

Donna Coderre, Resides at Crawford Street, Principal of Leo Savoie School - She thanked the former School Committee Members; whether anyone agreed or disagreed with the decisions that were made, their job was not easy and it was done at some of the most difficult times our city has faced. The Board sitting before us are a unique group; city residents who have attended our schools; they are very enthusiastic, excited, and nervous but willing to work hard to promote all the good that is going on in our schools. As one member of the School Board stated “here in Woonsocket we have the one pride that you have to be a resident to receive and that is our public school education; the goal is to make all people want this product more than anything.” She encourages all community members especially school community members to put the past in the past and allow this wonderful school department to begin a new era with positive energy and not negativity that sometimes comes from the stresses of a difficult economy and financial struggles. Congratulations to each one of you; she is so proud and excited for them and knows that the city is moving in the direction of a culture that focuses on all the good that Woonsocket has to offer; if we attempt to be part of the solution and not part of the problem think how far we can go; as her father would say, if you don’t have anything positive to say then try harder. Let’s all try harder.

Superintendent Recognitions: G. Donoyan said at this time of year it is easy to be so busy as to forget to recognize some very good people who make our schools run efficiently; the facility staff work early every morning to prepare our walkways and our parking lots for use during the day especially when the snow falls; they ensure that the boilers are running to keep our students and staff warm so teaching and learning continues seamlessly; so it is with warm appreciation that she thanks those members of the facility staff and Mr. Peter Fontaine who is the Director. She also asked all the administrators and principals who are here tonight, who are a strong group of leadership, to stand; to the new School Board, they would like to show their collective support to you during the time that we will try to drive the system to excellence. On behalf of the Woonsocket Education Department, we send our heartfelt well wishes to our students and their families, employees, vendors, community partners, municipal and state officials for a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Motion to receive and place on file: S. Seale 2nd: D. Chattman Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Approval of November 21, 2013 Open Minutes:

G. Lacouture stated the five of them were not at this meeting; however, Ms. Blais has certified that these minutes are a true record of what happened at the previous meeting of November 21st.

Motion to approve minutes of November 21, 2013: D. Chattman 2nd: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Consent Agenda:

S. Seale asked about the truck purchase. J. Spagna said that purchase was approved by the Budget Commission on December 13th; normally we would meet twice a month with the Budget Commission after the School Board has seen this list and approved it for payment; because of the holiday season, they postponed all their meetings until January so we are doing our approval via email. The truck purchase was in the budget for \$30,000 which was approved; the truck was purchased from Flood Ford which is on our Master Price Agreement so there is no bid requirement. There was an opportunity for some savings.

Motion to approve the consent agenda in its entirety: S. Seale 2nd: D. Chattman Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Communications: None

Committee Reports: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. None
-

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of the 2014 Annual School Board Meeting Dates - G. Donoyan**

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

2. **Woonsocket Education Department Organization Presentation by Directors - G. Donoyan**

G. Donoyan stated there will be a brief PowerPoint presentation to acclimate the School Board to some of the demographics within the city, some of the issues that are compounded within the city for the schools and for the children, and also a very brief overview of the departments at the district level; we plan to have a more in depth workshop on each one of those departments at a later date.

3. Update of Woonsocket Education Department Financials as of November 30, 2013 – J. Spagna

J. Spagna said this is a report that the Board will receive on a monthly basis; he gave a breakdown on how this spreadsheet is set up and what each column means. He stated right now approximately 30% of our budget is expended and we are actually 40% into the school year; we are on target. One of the biggest issues in the district are the medical and dental insurance; we are self insured and that is one of the biggest variables we have in our budget that we have to watch very closely because it is very easy to go over the budgeted amount; currently we are at 19% below last year's expenditures.

Motion to place this report on file: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

Conferences – None.

Superintendent's Report – G. Donoyan stated these are remarkable and historic times for Woonsocket. The City is undergoing a new vision - best stated by Mayor Baldelli Hunt, "By all of us working together, I know we will soon turn our fortunes around. All of us want to see a better day." This sense of working together is evident with the cooperation from the Mayor's staff, to our educators, to the families and citizens I meet. There is an air of cautious optimism that I believe will grow to full optimism as we restore lines of communication, collaboration, and trust between the City and schools. And ...it has already begun! Our new School Board, appointed by Mayor Baldelli Hunt, is a body of adults who value education, take pride in our schools, and want to make our City schools exceptional. The Woonsocket Education Department welcomes each of you on the mission to improve our school system making it the best learning environment for our students and thereby restoring a sense of pride for this great City! A board of education is a uniquely American institution. It keeps the country's public schools flexible and responsive to the needs of their local communities. As a member of the Woonsocket School Board, you have the most important responsibility that can be assigned to any citizen: *helping to plan the education of this community's youth*. Your role as a **representative** of the entire community, a steward of the district's resources, a leader in the community, and an advocate for public education in turn makes you a role model for our children. It is our responsibility to do the best we can for our children by making our district stronger and more vibrant. In turn, families will choose to live in and respect a community that has a fine school system. With your leadership and growing public trust our school district will thrive! All of us look forward to a better day!

Motion to receive and place on file: D. Chattman 2nd: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

School Board Good and Welfare:

D. Chattman – He said he is looking forward to working with the people here, the administrators, and the other people involved with the city and schools; he said you hear a lot of things when you get on a Board like this and everyone is asking him if he is crazy but when you think about the children how can you not love the kids and how can you not want to give back; he was born and raised here and it is a pleasure for him to be here and hopes he can make a difference; he is looking forward to this. He is looking forward to seeing the children that go through our school system and maybe they can come back and be a positive to someone else and be a positive to our community, come back and give back to our community; to him that would be his reward.

S. Pawlina – She said she would like to express her sincere thank you to the members of the School Board Application Review Committee; it was a wonderful process and she is very happy that she got to go through it; thanked them for their hard work in helping to craft the composition of this new School Board; she is very excited to be working along side all of you and looks forward to it greatly. She also expressed her gratitude to Mayor Baldelli-Hunt for this appointment. Clearly, as a Committee, we are faced with many challenges. In her application she spoke about her concerns as to how they are perceived; there seems to be a feeling of educational apathy in the city and it troubles her that some students aren't engaged, parents aren't as involved as they should be, educators feel unappreciated, and taxpayers don't believe they are getting the best bang for their buck. She is confident that with the new School Board and our new way of moving forward that we can change all of these perceptions and all of these negatives to all absolute positives. She has no doubt in her mind that's what we, as a School Board, will do.

S. Seale – He thanked Mayor Baldelli-Hunt for the appointment and thanked the five members of the Committee that selected them; he has known and met a couple of them prior; he knows the principal of the school that his son goes to and has met the member of the St. James Baptist Church. He thanked the past School Committee for reaching out and offering them support; he recognized that they had a very challenging job in a very challenging time. He also congratulated the new City Council and he looks forward to working jointly in many things moving forward. The toughest thing to capture is the passion and sitting up here, nervous for the first time, I truly love Woonsocket; he is confident that with this new Committee, the new City Council, and the new Mayor working with the principals, directors, and teachers that they can make this school department the model school department in the state. He thanked everybody and said please be patient.

G. Lacouture – He recognized Attorney Richard Kearns who represents the Mayor and thanked him for coming; it shows the positivity as far as the relationship with this School Board and the Mayor; if you have the chance to look at the charter and the structure of the School Board, the Mayor is basically the leader of the School Board. She has chosen the five of us up here; the process to get here was not easy; if you have the chance to look at the application you will see it was not an easy process; it also shows the focus of the Mayor and what she sees in education; if you went to the inauguration and you heard her speak, she is extremely positive as to the direction of the School Board; the five of us have made that commitment to her to assist in bringing back this school system to be where it was; in order to do this we have to do what Ms. Coderre’s father said “be positive”; negative does not, cannot take place in the Woonsocket Education Department at any level because we will not succeed unless we have that positive outlook; they are concerned or otherwise they would not have applied; the school system is important to us. Thank you to the former School Committee for their work, the committee that interviewed us, and the mayor’s staff who interviewed them; he senses that when the 100 day speech by the Mayor comes forward, we are going to see a very strong emphasis on education which affects everybody in this community.

Jose Rivera – He said he will go by what the other members have said; all the generic things like the thank you and the process they underwent to get here today. He would like to re-emphasize the reason why we are here and that is because of our students; our priorities need to be aligned with one voice knowing that we are sitting here tonight to serve our students and that mentality needs to be carried throughout everything we do; whether it is the creation or implementation of policy, any decision making needs to be made keeping in mind that we are here to serve our students. When that mentality gets engraved in our brains anything we are to do going forward will show that is the reason why we are here tonight. It is us and every single one of you, whoever will eventually come down and listen to us speak; we just need to be aware of why we are here and set the tone that the priority will not be any political agendas. Our thinking and opinions are for the students of Woonsocket because these kids will be our future; they may one day take care of us. With this being said, he would like to re-iterate and re-emphasize that priorities need to be aligned and we need to have one voice going forward.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:41 p.m.: S. Seale

2nd: S. Pawlina (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberly Blais, WSC Recording Secretary