

MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015
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.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call by Superintendent Patrick McGee:

George Lacouture, Chairman	Present
Soren Seale, Vice-Chairman	Present
Jose Rivera	Absent
Susan Pawlina	Present
Donald Burke	Present

PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:

Roxane Carey, WTG Executive Vice Present – She along with the WTG Members would like to personally thank the WSC for voting in Dr. McGee as Superintendent at SC's last meeting.

RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Superintendent Patrick McGee recognized Woonsocket High School Student Jacob Greenless who competed in the boys hammer throw during the RI Outdoor Track and Field Championships at Brown Stadium on June 7th; Jacob and his classmates Jared Briere and Dilyn Cote are ranked among the top 50 nationally in the hammer; Jared Briere finished first-place in the hammer at the Northern Division Championships in May. Last month, he was awarded the age 15-16 title at the National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships in Florida where he tossed the hammer a career-best of 202 feet and 7 inches; as a 10th grader he also earned All-American status at the New Balance Nationals in June when he finished sixth overall. All three students will be entering their junior year at the high school this year. Congratulations and we look forward to hearing more about the student athletes. Sodexo Director Ellen Shalvey recently received the Citizen Citation from Governor Gina Raimondo; Ellen was recognized for her dedication and leadership in closing the summer meals gap for Rhode Island children and building healthy kids and healthy communities for a healthy Rhode Island; last year Sodexo served more than 200,000 meals during the summer; this year we anticipate an even greater impact! On behalf of the Woonsocket Education Department and the city's children and families we thank you for all your hard work and commitment.

Motion to receive and place on file: S. Seale 2nd: D. Burke (Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

• August 12, 2015 Open/Closed Minutes – Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: D. Burke
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

Motion to take out of order under New Business, Agenda Item #3 and #4: G. Lacouture 2nd: D. Burke
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

3. Discussion/Vote on the Amendments to Non-Union Benefits Policy – G. Lacouture
Motion made to amend the personnel leave policy to read after the word withheld "personnel leave may be carried over from one year to the next to a maximum of six days provided that school level administrators shall not be provided to discharge more than two consecutive personal days when school is in session. Under no circumstances and for no reasons shall any employee be compensated for unexpended personal leave upon termination/resignation of employment": G. Lacouture
2nd: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED
Motion made to vote on the policy as amended: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

S. Rapport noted that on Pages 9 and 10 she recommended to the SC to remove the phrase "High Holy". Motion made to eliminate the words "High Holy Day" from Religious Observances: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

S. Seale stated there are more amendments to this documents that SC did not approved yet. S. Rapport stated on Page 7 she highlighted and made a margin note that reads school level administrators and school level administrative support staff cannot take vacation leave while school is in session; this language was in the policy that the SC already adopted; because there was some discussion about this she was simply alerting them to the fact that there was no need to make changes. S. Seale asked if non-level school administrators can take vacation while school is in session. S. Rapport said correct.
Motion made to vote on the policy as amended: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

4. Discussion/Vote on the Amendment to the Non-Union Contracts – G. Lacouture

Motion made to amend that the Superintendent of Schools shall recommend to the Mayor non-union employees to be given a one or a two year contract: D. Burke 2nd: S. Seale

S. Seale stated he understands that the Mayor ultimately signs the contract but are they the ones who submit the contract to the Mayor for approval. G. Lacouture said no because the contract is between the Mayor and the employee; we hire and fire; we are recommending to the Mayor through the Superintendent a one or two year contract. The Mayor would like us to be on record that we agree to a one or two year contract for non-union employees. S. Seale said the question is the routing of the recommendation; does the recommendation go directly from the Superintendent to the Mayor or does it come from the Superintendent to the SC then to the Mayor with the understanding that it is ultimately the Mayor's discretion on the term of the contract; he thinks it should be routed to them so they can have some input. G. Lacouture said that is not what the motion says; it does not distinguish that SC has to approve John Doe to a one or two year contract. S. Rapport stated legally there is no clear answer because this provision, statutorily, as it is being carried out is without precedent; we are the basically the first body to follow this law. The SC can think of the Superintendent as the CEO of the SC so you are really acting through him; the SC can legally delegate to him the authority to make the recommendations; however if the SC does not want to delegate the authority she thinks it is in their power to say the Superintendent should be recommending to the SC and then SC representing to the Mayor. If SC does not want to delegate this task then the SC will need to modify/amend G. Lacouture's recommendation. At this time, G. Lacouture does not think the SC has to approve these recommendations when they have already approved to hire/fire these individuals. The Superintendent and/or his designee will be the evaluator. S. Seale feels that it is not a matter of approval; it is a matter of endorsement. He feels they do have an interest and understanding of the decision making process before endorsements. D. Burke stated the Superintendent was involved in the evaluation process and the SC was not and doesn't think they should be. The Superintendent is held accountable for what he does; if they disapprove of something that the Superintendent does then it can be brought forward here; thinks there may be too much micromanaging on their part. However there could be an appeal process if the Superintendent gives a one year and the individual feels they should be given a two year. S. Seale said there is no appeal process because ultimately the Mayor is the signer of the contract; the only time they would have any opportunity to weigh in is prior to the Mayor making her decision. P. McGee said he does the evaluations of directors and principals; based on those results he makes the recommendation/termination of a one or two year contract; however these results could go to the SC so he is sharing this information with the SC before going to the Mayor for signature. S. Seale thinks if this would be included in the Superintendent's report or some other formal spot on the agenda it would be a suitable solution to the problem.

D. Burke asked if the salary will be affected by a one or two year contract. G. Lacouture stated there is no salary increase for this year and said to S. Rapport that if someone is to receive a two year contract there would have to be a provision if there is a salary increase. S. Rapport said for those who get a two year the way we would write the second year is that it would remain the same subject to the equivalent of a wage reopener in a collective bargaining agreement; for those who would get a two year contract you would include language in that contract that makes reference to the possibility that the second year may be different from the first year; you would not include a raise. G. Lacouture said we would need to vote on this if we are changing the contract. S. Rapport said yes and it would subject to SC budgetary process. G. Lacouture said the SC already voted on the contracts; there has to be a way for the SC without having to change the contract or the spirit of the contract to take care of this question. S. Rapport said within the next two weeks identify the cluster of administrators who are going to get a two year contract, the SC can put this language on the next agenda and approve this slight modification of the language to the two year contracts. G. Lacouture stated by the time the SC approves this then have the individuals come in to sign and then send to the Mayor for signature we are looking at November and this was supposed to be done by July 1st. S. Rapport stated the contracts become effective July 1st no matter when they sign it. S. Rapport said for those receiving a two year all they would have to change from the template the SC already approved is a clause that would be added that allows for a potential increase in the second year subject to the budgetary process. G. Lacouture said the contract should be written with the salary for the first year and for the second year for all non-union and those who will receive two years and if there is a salary increase the SC would vote; it could be an appendix. S. Rapport said you would only need to amend two year contracts because all others would expire at the end of the first year. S. Seale asked if they could amend the contract that the Mayor signs; we would need to be in the language prior to the Mayor signing. S. Rapport said either way the contract will have to be amended and it would have to be amended by the Mayor after the approval of the budgetary process for the second year. G. Lacouture doesn't approve of two year contracts in this case because the Superintendent indicated to the SC that half of the people evaluated were evaluated by a less than acceptable non-RIDE instrument; if the instrument is faulty then how can we give two year contracts. S. Seale said regardless of the evaluation instrument, if we are putting our faith into the superintendent to make a recommendation he would also expect the superintendent to take into account the evaluation instruction when making his recommendation on contract terms.

Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes

APPROVED

**CONSENT AGENDA: G. Lacouture noted that the SC received additional personnel recommendations this evening.
Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED**

COMMUNICATIONS: None.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS: G. Lacouture asked P. Fontaine to give a report on the WMS gyms and the capital improvements. P. Fontaine stated his maintenance staff discovered a crack in a cinder block in the Villa Nova Building and it was loose; they immediately took the block down and made calls to the city building officials and Gilbane who in turn contacted their subcontractors; they all met yesterday and agreed that this would be a two to three week fix. This morning the subcontractors, Costa Brothers showed Gilbane a different fix to the problem which was much quicker; as of this moment, approximately 98% of the Villa Nova gym has been repaired; the block that was broken has been replaced/secured and all the other blocks have been secured. Tomorrow they will be at Hamlet doing the same thing. He cautions by saying it is not complete until the building inspector signs off on this which will be Friday. He noted that this is a permanent repair and expect both gyms to be completed late tomorrow or early Friday morning; then both buildings will be inspected by himself, Gilbane and the building inspector; until this happens no one will be permitted in the gym. If everything turns out as expected then the gyms will be opened for the opening day of school. Two sets of staircases have been repaired at Coleman School; they are only waiting for the stair treads to be put in which will be put in tomorrow and the building inspector has already approved this work. All the sprinkler systems have been installed. The sprinkler system at Globe School has been tested and all the rest (WHS, Savoie, Citizens' and Bernon) are being tested tomorrow morning. S. Seale asked if the blocks at the WMS were structural. P. Fontaine said they are sort of cosmetic; there are 10 columns and behind these columns are a steel braces that goes from the floor to the ceiling; these blocks cover those columns; they are not structural; however, all ten columns and blocks in both building will have permanent anchors so they will never move again. S. Pawlina asked what caused this one cinder block to come loose. He said when they took the damaged block down there should have been a clip every second to third cinder block so this doesn't happen; they were down to the fifth to six block until they found a clip; however now every single block is clipped. She asked if we checked every cinder block in the whole school. P. Fontaine said no; he believes this was an isolated incident. She said the contractors should go through the building to make sure it was an isolated incident. He and the building inspector will do this. P. McGee thanked P. Fontaine and his team for their very quick response. D. Burke asked who pays for the repairs. P. Fontaine stated the subcontractor of Gilbane.

**Motion to remove out of order under New Business, Agenda Item #5: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED**

5. Status and Plan of Action for the Purchase of the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC):

D. Burke stated about a month ago the City Council discussed the purchase of the WACTC at their meeting; B. Peryea presented at this meeting as well. They did not talk about the students or education only finances; because of this he got up and spoke about the importance of WED taking over the school. There is a deadline offered by the state to purchase so shame on us if we lose this school and lose the students to other schools. He asked for this to be put on the agenda because the SC needs to come up with a plan as to what to say to the City Council so they can vote; they need to put together a different financial packet to show where the money will be spent and also asked is there a deadline and when is the deadline. P. Fontaine stated there is no set deadline but the state is putting pressure on us to do this. This is on the Building Committee agenda for tomorrow's meeting. Mr. Webb has formed a plan for the programs which is one part of this and the other part is facilities. He agrees that the City Council will not agree to this until we show how we are spending every penny of the \$3.1M; he is trying to cut down on the facilities work because once this money is expended we are then entitled to reimbursement from the state for future improvements. S. Pawlina asked how much money the state has put into the WACTC since talks about taking it over. P. Fontaine said approximately \$4200.00 for this year. B. Peryea stated \$210,000 has been spent on the WACTC from the state over the last seven years. In closing P. Fontaine will present the money needed for repairs and Mr. Webb will present program ideas to the Building Capital Committee tomorrow. In turn, the Building Committee will make the recommendations in the near future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Approval on the WMS Grading Policy – 2nd Passage – P. McGee, S. Boss
Motion to approve for 2nd Passage: D. Burke 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Approval on Substitute Pay – S. Pawlina, B. Peryea
Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: G. Lacouture Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

2. Discussion/Approval to return Fifth Avenue Building back to the City of Woonsocket – G. Lacouture, P. McGee, P. Fontaine

Motion to approve: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

6. Discussion of a Night School Program as another avenue to graduate – D. Burke

D. Burke said a couple of months ago there was a discussion about the graduation rate and knows that the SC wanted to meet to come up with some plans for the graduation rate. Right now we have a freshmen seminar in place which will help the students down the road; however, his concern is now; what are we going to do now for the students who have fallen by the wayside because of economics, moving, etc. We used to offer night school but no longer. He thinks a night school could help with the graduation rate but most importantly could help keep kids involved so they could get a diploma which is the most important thing. The school he works for does a night school program and the students work during the day and go to school in the evening; they capture approximately 30 students. The cost is approximately \$70,000.00 per year and the students do pay a fee. He has met with Karen Barbosa to talk about the ELO Program and they are involved with trying to capture credits for students; he thinks she may be a good avenue and maybe help develop this idea. He hopes maybe in January we could have something in place. Recently the Governor talked about high schools connecting with colleges which is called dual enrollment. He would like guidance and administration to think about these ideas and make something available for these students. G. Lacouture stated WED has a five-year plan which limits what they can do; maybe there are grants. D. Burke is surprised that this avenue wasn't brought up to help with our graduation rate. In the paper they are still quoting our graduation rate from two years ago which was 58.9; let's change this number. G. Lacouture added that we do have students taking college courses while attending high school. P. McGee noted that we do have options with dual and concurrent enrollments. Concurrent enrollment is when there is a teacher on staff who is certified to teach a college course to students who are in high school and they can get college credit. Dual enrollment is when they are going out to a college during the day and/or after school while they are enrolled in the high school. He and C. Henderson are scheduled to meet with RIDE to discuss the Governor's proposal and explore these options. S. Pawlina stated we really need to apply for grants because this is something we really need to do; we also need to think outside the box for this night school to make it happen; maybe invite the towns around us to see if their students would like to participate and they could help pick up some of the costs.

7. Discussion/Approval on the Appointment of the WMS Principal – G. Lacouture, P. McGee

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina
P. McGee read the letter of recommendation to appoint Mr. Mark Thompson to the position of the WMS Principal.
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

8. Discussion/Approval on the Appointment of the Medicaid/Easy IEP Specialist – G. Lacouture, P. McGee

Motion to approve: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale
G. Lacouture said the position is not a specialist position, it is a clerk position. He instructed the finance director and the superintendent to look at the salary to determine if this is what we should be paying and nothing has been done. Having said this he agrees with the appointment but not with the salary so he cannot support this. P. McGee read the letter of recommendation to appoint Ms. Christine LeBeau to the position of the Medicaid/Easy IEP Specialist for the Woonsocket Education Department.
Roll Call Vote: 3 Yes (SS, SP, DB) 1 No (GL) APPROVED

9. Discussion/Approval on Bid #16-09 Athletic Supplies – G. Lacouture, B. Peryea

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

10. Discussion/Approval on Bid #16-10 Athletic Uniforms – G. Lacouture, B. Peryea

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina, D. Burke Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

11. Discussion/Approval on Bid #16-11 Athletic Medical Supplies – G. Lacouture, B. Peryea

Motion to approve: S. Seale 2nd: S. Pawlina Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes APPROVED

CONFERENCES/DISCUSSIONS – None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Superintendent Patrick McGee announced Monday, August 31st is the first day of school; it is an exciting time of year. Freshman Orientation information is on WED's website; incoming freshman and not repeating freshman will be coming to school on August 31st; first day of school for returning 9th graders, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders will be September 1st. For the kindergartners, with their last name beginning from A to L, their first day will be August 31st; for the kindergartners with their last name beginning from M to Z, their first day will be September 1st; all

kindergartners will come together on September 2nd; this information is also on the website. He will also be sending out a phone blast beginning tomorrow and Friday regarding this information to the district and the community. At the last meeting, S. Seale expressed concerns about the WHS website; with the help and work of A. Graham, S. Thibeault, C. Henderson, and staff at the WHS, that website has been redone and updated but it is a work in progress. They have coordinated schedules to meet with each of the principals to review their websites to ensure they are all up to date; in addition, every Thursday the principals are to notify the tech department if there are any changes to be made to their school's website. The goal is to increase communication between the schools, the district, parents, and community. We have spoken in the past about the unfortunate negative publicity the school department receives which has gone on for a while now; he does not buy into this any longer; the days of the self-pity in Woonsocket are over; we are capable of achieving and excelling with our students, our staff and all faculty. He and the directors had a nice meeting with Joe Nadeau from the Woonsocket Call; they explained the hard work that has been going on over the past years, work that has been done during the summer, and the initiatives that we are undertaking. There are a lot of positive things going on in the school department but we need to do a better job of getting this information out. Today, he and some of the other directors had a meeting with Sandy from the Valley Breeze again to talk about the positive things that are going on in this district. He is committed, as well as this district is committed, in showing the state what is happening in Woonsocket and really boast about what is happening here. We do have some issues like the graduation rate which they are focusing on but there are some really positive things. Teacher Orientation is scheduled for tomorrow beginning with breakfast at 7:30; the program begins at 8:40. Professional Development Day is scheduled for this Friday for the teachers. He thanked Mike Capasso for serving as interim principal at Citizens Elementary; he anticipates recommending someone to this position at the September 9th meeting; Mike has worked over the summer with the secretary and some teachers to ensure a seamless opening for school. Thanked Richard Zagrodny who has been helping at the WMS while we waited for Mr. Thompson to be appointed this evening; R. Zagrodny will stay on a little longer because Claire Dumas has come down with pneumonia. He recognized the HR Department and the union who have worked together to ensure that we have as few open positions as possible to start the year. At this time, J. Wolfgang gave the SC a rundown of the open positions which is approximately 10. On September 9th they will interview for the assistant superintendent position; by the next SC meeting he is hopeful that mostly all open positions will be filled. P. McGee announced that Pre-K at Pothier Elementary will begin on September 8th. The WHS will receive a NEASC visit on October 18th through October 21st; typically when the NEASC Team comes in they like to schedule a meeting with the members of the SC; SC will receive a schedule shortly.

Motion to receive and place on file: S. Seale 2nd: G. Lacouture (Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

SCHOOL BOARD GOOD & WELFARE:

S. SEALE: Welcomed everyone back to school and welcomed new families and students to the school department and looks forward to a new and outstanding year filled with fun and improvements.

J. RIVERA: Absent.

D. BURKE: He seconded S. Seale's comments and stated it is going to be an exciting year. He also sent his best wishes to the teachers. Congratulated Ellen from Sodexo and glad she was recognized for her hard work with the summer program; he had the opportunity to visit some of the sites over the summer and was especially struck by the students who helped with the summer lunches

S. PAWLINA: Last meeting she apologized for sounding like a politician when she thanked her fellow SC members for their hard work on the grading policy for the WMS. This meeting she will start by apologizing for her dropping the ball on school policies. She is on the committee to review policies and they have not had, as promised, a meeting to review the school readiness policy; she takes full responsibility for not having this meeting. However, she will rectify this by having a meeting. In the meantime if any administrator, teacher, secretary, or parent has any issues or complaints that they want to voice, please call her at 765-1862; again those complaints should go to her. Wished everyone a good and happy school year. She is also happy about the new hires starting with P. McGee as the head of our education department and the new WMS principal.

G. LACOUTURE: Thanked Mayor Lisa Baldelli-Hunt and City Solicitor Michael Marcello for attending this evening and finally finishing something we have been talking about for quite some time. He commends the HR Department. When the SC was appointed the vacancies were phenomenal; in December there were approximately 40 open positions; how can you run a school system with this many vacancies; there were substitutes where some weren't even certified in that area and this is something he has hammered on all of the time. Now we have a team of three in the HR Department who work together and today we are almost fully staffed. When he looked at the personnel recommendations for this evening he was extremely concerned that 75% of the certified staff were hired with masters plus degrees. The finance director put together the pays of these individuals and one of the things that came up was that one of the positions, which they have been trying to fill for months, came out of purchased services; we will have to transfer that money into the salary account and that's

what bothered him. He has asked the Vice-Chairman of the SC, who has brought this up previously, if he would take this on with the finance director to create a policy concerning transfers; he knows the City Council has one. For example, if we need to take \$60,000 out of purchased services and put it into the salary line, the SC needs to approve this because ultimately they are responsible for the budget. The SC had a presentation in the spring concerning the graduation rate which he was not happy with at all. They should be able to identify those students who have dropped out and make an excel spreadsheet to see who is and who is not dropping out and make sure they have the services they need to graduate. He would like an update from P. McGee by the November meeting along the lines he expressed to him; he will sit down with anyone to give them his ideas from a mathematical standpoint. There was an editorial in the Providence Journal that disturbed him greatly; it was about the Mayoral Academy and how we lost in the courts (that part didn't bother him because he is glad that they challenged this) but when the editorial writes negative things about his community he gets upset. The same thing happened in the RI Monthly; they used data from 2013 and it did not portray the high school/school system in the best light; we have the highest student/teacher ratio in the state; we have the lowest per pupil cost in the state; our graduation rate is the third lowest in the state; these are not positive things; however there was something positive but you need a magnifying glass to read it. P. McGee is stressing positive things are happening in our district; every one of us needs to do the same thing and hold us to the highest standard possible.

Motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.: G. Lacouture 2nd: S. Seale (Unanimously Approved by the Committee)

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Blais
WSC Recording Secretary