

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2014
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

Roll Call:	George Lacouture, Chairman	Present
	Soren Seale, Vice-Chairman	Present
	Susan Pawlina	Present
	Daniel Chattman	Absent
	Jose Rivera	Absent

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE: None.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Interim Superintendent Patrick McGee – He announced to the community that WED had a successful opening of the schools today; he visited every school in the district and spoke with administrators, teachers, faculty, parents, and students; he would like the community to know that they have worked very hard to opening this school year. Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) was a success; he had the opportunity to go into Pothier with the Mayor; the Mayor was very impressed and pleased with the work that has been done. He would like to recognize Donna Coderre and many other administrators who worked incredibly hard to make sure that our bringing back FDK to the district was a resounding success. In Kindergarten, we have approximately 450 students registered; district wide we have approximately 5800 students. There were some glitches as there usually are for the opening of first day especially with a district this size; some of those glitches were some bussing issues which he and P. Fontaine will be speaking with the bus company to make sure they resolve some of those issues. He would also like to recognize J. Spagna, which this evening will be his last SC meeting with us, who was really instrumental in getting our district back into fiscal shape; he thanked him for his services and stated it was a pleasure working with him and wishes him all the best in the future.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- **August 13, 2014 Open Minutes** - Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion to take out of order under new business the appointment of Interim Superintendent to Woonsocket Education Department:
S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

Motion to approve the appointment: S. Seale 2nd: G. Lacouture

G. Lacouture stated that Dr. McGee has already been appointed by the BC as our interim/acting superintendent effective August 15th; he will be performing all of the duties of the superintendent of schools as needed which he has done in the past; they thanked him dearly for this.

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

CONSENT AGENDA: Motion to approve the consent agenda: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina
ROLL CALL VOTE ON ENTIRE CONSENT AGENDA: 3 YES APPROVED AS SUBMITTED

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS: S. Seale announced that the Uniform Sub-Committee will hopefully have its final meeting on Tuesday, September 2nd at 6:30 p.m.; they will be discussing the policy that will be brought forward to the SC for their approval. G. Lacouture stated he is not on the FDK Committee but he talked with D. Coderre this morning; we only had three new students register this morning and this is unbelievable in an urban district; there will be some movement as far as students are concerned because at Savoie, the kindergartners per class are in the 30's. The principals will be meeting on Tuesday to resolve these conflicts

with the overcrowded classrooms. A tremendous thanks to D. Coderre for stepping forward and to the building principals and secretaries who have gone out of their way.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Vote on the appointment of the Assistant Director of Special Education – P. McGee

Motion to remove from the table: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

G. Lacouture stated there was a minor glitch with this because one of the candidates had a medical emergency; it will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Motion to table: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Discussion/Vote on Bid Award: Bid #15-14 Before and After Daycare Provider – J. Spagna

Motion Made: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

3. Discussion/Vote on Bid Award: Bid #15-15 Building Material for a Cape Cod Style House – J. Spagna

Motion Made: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

4. Discussion/Vote to increase substitute pay – P. McGee, J. Spagna

Motion to remove from the table: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina

S. Seale stated he was initially concerned about the increase of \$25.00 per day; however, he did some research into other districts that has similar demographics like Pawtucket which do pay within this dollar range; he is comfortable with this increase in order to lure more substitute teachers to the district. S. Pawlina agrees.

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

5. Discussion/Vote on the hiring of an Interim Director of Finance – G. Lacouture, P. McGee

Motion Made: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina

P. McGee is recommending Ms. Margaret Baker to be appointed as the Interim Director of Finance and Administration. This position will be vacant beginning August 29th; having said this, Ms. Baker will be the interim in that position until they hire a permanent person for said position. He read the letter of recommendation and stated her salary will be \$95,000 pro-rated to a daily basis with no benefits.

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

6. Discussion/Vote to post Director of Finance position – G. Lacouture

Motion Made: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina

G. Lacouture said it is his understanding that this position has been posted. J. Wolfgang said no, not until it was approved by the Committee. G. Lacouture stated he was under the impression that Mr. Coleman told you to post this position immediately. J. Wolfgang said no, he did not.

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

7. Discussion/Vote to post Controller position – G. Lacouture

Motion Made: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

8. Discussion/Vote on the appointment of the Chief Information Officer – G. Lacouture Motion to appoint Chief

Information Officer: S. Seale 2nd: G. Lacouture

Motion to table until the next SC meeting: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

9. Discussion/Vote on the appointment of Legal Counsel – G. Lacouture

Motion made: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina

S. Seale stated he was part of the legal counsel interview committee; they had the choice of choosing between many very qualified candidates so he is comfortable with the appointment of this firm. G. Lacouture stated he has mixed emotions because the firm of Brennan, Cuprio, Casoine, Scungio, and MacAlster has served them well and has an impeccable reputation. He is hoping the experience with a new attorney will be the same; he will be supporting the new attorney whose name is Sara Rapport and her firm. S. Pawlina stated since they became an appointed SC they have been in the process of looking for an interim; this started over a year ago in July and now we are in August 2014 finally hiring not an interim but a school attorney; it has taken over a year to fill this position

and this is not acceptable. We, as the SC, are just making the recommendation to hire to the Budget Commission (BC) which is also unacceptable; this goes to show why they need to leave; we need to make these appointments more quickly because it is taking up too much time; we don't have other positions because of the BC; it is because of them that we lost our controller, finance director and superintendent. As a city we have to say enough is enough and take over our city because these decisions can't take 13 months; our director of technology has been vacant for over a year as well.

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

10. Discussion/Vote to amend Athletic Activities Medical Insurance Form – P. McGee

Motion Made: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale

P. McGee stated the acting athletic director had a meeting with the RI Interscholastic League to discuss the insurance our athletes must have in sports, specifically in football. In the past, athletes would have to purchase insurance and in Woonsocket we used Lefebvre Insurance. The insurance cost for football players has gone from \$9.50 to \$200.00 and the reason for this is because of concussions. Many of our students cannot afford this. We looked at current SC policy that would prevent a family from using their own insurance versus having to purchase the insurance; however no policy exists. He talked with legal counsel and they stated there are other schools who are dealing with this so they sent him a waiver form that other school districts are using. The SC received a copy of the proposed waiver verification and hold harmless agreement that parents would be given to fill out; the second page at the bottom has the waiver; if a parent has insurance they would waive purchasing the \$200.00 insurance. The second document attached is the Lefebvre insurance information. He is asking the SC to use this form for our student athletes; he noted that the students and parents would receive both forms which are the waiver and information about Lefebvre insurance. S. Pawlina asked if this form will be given to students in Spanish as well. P. McGee said yes. G. Lacouture said his concern is asking a family for their private insurance name and information so he would feel more comfortable if the form was notarized; he doesn't feel the waiver form would stop a lawsuit against the SC. S. Pawlina stated student athletes do have a form notarized which is from the RI Interscholastic League; this form acknowledges and authorizes or consents assumption of risk. G. Lacouture said it is not the same as a waiver. G. Lacouture would like to amend this waiver to include it must be notarized.

Motion made to amend this waiver to include the waiver must be notarized: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale

Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes APPROVED

CONFERENCES: None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: None

SCHOOL BOARD GOOD & WELFARE:

D. CHATTMAN: Absent.

J. RIVERA: Absent.

G. LACOUTURE: He attended the initial breakfast/meeting at the high school and as he sat in the auditorium he thought he sat at his first orientation meeting 50 years ago to the day and he felt old. It was so nice to see excited people getting ready for the school year. He went by Globe today and the kids looked like a million dollars; he knows how excited elementary kids are and hopes that the high schools kids are as well. He is happy that FDK got off with a great start; through the hard work of everybody (teachers, teacher assistants, principals, secretaries, and administrators) we pulled it off and everyone should be congratulated.

S. SEALE: As a parent the first day of school is like an adult's Christmas, you wake up early, you're excited, can't wait for the bus to come, and celebrate the glory of being kid free all day. It is his understanding that it was an excellent first day throughout the district. He is happy that FDK is as successful as it has been in its opening. The RI Monthly Magazine published the rankings of 49 high schools throughout the state and they have various metrics by which they measure each of these schools; Woonsocket did an excellent job in improving its NECAP scores but one of the metric, to him, which was very concerning and it's a byproduct from the financial situation that we are in, is we have the highest student to teacher ratio in the state at 24 to 1; hopefully as the financial situation in Woonsocket improves we will find some room to reduce student to teacher ratios so our students can get more individualized attention and continue to raise those test scores and graduation rates across the district.

S. PAWLINA: Congratulated the district on a great first day, especially under the circumstances and the craziness that has gone on during the last few months, and on implementing FDK. Thanked D. Coderre and all the people she tasked to help her for having FDK go off seamlessly. Thanked Dr. McGee for taking on the Interim Superintendent position, for going to all of the schools today to welcome our students and teachers. She looks forward to this new school year; she has high hopes of getting in place all of the key positions very soon so they can go on with what they started to do back in December when they took on these positions as School

