

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016**  
**Woonsocket Middle School @ Hamlet Building**  
**60 Florence Drive, Woonsocket, RI 02895**

**Call to Order by Chairman Soren Seale at 7:00 p.m. in Open Session**

**Moment of Silence**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call by Superintendent Dr. Patrick McGee:**

Soren Seale, Chairman	Present
Donald Burke	Present
Susan Pawlina	Present
Valerie Gonzalez	Present
Paul Bourget	Present

---

**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

**Jeffrey Partington, Woonsocket Teachers' Guild (WTG) President:** Stated they are firmly against the rescission of the two dean of students positions at the middle school; realizes it's a financial decision; however, the middle child does need a significant amount of help with discipline and they have been saying this over the years. They are hoping that this is a temporary measure because the good and welfare of the children would be best served with the deans of students in place. This will also help administration and teachers tremendously.

---

**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Patrick McGee, Superintendent**

➤ **School Opening** – Superintendent reported they had a very smooth opening of school this year. The buildings look phenomenal. They did a lot of landscaping over the summer at each of our schools. The custodial staff, under the direction of Peter Fontaine, did a great job getting the buildings ready. One issue we typically deal with each year is class size overages at the elementary schools. They have been meeting weekly looking at class sizes. Sometimes to avoid overages we have to move students from one school to another but we try to do this as infrequently as possible; working very hard to eliminate class size overages well before the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Recognized his directors and principals who have done a phenomenal job this summer in preparing their schools; very proud to work with them; we have a strong team. Our students, families and community are in very good hands.

D. Burke asked if overages are a problem right now. P. McGee said we minimize the classrooms that exceed the number of 25 to 27 students; right now it is not a major issue and there are plans that will be moving forward within the next few days. D. Burke asked if there is a process to move students from school to school. P. McGee stated the protocol they follow is the last student who registers would be the first student to be moved and they also keep siblings together.

Motion to receive and place on file: P. Bourget                      2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Burke, V. Gonzalez    (Unanimously Approved)

---

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 24, 2016 Open Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of August 24, 2016: S. Seale                      2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Bourget

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes                      APPROVED

<b>CONSENT AGENDA:</b>	<b>Motion to approve: D. Burke</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Bourget, S. Pawlina</b>
<b>ROLL CALL VOTE: 5 YES</b>	<b>APPROVED AS AMENDED</b>	

**Personnel Actions** – S. Seale stated that one of the appointments for the non-certified positions has declined the position; the name is Louis Dube.

Motion to remove that appointment from the Personnel Actions: S. Seale  
2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Bourget, S. Pawlina

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes

APPROVED

**Home Schooling** – P. Bourget stated these requests consist of 38 students. Thinks every parent should have the opportunity to choose what kind of schooling they want to provide their children. If the parent files the request on the proper forms and the proper curriculum according to RIDE it is an automatic approval from the school department and school committee (SC). He knows of a case where the parent(s) had to meet with the superintendent and/or asst. superintendent to go over the body of work to evaluate the progress of that student to make sure that student at the end of the year was at the level to move onto the next level. Unfortunately, we do not have this. He has had conversations with state reps in regards to what we need to do to tighten this up. Maybe a resolution could be sent to our delegation. His concern is if these children decide to come back to school are they well prepared to enter the class that they should be in. We do not have the ability to check on the progress of the student so until that is done he will not be voting on this because he became a SC member to work for the betterment of the children. This has to go to the general assembly and has to be tightened. D. Burke stated the protocol is the asst. superintendent reviews the forms that are filed by law; we have faith in her and her judgement when she gives the approval. However, it is a good point that there is no evaluation. S. Seale agrees with P. Bourget; however he is uninclined to vote against this as long as they meet the statutory requirements under the law because the SC would be putting themselves at risk for declining to allow them to homeschool their children in the current statutory framework. V. Gonzalez asked what would happen to these children if this wasn't approved. She agrees there should be some kind of an evaluation system but stated we should not penalize these families when they have completed everything that is required to home school their children.

Motion to approve the home schooling requests: P. Bourget 2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Pawlina  
Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes (SS, DB, SP, GV) 1 No (PB) APPROVED

Roll Call Vote on the consent agenda as amended: 5 Yes APPROVED

---

#### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

- Summit Personalized Learning – P. McGee

J. Chan-Remka gave a powerpoint presentation and explained what personalized learning is and what effects we think it will have on our students' performance.

Motion to receive and place on file: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Bourget, V. Gonzalez (Unanimously Approved)

- Project Leads – P. McGee

C. Henderson introduced Kelly Matson who is a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at URI. K. Matson gave a presentation on the URI RAMS (Rx for Addiction and Medication Safety) Study. He said that we may or may not know of the misuse of opioids amongst our youth especially at the middle school. Therefore, they have partnered with URI RAMS and will be bringing this program to our school to work with the 9<sup>th</sup> graders. K. Mattson stated the goal of this study is to measure the impact of the educational and interactive components of the URI Opioid Misuse Education (RAMS) program on student awareness and perceptions related to prescription drug abuse. Upon completion of this program, the study results will be provided for schools at the end of academic year.

Motion to receive and place on file: P. Bourget 2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Burke (Unanimously Approved)

---

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

**CONFERENCES/DISCUSSIONS:** None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

---

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Discussion/Approval to rescind the two Deans of Students for the WMS positions – P. McGee

Motion to discuss and approve: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Burke

S. Seale stated this stems out of the approval they gave of the special education restructuring and it is his understanding that the money is no longer there. D. Burke said a possible solution is that instead of two deans of students at the high school we can have only one dean at the high school and the other one at the middle

school. This is an important position for the middle school; if not two then at least one position should be there. Therefore, he will vote no to rescind this so we can look at this again. S. Pawlina agrees with D. Burke that these are needs. This falls under the unfunded, unfair funding formula. Putting teachers and paraprofessionals in front of our students is the best way to spend our money at this time. P. Bourget said it is a need but right now we do not have the money; however, we do need to keep them on the "needs" list and revisited at a later date.

Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes (SS, SP, PB, VG) 1 No (DB) APPROVED

---

2. Discussion/Approval to rescind the custodian position – P. McGee

Motion to approve and discuss: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Bourget

S. Seale stated this is also the result of the financial need which also falls under the same discussion as the deans of students positions. V. Gonzalez would like this position left on the priority list.

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

---

3. Discussion/Approval on Non-Union Contracts – P. McGee

Motion to approve and discuss: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Bourget, S. Pawlina

S. Seale said the SC can either vote to endorse in its entirety or amend if any of the recommendations are out of alignment. P. Bourget stated he would like to see all the individuals on the list receive a one-year contract and be evaluated next year instead of giving someone a two-year contract. P. McGee stated that the rationale for the two-year contracts was the body of work being produced in a short amount of time and he has quite a lot of confidence in the individuals that are being recommended for two-year contracts. D. Burke stated that these individuals have a great deal of responsibility because of the body of work and he would approve the recommendation as is. S. Seale is inclined to agree since it wasn't that long ago that all of the positions have been filled. He does not want to send the message that Woonsocket is not a stable place to work; this would be a show of good faith for the leadership team, while still holding the team accountable for job performance.

V. Gonzalez stated that she could see the benefits of giving a two-year contract; it takes at least a year to put protocols and systems in place. Also, people tend to be more dedicated when they know they are going to be in a position long term. P. Bourget stated each of the individuals on the list are vital individuals who will contribute to our school system as much as the other two leaders; he believes they should all be uniform; wants consistency. P. McGee stated that none of the one-year recommendations were based on performance concerns; all of the individuals on the list are very responsible. S. Pawlina stated she agrees with P. McGee's recommendation to the one and two year contracts; the one-year contracts allow people to try a new job yet return to their old position if it doesn't work out. She trusts the superintendent's judgement, believes he should have flexibility and agrees with the recommendation as is.

S. Seale said to J. Cooper that under the law there is an administrator section that provides the protection to our building administrators that if you are on the books as of a certain day, you work that entire year even without a contract; one-year contract for a building administrator is essentially saying we are following the minimum guidelines under the law. J. Cooper doesn't think that is totally accurate but will take a look at the administrative statute and get back to the SC.

Roll Call Vote: 4 Yes (SS, DB, SP, VG) 1 No (PB) APPROVED

\*S. Seale noted that these are the endorsed contracts that will go to the Mayor for final consideration.

---

4. Discussion/Approval on the appointment of the WHS Technology Specialist – P. McGee

Motion to approve and discuss: S. Pawlina 2<sup>nd</sup>: D. Burke

P. McGee read his letter recommendation to appoint Mr. Thomas Wakely for the position of Technology Specialist.

D. Burke asked if this is an already budgeted position. B. Peryea stated yes.

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

---

5. Discussion/Approval on Bid #17-13 Mechanical Contract Services – Bernon Heights School Replacement Boiler – P. McGee

Motion to approve and discuss: S. Seale 2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Gonzalez

Roll Call Vote: 5 Yes APPROVED

---

---

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Patrick McGee, Superintendent**

➤ *Technology Update:* He is very pleased with the direction the technology department is going in. Mr. Notarianni and his department has worked very, very hard over the last two months. We are actually at the point where we are providing technology to our students and staff that are operational. On one hand it is a sad statement because we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; however, we all understand the history here with technology. He also recognized Geoffrey Barrow who has done a phenomenal job to move the network forward. The WED Technology Department is proceeding with a building-by-building review and conversion process to improve the technology infrastructure and needs of the district. The following tasks have begun at Coleman Elementary School and will be completed at each remaining school in the district:

1. Printer – review, replacement, and logical reassignment
2. Distribution of new HP Stream laptop devices to each teacher
3. Reconfiguration/redistribution of student classroom devices in each classroom
4. Move staff files to Google Drive

As of September 13, 2016 the Technology Department has completed Coleman Elementary School. The following are tentative dates for the remaining buildings in the district:

- Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> – Citizens' Memorial Elementary School
- Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> – Savoie Elementary School
- Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> – Pothier Elementary School
- Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> – Globe Park Elementary School
- Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup> – Bernon Heights Elementary School
- Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> – Harris Elementary School
- Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> – WHS/WACTC
- Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup> – WMS Villa Nova
- Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> WMS Hamlet

➤ **School Building Authority:** The following Capital Improvements and repairs have been completed in the WED this summer:

- Woonsocket High School: Library: New carpeting, new paint, new computer furniture; Auditorium: New stage floor, new stage curtains (to be done this week); New hot water tanks; New generator switches; New compressors (roof top) AC units; Landscaping; New safety shower for science lab; Repaired hoods in science labs; Roof repairs (on-going).
- Savoie: New floor tiles in cafeteria; Landscaping; Boiler repairs
- Citizens' Memorial: New floor tiles in cafeteria; Repainted cafeteria; Landscaping; Corridor painting (to begin in September).
- Pothier: Corridor painting to begin in September.
- Citizens'/Pothier Campus: New fencing, signs and traffic pattern.
- Globe Park: New floor tiles in cafeteria; Repainted cafeteria; Resurfaced playground; Landscaping.
- Bernon: New floor tiles in cafeteria; Repainted cafeteria; Repainted corridors; Landscaping.
- Harris: Repainted stairwell; Landscaping.
- Coleman: Landscaping.
- Middle School: Landscaping.

School Building Authority Application: Mr. Peter Fontaine, Director of Facilities, Transportation, and Security, Mr. Brad Peryea, Director of Finance and Administration and I met with representatives from RIDE last week to discuss our district's application for SBA funds for the 2016-2017 school year. On Friday we submitted our application for approximately 5 million dollars. The following is a prioritized list of projects based on health and safety:

1. WHS – Replace remaining roof, replace library ceiling tiles, add repeater, replace PA system
2. Globe Park Elementary – Replace roof, replace classroom floor tiles
3. Savoie Elementary – Replace boiler
4. Bernon Heights – Replace classroom floor tiles
5. Citizens' Memorial – Replace classroom floor tiles

D. Burke said it is exciting news and great plans. We have great people working in the district and hopes they always know that we appreciate and thank them. It's wonderful to hear about technology as well. Governor Raimondo had this initiative about technology; are we getting any money from the state.

P. McGee said the projects they are doing right now are coming out of our local budget as well as the e-Rate grant which is a federal grant.

Motion to receive and place on file: P. Bourget

2<sup>nd</sup>: S. Seale (Unanimously Approved)

---

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:**

- **S. Seale** – Welcome back to school everyone. From his understanding and from his perspective everything has gone fairly smoothly; heard it was a great start of school. Thanked everyone for their hard work.

- **S. Pawlina** – Recently, there was data drop regarding absenteeism; places like E. Greenwich did great and places like Woonsocket did horrible because, in her opinion, they underscore problems. We scored the highest of having the most chronic absentee students in the state; this data drop was from school year 2013-14 which was also the last year we had half-day kindergarten and was also noted as that our highest absentee rate was in kindergarten for that year. The Commissioner also thought that maybe we had a high rate of absenteeism because our teachers are not connected with our students. She went to a meeting this week with community members, teachers, students, parents, principals and there was a list on how we can improve our community and schools; not once did anything or anyone say our teachers are not connecting with our students; in fact, everyone said how much our teachers connect with our students. The Commissioner may not be connecting with our inner city or the education going on in these places and they are made to feel horrible. Nowhere did it say that parents are responsible for getting their children to school; it's the schools who were supposed to be getting their children to school when really education starts and is dictated from the home setting. She is offended and thinks everyone in Woonsocket should be offended as well. If they are going to send out this data and not send out financial fixes that we need then what's the point. Another data drop was high teacher absenteeism; maybe there is a correlation where we may have faulty boilers, etc.

---

Motion to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.: P. Bourget

2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Gonzalez (Unanimously Approved)

---

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Blais  
WSC Recording Secretary