog she referred to you earlier is now posted on mywoonsocket.com and thanked Lorraine for doing this; everyone needs to read this and it needs to make the news. She added to the Superintendent's speech by saying that we need fair and adequate funding for all students in RI. She thanked J. Gallishaw for his 18 years of services and he will be seriously missed by everyone; he is more than an employee, he became family. She did not hear any complaints about the first day of school so great job everyone. She wished everyone a fun and safe time at the block party tomorrow night as well as a fun and safe Labor Day weekend. She stated she will also be at the Bernon Heights playground event.

V. Phongsavanh – She recognized that this is the 50th year anniversary of Martin Luther King's speech giving us a vision on what the history is of this world and this country; she continues to still believe that, as A. McGuire-Forcier said, education is still one of the biggest civil rights issues in this nation and as we continue to have a fantastic year and start off on a great note there are still so many inadequacies that still exist although we have made a lot of progress; there are things that we still need to work on and it does take a whole community to do this. She thanked the whole team for putting together a great first day and hopes it continues.

C. Roberts – He echoed the comments about the first day and didn't receive any negative phone calls either. He thinks one of the most exciting things and one of the pleasures with facebook is seeing everyone's first day pictures of friends who now have children and other people we know throughout the district. He will also be at the Bernon Heights build as of right now.

E. Nadeau – She thanked J. Gallishaw for all of his tremendous contributions that he made to WED over the years. She remembers when we were building the middle schools and how he found money for us; he has always gone out of the way to help our kids; these are big shoes to be filled and he will be missed dearly.

J. Donlon – He echoed the comments about J. Gallishaw and thanked him for the wonderful job he has done for the school department; he will be greatly missed. He welcomed back all the children going to school this year as well as the new administrators that will be taking on bigger responsibilities but thinks they have chosen proper people and hopefully have a good school year; he commended the PTA at Globe Park School for putting the new sign up in front of the school; they raised the funds and had a company put it in and it is a tribute to that school. He reminded the students that WED has a dress policy and hopefully it will be followed this year and hopes the administrators follow through on this and won't have our children looking like they have been playing outside all summer long. He also would like to know if Mr. Ackerman's music was piped into the elementary schools today and what the reaction was from the children. He wished everyone a safe and prosperous new school year.

Motion to Adjourn at 7:51 p.m.: A. McGuire-Forcier 2nd: V. Phongsavanh, J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberly Blais, WSC Recording Secretary