

MINUTES  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2014**  
**OPEN SESSION**  
**Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet**  
**60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895**

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**Meeting called to order by Chairman George Lacouture at 6:30 p.m. in Open Session.**

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

The School Committee may seek to convene in Executive Session to discuss the job performance, position, and related issues pertaining to a central office administrator, in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1).

Motion made to convene into closed session at 6:30 p.m.: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes **APPROVED**

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**Meeting called to order by Chairman George Lacouture at 7:02 p.m. in Open Session.**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

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

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**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

**Dennis Desaulniers, Woonsocket Resident:** He stated Mr. McGee, who has been here mostly his whole career, is certainly qualified to be our new superintendent. If you don't think he's qualified then why are you making him the assistant superintendent, creating a new position. The teachers and unions are recommending him and hopefully the SC is recommending him; he hopes they put in a good word to the Budget Committee for appointment. He has nothing against the fellow who is going to be assigned as the superintendent but here is a man who has put his career in Woonsocket. These people are working hard and you are going to appoint someone from out of town. Thinks Mr. McGee would put stability in our school department. He hopes the SC listens to their suggestions.

**Jeffrey Partington, WTG President:** It appears from the Woonsocket Call we have another sad day in Woonsocket. The front page stated Robert Mitchell is being recommended to be the next Superintendent in Woonsocket. As we had no say in the process, nor did the parents, students, teachers, or community leaders, then it appears outside political influences did not want the learning community to have any say in the choice of leader. Similar to the resolution that you unanimously passed in June not supporting the Mayoral Academy because you do not have a voice in the process, it appears that this candidate is being railroaded down our throats due to some outside political agenda. In a recent press release he stated, WED has had a long period of distress; so much so that many talented teachers and administrators have left for more stable conditions, many significant contributors to this school system who remain committed have either grown up here or have created significant roots in the city. Dr. McGee has proven this type of loyalty to this community, these students, through his various roles as vice principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and as the current acting superintendent. Dr. McGee is the obvious choice for this community. It is my understanding that the vote to approve the recommendation will come sometime next week. When this SC was appointed, many feared that members might be beholden to the Budget Commission or the Mayor and vote that way. You have not done that; you have voted for what is in the best interest of all students and I am hopeful that in the vote next week that you vote with your conscience, your heart, and do what is best for all of us and vote the appointment down. Let the Budget Commission have the burden to override what we all know to be the correct decision.

**Alethia Forcier, Ledgewood Lane:** She is here about the uniform policy; she is not here for her kids because she has stressed to the SC that her kids will not wear one but she is here because she sees potential lawsuits with this dress code. There is nothing in the policy that says how to apply for a waiver and the eligibility for a waiver and it needs to be put in here; last SC meeting she was told people in poverty could apply for a waiver and was also told that they will be using the free and reduced lunch lists to decide on these waivers; she knows a lot of families who do not qualify for this but have homes and have been slammed with taxes; it is unfair that this waiver is leaving out the working poor in city that own homes and are overburdened by taxes. Two weeks ago at the high school it stated that footwear must be closed toe and heel and heels must be low to ensure safety; now they can wear this because this is a concern. At the middle school, it says pajama bottoms are prohibited but at the high school it says pajama tops and bottoms; so are

they allowed to wear pajama tops at the middle school? She has a problem with this policy being voted on tonight. What happens when you have a substitute principal, they read this policy, notice that the Forcier child is not in uniform, then keeps her in for recess not knowing that this policy is not suppose to be enforced at the elementary level because it doesn't say it on the policy, and there goes a lawsuit. A solution to this problem is the policy that was written and spearheaded by Louise Masse. Another point about this new dress code policy is that jeans can be worn but this is nothing is stated to prevent them from wearing ripped or jeans with holes. Ms. Masse's smaller written policy covers more than the two pages the SC has written. She would appreciate a waiver added to this policy before they vote.

**Estelle Bubble, Third Avenue:** Why don't we just leave the dress code the way it is. The dress code with the colors was perfect. The kids say it doesn't matter what they wear because they don't enforce the dress code; how are these kids going to give respect if they don't have it. She has a facebook page that is called Woonsocket Area Dress Code; this is for people who want to sell their clothes, who want to trade it (swap), or who just want to donate their clothing; she has over 80 people involved now. We need to enforce the dress code.

**Keith Jalette, WHS Student:** He is here to support 2<sup>nd</sup> passage of the new dress code policy for the high school; this policy makes more sense than the policy that currently exists; he thinks there was unequal enforcement with the old policy. He thinks students should be able to wear what they want to wear as long it is not offensive or obstructing learning. There should be a much clearer waiver policy and it should be written so he hopes the SC does act on this. Now it's time to stop focusing on this one issue and move onto more important things.

**Roxane Carey, WTG Vice-President:** She is here to speak about the hiring of the lawyer. She doesn't care who we hire but when she was looking at the numbers, she noticed we are going to hire someone for a stipend for 400 hours; is there some kind of an agreement if we go over the 400 hours. When you vote on this tonight this may be part of the discussion you may want to have.

**Daniel Guernon, Vose Street:** He received a letter today in regards to the situation that took place yesterday at Globe. Police arrived at the school out of concern for what could have been a domestic situation; not knowing what happened caused a great amount of concern to the parents; he did receive a robocall stating what was in the letter but only received that call today. His concern as a parent is sending his child off to school the following day after police presence was seen in the school; there were parents who did not send their children to school today; in a situation like this, he feels that an immediate call should have been put out from public safety to address what has taken place. How the situation was handled with the police making their presence was excellent but he has a problem with the lack of communication that came forth after the fact. Right now is a good time to examine protocols from the top down and use this as a measure to do a better job in the future.

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**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:** **Interim Superintendent Patrick McGee** stated Carnell Henderson, Principal of the Woonsocket High School and Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center announced today that Austin Ferrenti has been named a Commended Student in the 2015 National Merit Scholarship Program. A Letter of Commendation from the school and National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), which conducts the program, will be presented by the principal to this scholastically talented senior. Austin is a senior in WACTC's Biotechnology Program. About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2015 competition by taking the 2013 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Congratulations Austin!

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

• **September 10, 2014 Open Minutes - Motion to approve: S. Seale**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes**

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

**APPROVED**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**G. Lacouture removed the personnel actions. S. Seale removed both field trip requests.**

**Personnel Recommendations:**

**G. Lacouture said with the certified positions there are no indications on the personnel recommendations as to where or who these new hires are replacing. It is his understanding that one teacher is replacing a transferred teacher, two teachers are filling in a vacant position, and two teachers took a FDK position. He has stressed to J. Wolfgang in the past that these forms be filled out completely; this is the second month they have been filled out incorrectly; he trusts that this would be the last time. J. Wolfgang stated it will. G. Lacouture stated when it comes to the position of Brian Bouley as the Varsity Head Football Coach, he would like to amend this to indicate for the 2014-15 school year only. He personally doesn't approve of an**

administrator being a head coach. He would like the new superintendent to have the opportunity to approve an administrator being a head coach. He asked J. Wolfgang if he posted this position on the Interscholastic League's website. J. Wolfgang said no.

Motion to amend the position of Brian Bouley for 2014-15 school year only: G. Lacouture 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

Roll Call on the changes made to the personnel recommendations: 5 Yes APPROVED

**Field Trip/Conference Requests:**

S. Seale stated on the WMS Washington trip it states the number expected to attend is between 30 to 50 for a cost of \$662.00 per person and this comes out of the student's pocket and the chaperones are free. P. McGee stated there are fundraisers involved for student whose parents may not be able to afford or fund the trip. S. Seale said the quote that was offered for \$662.00 per person is based upon 50 people paying; if only 30 attend is it still the same cost or almost doubled in price. P. McGee said he will get the information and get back to him. S. Seale stated the NAFEPA conference will be held in Oklahoma City but yet there is no cost associated for this trip. L. Filomeno stated NAFEPA is paying for this; she is a member of the board.

Motion to table the WMS Washington field trip until a representative from the WMS is available to attend this meeting and answer questions: G. Lacouture 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

CONSENT AGENDA: Motion to approve the consent agenda: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: G. Lacouture

ROLL CALL VOTE ON ENTIRE CONSENT AGENDA: 5 YES APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion/Vote on the amendments of Policy P4-15-School Readiness Policy – 2nd Passage – S. Seale, J. Rivera**

Motion Made: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: G. Lacouture

G. Lacouture said if there are amendments doesn't this go back to 1<sup>st</sup> passage. S. Rapport stated there were some wording changes that she discussed with K. Blais; because of the nature of those changes and because they weren't material or significant, she does not think it was necessary to bring it back to 1<sup>st</sup> reading. S. Seale stated both the changes were requested prior to the initial passage but through oversight were not included; first change goes with the high school and middle school; when speaking about pants it used to say tights may not be worn as an outer garment and now it's been added to say tights and leggings may not be worn as outer garments but they can be worn under a skirt or dress; second change is at the high school level to remove the requirement that footwear be closed toe and heel. G. Lacouture stated he does not approve of open toe, open heel footwear for health and safety reasons; therefore he will not support the changes with the school readiness policy; however if the vice-chair removed the closed heel and toe he would support the passage of the policy. S. Pawlina stated there are many things about this policy she is not comfortable with; the merits that Ms. Forcier brought forth tonight that was written by Ms. Masse really should be just looked at and really just put into effect. She does not believe they should be able to wear hats in school; she doesn't believe this is what they wanted or what should have come out of all of this; we have gone from one extreme to another; she can't support this policy at all. S. Seale stated there are so many different opinions about this policy; some think we should continue with the dress code as is and work on the enforcement and some just want a dress code that is permissive in nature across the board but thinks the real question "Is this better than what we currently have?"; a lot of the amendments that were made were asked for by the parents and/or administrators. If you think this is better than what we currently have then vote yes. J. Rivera asked G. Lacouture that if the amendment for the closed toe and heel was made they would have his support of the policy. G. Lacouture said yes.

Motion to withdraw the section of the closed toe and heel: J. Rivera 2<sup>nd</sup>: G. Lacouture

Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes (GL, SP, DC, JR) 1 No (SS) APPROVED

Roll Call on the amended school readiness policy for 2<sup>nd</sup> passage: 3 Yes (GL, SS, JR) 2 No (SP, DC) APPROVED

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion/Vote on the job description for the Chief Information Officer - G. Lacouture, P. McGee**

Motion Made: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: G. Lacouture

S. Seale stated that one of the revised changes from 2013 is the reports to part which states the position report to the superintendent of schools with input from the Mayor of Woonsocket; he was wondering what is the basis for this input. G. Lacouture said he has been

told that the position will be a split position between WED and the City of Woonsocket of approximately 90/10; WED would pay 90% and the city would pay 10% which is similar to the Human Resource Director which was originally voted on by the SC and Budget Commission (BC). Mr. Wolfgang stated he was not told by the BC about the exact percentage. G. Lacouture made an amendment to the job description.

Motion to amend the job description that the salary will be a 90/10 split: G. Lacouture  
Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina

Roll Call on the position as amended: 5 Yes APPROVED

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**2. Discussion/Vote on retainer fees for Legal Counsel – G. Lacouture, M. Baker**

Motion to pay Sara Rapport \$75,000 for 400 hours as a retainer: S. Seale

2<sup>nd</sup>: G. Lacouture

S. Seale asked what happens after 400 hours. G. Lacouture stated they would have to re-bid; they can go out to look for another attorney or they could extend the retainer for another \$75,000. What they are approving tonight is \$75,000 for 400 hours which is \$187.50 per hour.

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

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**3. Discussion/Vote to appoint the WACTC 10-Month Assistant Principal – P. McGee**

Motion Made: S. Seale

2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina

P. McGee stated that it is with great pleasure to recommend the appointment of Mr. William Webb as the WACTC 10-Month Assistant Principal; he read the letter of recommendation.

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

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CONFERENCES: None.

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Motion to seal the minutes of the closed session meeting of 9-24-14: S. Seale

2<sup>nd</sup>: G. Lacouture

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

G. Lacouture stated that no votes were taken during the closed session meeting of 9-24-14.

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**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT: Interim Superintendent Patrick McGee** responded to the questions asked by the Globe Park parents and stated he takes full responsibility for not reporting this the day it happened and he apologizes for this. He would like to commend Lynn Prentiss, Principal at Globe Park School who did a phenomenal job that day. These types of situations you hope to never encounter but he can tell us that she was very decisive, followed all the procedures and protocols by contacting his office, Mr. Fontaine, and the WPD. The WPD responded immediately, assessed the situation, and determined that there were no children or adults were in danger at the school; thank you to the WPD. As we move forward we will continue to assess our responses as we always do when we have situations to make sure what we do is right for the kids and our schools are safe.

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**SCHOOL BOARD GOOD & WELFARE:**

**S. PAWLINA:** Passed.

**S. SEALE:** He thanked everyone who has participated and came to the uniform committee meetings and who have spoken at the two SC meetings; their input was invaluable. He knows not everyone is happy with the policy but he thinks it is a step into the right direction with moving forward with this dress code. The first SELAC meeting is scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the WMS-Hamlet Building in Room 124; SELAC stands for Special Education Local Advisory Committee; this is an excellent resource for parents who have special needs children to have their questions answered or to find other resources to help.

**G. LACOUTURE:** He said Mr. Desaulniers and Mr. Partington discussed the superintendent’s appointment; from a SC view point, this has not been, in his opinion, a positive process. From the beginning, the committee that was initially set up had all of those things that he has been familiar with; when this was taken to the powers that be in state government, the answer was no, no way. As his authority as Chair, he did appoint S. Seale and D. Chattman and thanked them for the hours they have put in. No one is overly happy with the fact that Dr. McGee is not going to be the candidate as reported in this morning’s Woonsocket Call. He is personally happy of the fact that we are going to have a superintendent and he will give this superintendent 100% of what he can from this body. He is even happier that Dr. McGee will be elevated to a position he deserves; that of an assistant superintendent with commensurate pay. Dr. McGee, like many in the room, is committed to the WED and we all look forward to him staying here.

