

MINUTES  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2014**  
**7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet**  
**60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895**

**Meeting called to order by Chairman George Lacouture at 7:00 p.m. in Open Session.**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

<b>Roll Call:</b>	George Lacouture, Chairman	Present
	Soren Seale, Vice-Chairman	Present
	Daniel Chattman	Present
	Susan Pawlina	Present
	Jose Rivera	Present

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**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

**Leo A. Savoie Students** – Several students from Savoie described different community services they have worked on. They thanked everyone who donated to these projects and reminded everyone that even though we have a great community we can all work together to make it better.

**Heather Neil, Elementary Technology Integrator for the District** – Across the world amazing innovations are happening in technology which are truly changing the face of education and the future; social media is allowing students to have a global audience to share and teach what they are learning; she gave several examples of what students are doing. As you know at WED, thinking outside the box is a means of survival; she works with teachers everyday who have ideas that could inspire students and students are ready to rise to the occasion; what is stopping them from being the next newsworthy story is that our technology department lacks leadership; we have gone nine months, almost an entire school year, without a technology director. There is an urgency to hire a technology director for these students, teachers, and this city. A city is rich in only the education it provides. We need a technology director that not only manages personnel, work orders, and maintains technology but one who navigates the rapidly changing landscape of technology, digital citizenship, teacher instruction, and most importantly, student learning.

**Gordon Davignon, Music Teacher at Bernon and Savoie School** – He is here to talk about the lack of a technology director. A teacher at Bernon purchased an interactive whiteboard and has not been able to utilize the whiteboard because there is no projector because there is no one in the technology department, especially a director, who could approve to purchase a projector. In the elementary schools there are no technology teachers. Personally he has spent thousands of his own dollars getting the best technology equipment for his students to be able to bring technology into the classroom; he is actually one of the facilitators in the music department at the elementary level who is doing this. He has been meeting with Dr. McGee and technology to actually get technology into the music department but their hands are tied without a technology director.

**Roxane Carey, Vice President, WTG** - She is here hoping that the Committee will have another meeting between now and June 11<sup>th</sup>; they currently have 35 plus teachers on layoff status; they have no rescissions that have been made at this point. Last week they sat down with Mr. Wolfgang and created a list; they have 16 people to bring before the Committee tonight for recall but because the Superintendent was on vacation this sat; she asked Mr. Wolfgang if they could make this an addendum for the Committee but this was also unsuccessful. The job fair has to take place before the end of the school year; if they only have recalls on June 11<sup>th</sup> this process will not take place; the process that was created by the Superintendent is 3 days; if we wait until the 11<sup>th</sup> to do the rescissions then we will have teachers collecting unemployment which is unnecessary when we have positions for them; the people on the list that they created have positions; these people are in the budget but they are laid off. They haven't had a raise in 5 years, she doesn't want to talk about the new contract, and the only thing that we have to offer them is job security and we can't even offer that to them anymore

**Jeffrey Partington, President, WTG** – On June 10 and 12 at the Woonsocket Senior Center, there will be a public comment period for the RISE Mayoral Academy that is a K-8 Charter School proposed for the communities of Woonsocket, North Smithfield, and Burrillville for the 2015-2016 school year; we are not in favor of this proposal for several reasons, not the least of which is siphoning off money from a cash strapped community for a competing school. We fought side by side with the Mayor and the School Department to get passage of FDK for our schools as we believe it is in the best interest of the students in Woonsocket. We did not expect that we would be unwitting partners in making sure there was adequate funding to startup this Mayoral Academy that will begin in 2015-2016 with Full Day Kindergarten only. This Charter School will only siphon off precious money from an already distressed district to further the aims of an outside corporate agenda. The rationale for the startup is the all important NECAP test scores and the ability of the Mayoral Academy to work with parents to ensure their students go to school as the absenteeism rate at Globe and Coleman is described as very high. He can counter the latter with the inability of the school district to hold parents accountable due to our lack of a Truancy Court and Attendance Officers at the Elementary Level. The Mayoral Academies have a track record of “cherry picking” the best students and if they do not perform, they are sent back to the public schools. Again, it is the lack of resources that handcuffs the public school's abilities, not lack of will or performance. As you will not be asked to vote on this, he is calling on this committee to pass a resolution to not support this Charter School effort.



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**3. Discussion/Vote on the Awarding of Certificates of Individual Achievement as an Addendum to the WED's Waiver to the Statewide Assessment Graduation Requirement Policy and Protocol – L. Bedard**

L. Bedard stated they developed a policy to add to the waiver policy that the Committee approved recently which is called awarding Certificates of Individual Achievement; this is for students who have active Individualized Educational Plans, who are eligible for the RI Alternative Assessment, and who are enrolled in a program where it is recognized that he or she cannot reasonably meet the regular RIDE proficiency-based graduation requirements; they would be allowed and encouraged to participate in our graduation ceremony, walk across the stage, and receive a Certificate of Individual Achievement. The student who will qualify for this would have completed at least 4 years of high school; the student's IEP Team will be reviewing the student's graduation as part of the transition plan 18 months prior to graduation and again 6 months before graduation; the parents will be informed at all these different intervals. The IEP Team shall inform the principal in writing any decisions made regarding graduation status prior to January 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year of graduation.

Motion to approve the Awarding of Certificates of Individual Achievements: S. Pawlina 2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Chattman  
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes (GL, SP, DC, JR) 1 No (SS) APPROVED

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**4. Discussion/Vote on the appointment of the Human Resource Coordinator – G. Donoyan**

Dr. McGee read the letter of recommendation for the appointment of the Human Resources Coordinator. He stated they are seeking approval pending WBC approval the appointment of Mr. William McGowan as the Human Resource Coordinator for the WED.

Motion to approve the appointment of Mr. McGowan: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

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**5. Approval of Bid Awards: Bid #15-05 Roland SP-300 Printer/Cutter; Bid #15-06 Fire Alarm and Sprinkler; Bid #15-10 Coleman Doors and Stairs**

Motion to approve the Bids: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

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**6. Approval to extend Sodexo Contract for the months of July and August – J. Spagna**

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

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**7. Discussion/Vote on Substitute Pay – G. Lacouture**

Motion to discuss substitute pay: G. Lacouture 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Seale

G. Lacouture handed the Committee a set of figures that J. Spagna put together regarding substitutes; right now we have spent only 57%; in the previous year we spent 112%. He would like to propose that for the remainder of this school year we increase the substitute pay to \$100.00 per day. S. Seale agrees that we have to send a message but feels \$100.00 per day is high. J. Rivera asked what would be the pay rate for next year. G. Lacouture said they would discuss this during the July meeting and then it could go before the WBC towards the end of July for approval. G. Lacouture stated the budgeted amount of subs this year was \$780,000 and we have spent \$447,000 and J. Spagna will need to figure out how far we can go with the \$100.00 for next school year. S. Pawlina stated we spent 57% on budgeted substitute pay while we overspent on teacher overages to cover classrooms by 219%; we need to increase the pay for substitutes so our classrooms will be covered. D. Chattman asked J. Spagna is there is enough money to cover the increase of substitute pay for the remainder of the school year. J. Spagna stated as of today he believes there will be; in 2013 we were at 112% when \$485,000 was budgeted which was increased by \$300,000 in our budgeted amount 2014. He will do an analysis of what we would have spent this year if they paid them \$125.00 per day vs. the \$75.00.

Motion to approve the increase of substitute pay: G. Lacouture 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

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**8. Discussion on Class Size Overages – G. Lacouture**

G. Lacouture stated through March 31<sup>st</sup> of last year we spent \$20,800.00 on class size overages; same date this year, we have spent \$136,000.00; he said there has to be some sort of analysis in 2014 as to where this problem exists; C. Ursillo has identified the problem in special education but no one is looking at the problem in regular education; someone has to do this and if we need to hire someone then we have to hire someone to identify the problem. J. Spagna stated the analysis shows that 68% of the overages have to do with special education. G. Lacouture asked if they did an analysis of 2012 and 2013. J. Spagna said no. G. Lacouture stated you have to go back to do the analysis to find the trend; he would expect to have a report on class size overages by the last meeting in June. S. Seale said an analysis of the AESOP system over the summer might shed some light as well.

Discussion only. No vote was taken.

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**9. Discussion/Vote on Department Heads – G. Lacouture, D. Chattman**

Motion to discuss/vote on department heads: G. Lacouture 2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Chattman

G. Lacouture stated this started at the high school then went district wide; he would like to bring back, at the high school, department heads for english, science, math, and social studies; contractually that is approximately \$8,000 per department head which is not pensionable. D. Chattman stated several reasons why he supports this. Dr. McGee explained the process that the high school is doing now without department heads and expressed the need for department heads at the high school; he also pointed out that when NEASC visits next year this need will be pointed out by them. G. Lacouture would like to table this until the Superintendent is able to respond and get a cost analysis from the business manager.

Motion to table until the next meeting: G. Lacouture 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes TABLED

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**CONFERENCES: None**

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Patrick McGee for the Superintendent.**

At the last School Committee meeting there was a discussion regarding the lack of supplies in our schools; we have directed all of our building principals to ask each teacher what supplies they need as well as to ensure each teacher recognizes how to request the needed supplies; all principals have documented the process for supply requests and have notified central office that all teachers in their buildings have received the supplies they have needed. Planning for FDK is progressing; a pre-planned meeting was held with principals and teachers to compile a list of resources and materials to be ordered as soon as possible; further steps will include parent notifications of meetings as we move along with FDK implementation. The WHS graduation waivers are continually being addressed; to date 43 students have met the waiver for the NECAP requirements by receiving an acceptance to a RIDE approved admission based institution of higher education, passing an approved alternative test, or securing the district approved waiver by the Superintendent. Lastly, we look forward to celebrating graduating class of 2014 accomplishments on June 6, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. scheduled to be held at Barry Field.

Motion to receive and place on file: D. Chattman 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Seale (Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

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**SCHOOL BOARD GOOD & WELFARE:**

**D. CHATTMAN:** He listened to Ms. Neil and Mr. Gordon regarding a technology director; we are doing a lot of things that are beneficial to our children and it would be great to have a technology director. He would also like to have department heads for our high school. We can only bring these requests forward to the WBC but they have final approval; a lot of things that people bring forward to the committee is also in our hearts but like Chairman Lacouture said we do not have the final say. He has a problem with Title I; he heard L. Filomeno say that some students that go to Mt. St. Charles are poverty kids and some of our title money goes to them; how can they be poverty when it costs \$12,000 to \$15,000 to go to Mt. St. Charles. G. Lacouture stated that Mt. St. Charles does not receive money out of Title I; they receive money out of Title II which is for professional development; every non-public school throughout RI gets some money from the Federal Government for professional development; however, some Title I money will go to Monsignor Gadoury and/or Good Shepherd because some students qualify either under poverty or educational disadvantage; we pay a reading specialist to go to those schools two half days a week.

**S. PAWLINA:** She feels that we need to schedule an emergency meeting regarding the layoff notices and we need to do this quickly; we should not be paying for any layoffs of teachers when they will actually have a job. We are at the end of the school year so all of the end of the year ceremonies, proms, graduations, etc are taking place right now so she wishes that all students attending these parties, and parents as well, act responsibly and choose good judgment. The boy's baseball team lost in extra innings and there will be a second game on Friday evening.

**G. LACOUTURE:** He thanked Savoie students for their performance. He said to Heather and Gordon the technology situation is sickening; we as a School Committee are helpless; this is being controlled by the Mayor's Office and the WBC and there has been no direction given to the School Committee; he doesn't know if this means that we should all show up at a WBC meeting and tell them about our situation in how we are languishing for nine months. To Roxane regarding the layoff notices and an emergency meeting, we will need to leave this up to Mr. Wolfgang; he will ask Dr. McGee to talk Mr. Wolfgang tomorrow. In general, he would not object to a charter school if it took from this community the same proportion of the background of our students but when you take our best you are doing us a disservice; he knows what has happened in Cumberland and Lincoln concerning the mayoral academy and it has not done well especially for Lincoln; he applauds J. Partington for getting this information out and asked him to send a reminder email regarding the dates; he is not good with putting resolutions together but he will ask to get one so the School Committee can act on it.

**S. SEALE:** Private schools in the district do not get any Title I but what's more offensive is that we have to pay for their books; if you're paying tuition for a private school then pay for the whole package. He was at the Nova 5K and it was a fabulous event. Thanked the WBC for passing FDK and now they finally have resolution to correct one of the largest mistakes that ever happened. He wishes they would rehire or get an approval for an RFP for a technology director but the WBC is not moving forward. He agrees that they should address the recall of teachers. He wanted to ask the Superintendent about this, but she's not here tonight, if there is a long term solution on their attorney situation. In his opinion there are two types of charter schools; one is like the Beacon Charter School where they don't directly compete with the school system at large and they specialize in arts, etc; he puts mayoral academies in a vulture category where they find a district who is hurting financially or underperforming; they only let in 75 kids; so when you take 75 of the smartest kids out of the public school and then they say "hey look these 75 kids are performing well"; well no kidding; they were performing well in the public school and also setting an example for all of the other students.

**J. RIVERA:** Passed.

Motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.: S. Seale

2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Chattman

(Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

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Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Blais  
WSC Recording Secretary