

**MINUTES**  
**WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2008**  
**7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**Woonsocket Area Career & Technical Center**  
**Multimedia Room 303**

**Call to Order**  
**Moment of Silence**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Marc Dubois, Chairman	Present
	Michelle Williams, Vice Chairwoman	Present
	Linda Majewski	Present
	Anita McGuire-Forcier	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present

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**PUBLIC GOOD & WELFARE:**

**Allen Auclair, 24 Florida Street, Woonsocket:** Spoke again as a follow-up to his last meeting's comments about the Gap Test and NECAP scores as they pertain to Title 1 and non-Title 1 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students. He noted that the female students do 18% better than the males in reading. He also noted that the females students do 20% better than the males in writing. Auclair noticed that in today's newspaper, 40 positions aren't going to be brought back. He again suggested talking to the City to see about consolidating services. "In a study by the Education Partnership about the issues facing education in RI, superintendents felt that school committees were not doing a good enough job in removing ineffective teachers. In order to do this, you need to revise your evaluation tools," he said.

**Cindy Stepanian, PAC Co-Chair:** Announced that the Back-To-School Celebration was fantastic and there was a great turnout. Welcomed the new superintendent and said she wants to keep the lines of communication open.

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**RECOGNITIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS: Dr. Robert Gerardi, Jr.**

Based on the recent School-Performance Classifications for the 2007-2008 school year, Gerardi acknowledged the Leo A. Savoie Elementary School for having met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) and for being designated as a Commended School. He recognized that Harris Elementary and the Woonsocket Middle School made significant improvements as well. Recognized Carnell Henderson, Assistant Principal at WHS and newly appointed Head Coach for the Woonsocket Redskins, for his outstanding effort in preparing a cookout for the opening of pre-season football season. He wished them good luck in the coming year.

Motion to receive and place on file: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 13, 2008 OPEN/CLOSED**

Motion to approve: M. Williams 2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau (Unanimously Approved)

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion to approve Consent Agenda with the following exceptions: A. Forcier**

- *Purchases/Transfers over \$2,000 – Konica; VHS, Inc.; & Woonsocket School Lunch- Removed by LM*
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)

**1. Personnel Actions**

*Certified Appointments*

*Non-Certified Appointments*

**2. Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000**

Allied Auto Parts/Educational Supplies/WACTC/Voc. Revenue

Auto Zone/Educational Supplies/WACTC/Voc. Revenue

Dell Computers/Computer Equipment/WHS, WACTC/E2T2 Grant

Epson America/Projectors/WHS/E2T2 Grant

Follett Library/Library Resources/District/Get Ready Grant

***Konica/Copier Usage/District/Local – Removed by L. Majewski***

CONSENT AGENDA: continued

**Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000:**

Nettie Alexander/Consultant/Grants & Curriculum/PRIMES Grant  
Premier Agendas, Inc./Handbooks/Agendas/WMS/Local  
Stadium Systems, Inc./Equipment Reconditioning/Athletics/Local  
University of MA Medical School/Medicaid Administrative FY09/Business Office/Local  
**VHS, Inc./Membership Fees FY09/e-Learning Academy/Local – Removed by L. Majewski**  
**Woonsocket School Lunch/Teacher Orientation/District/Local – Removed by L. Majewski**

**3. Home Schooling Requests (15)**

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**EXEMPTIONS FROM CONSENT AGENDA:**

**2. PURCHASES/TRANSFERS OVER \$2,000:**

- **Konica/Copier Usage/District/Local - \$61,650.00**

Mrs. Majewski asked if this expense is for a service agreement. Mr. Strom explained that it's for the maintenance agreement based on the usage for a year. Konica services all the copiers throughout the district. This cost doesn't include paper and is the fee for one year.

- **VHS, Inc./Membership Fees FY09/e-Learning Academy/Local - \$4,750.00**

Majewski asked what this fee is for. Strom explained that it's for the Feinstein Learning Academy. Dr. Gerardi added that he believes they are overlapping with the e Learning.

- **Woonsocket School Lunch/Teacher Orientation/District/Local - \$4,625.00**

Majewski asked if the \$4,625 was the WED's half of the total cost. Mr. Strom indicated that the WTG would be picking up half of the \$4,625 expense, so our cost is approximately \$2,300.

**Motion to approve all exemptions from the consent agenda: A. Forcier  
2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau/M. Williams (Unanimously Approved)**

**COMMUNICATIONS: None**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** Mrs. Majewski reported that the Literacy Committee met in early July and will meet again in September. The Transportation Committee met on August 7<sup>th</sup> and will need to discuss the bus contract extension on a fall agenda. A draft of the CPR staffing plan has been submitted to RIDE for preliminary approval. It received an exemplary pre-approval from them. A public hearing will be scheduled. A SELAC meeting schedule should be online.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Approval of Job Description for Director of Teaching and Learning – Dr. Gerardi**

Dr. Gerardi recommended approval of the job description. Mrs. Majewski said she could support the approval of the job description only. She would like to see a reconciliation report on the budget and a sustainability report from RIDE. Dr. Gerardi said that in his conversations with RIDE, they indicated that if we do not have a deputy superintendent, this position would be adequate. Ms. Williams said she would approve the duties, but would not approve the appointment of someone right now because of the budget issues we are facing. Mrs. Nadeau said to RIDE, "If you want this position so bad, you fund it!" She spoke about RIDE funding house leaders at the WMS because they are under PS&I, adding, "I'm sure this position is probably needed, but it's the wrong time to be doing this." Mr. Dubois asked Mr. Strom for the next meeting to let them know how much in stipends we are paying to people doing some of these duties. Strom said that the stipends have been eliminated for this year. Dubois asked if they don't approve this position, will RIDE continue to pay the stipends. Strom will get back to Mr. Dubois with that answer.

Motion to approve: M. Williams  
Roll Call Vote: 2 yes (MD, MW) & 3 no (LM, AF, EN)

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier  
Motion failed.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. BID AWARD:**

- **#09-08 Ford Truck**

Mrs. Strom reported that the Facilities Director indicated that we paid quite a bit more for the same vehicle a few years ago. Mrs. Forcier asked if we could afford to pay for a brand new truck. Strom told her that we are paying a lot of money in repairs and based on that, he felt that it was prudent to go ahead and buy a new one since the prices are down. This truck will be used for plowing also. Mrs. Nadeau asked if this vehicle would be assigned to any particular person. Strom didn't know if it will be assigned to one person, but it will be used for plowing. Mrs. Majewski had spoken to Mr. Fontaine and the vehicles that have been breaking down will be put up for auction. It bothered Mrs. Nadeau that the WED cannot own a school building, but we have to plow and maintain it. She asked why the City doesn't take care of these things if they own the buildings. Strom didn't see how the City could do some of the small parking lots that some of the schools have with the large trucks they use.

Motion to approve purchase from Flood Ford of E. Greenwich for \$23,965.04: M. Dubois

2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau

Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (AF)

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**2. Appointments of Ten Month Principal, Fifth Avenue; Ten Month Asst. Principals, WHS/WACTC - Dr. Gerardi**

Mr. Dubois indicated that these appointments were to be placed on the last agenda, but were overlooked. "These people will work per diem until their appointment tonight," said Dubois.

**Motion to approve the appointment of Robert Desrosiers to the position of 10-month Principal at Fifth Avenue Elementary School: A. Forcier**

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes.

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**Motion to approve the appointment of Susan Votto to the position of 10-month Secondary School Assistant Principal at the W.A.C.T.C.: A. Forcier**

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Williams

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

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**Motion to approve the appointment of Brian Bouley to the position of 10-month Secondary School Assistant Principal at the WHS: M. Williams**

2<sup>nd</sup>: A. Forcier

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes

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**3. Approval of Policy P4-1.1 Age Requirement for Admission of Kindergarten - 1<sup>st</sup> Passage – Dr. Gerardi, A.McGuire/Forcier**

Mrs. Majewski asked for a copy of what the waiver requirements are. Dr. Gerardi will get them sent out to her. Mr. Dubois asked what would happen if children have already been accepted into kindergarten since this would only be the first passage of this policy. Atty. Ackerman would have to see the state statute because he's not familiar with it. "The student attending may not be in violation of our policy, but would be in violation of state law," he said. He will look into the meaning of the word "eligible" in the policy. Forcier said that she didn't have a problem with a waiver. She thinks *all* children and parents should know that they are able to apply for a waiver. She wants equality for each child in the city, not just for the children whose parents know someone. She was told that the child that was allowed to enter kindergarten was never screened, but doesn't know if that's true and wants the superintendent to look into whether the child was properly tested. Mrs. Nadeau agreed with her sentiments. Mr. Dubois asked if Mrs. Forcier had this put on the agenda because of a particular student. She told him she got a call from a parent about their child; and when she looked at our policy, it wasn't in line with the state regulations. Ms. Williams does think that the school department is responsible for not letting parents know they have another option for a waiver. "The WED should put out a notice about a waiver after the eligibility criteria are determined.

**Motion to Table: M. Williams**  
**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois  
**TABLED.**

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**4. Discussion of School Committee Broadcast with City Council on Cox Communications– Dr. Gerardi, M. Dubois**

City Councilman Bill Schneck addressed the WSC about the possibility of sharing the cost of live broadcasts for the City Council Meetings and WSC Meetings now that PBS has taken over the public access channels for Cox Cable customers. In the past, the City Council meetings have been broadcast live on the first and third Mondays of every month. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, the live meetings went off the air because of the takeover by PBS. Many people have come up to him asking why the City Council meetings aren't broadcast anymore. For \$800 a month, we can access the bandwidth from Cox for live broadcasts from four locations, including City Hall and the WHS Library. He suggested to Mr. Dubois to broadcast the school committee meetings live and split the cost with the City. The City pays Paul Jacobs \$350 a month to broadcast their meetings. However, the WSC meetings would have to be held at the WHS library. "Times are tough and maybe this is more of a want than a need. I just wanted to share this information with the WSC," said Schneck. Mr. Dubois asked if we would have to use Paul Jacobs. Schneck told him that we would need the piece of equipment that he has and it's from the 1980's. "You would have to have someone that would match the equipment that is needed in order to do the live broadcast," said Schneck. Ms. Williams suggested that the City Council hire our Digital Media students to record their meetings at \$50 a meeting for each student and replay them the next day on the public access channel. There is only a charge to do live broadcasts. Williams has never heard a complaint about our broadcasts not being aired live. Schneck also told Mrs. Nadeau that the city contracts out for most of its snow plowing. "It may be something to look at for the school department," he said.

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**CONFERENCES: None**

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: NECAP/SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION – Dr. Robert Gerardi**

Gerardi noted that his first two weeks have been focused mostly on getting the school department ready for opening day. He has: 1) toured each of our school buildings; 2) attended meetings with Directors, the Administrative Council, the NRIC, Parent Advisory Committee Co-Presidents, Sodexho Representatives, Valley Transportation, and a Keystone Software Seminar; 3) sent communications to all faculty and staff regarding the opening of schools; and 4) sent a communication to all parents of children from Harris Elementary School in regard to the August 28, 2008 School Choice Meeting. He also addressed the positives and negatives associated with the Rhode Island School Classification system. He agrees with the standards based movement of the Improving American Schools Act of 1994 that was passed during the Clinton era and believes that we need to constantly strive for improvements based on one set of standards. However, he strongly disagrees with the foundations of the accountability provisions in the NCLBA. He also predicted that the next session of Congress would replace the NCLBA with a growth model program that will address some of the issues that he will identify. He recently read that it may be called the All Children Can Learn Act, which would focus more on students reaching their potential rather than a set standard. He believes that RIDE has done the best they could to develop an outstanding test in NECAP that can help teachers improve instruction based on those test scores but that the current accountability system in place only measures individual student performance on one day. He also outlined what he feels are the basic flaws and assumptions of the NECAP test.

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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD & WELFARE:**

**Dubois:** Announced the opening of schools next Wednesday. Gave Mr. Legare a lot of credit, saying that he comes to every meeting even though he doesn't have to. He told parents to please read the handbook that their child brings home—not just sign it. He welcomed Dr. Gerardi and said he looks forward to a productive school year.

**L. Majewski:** Welcomed Dr. Gerardi. Said they are all pleased that he is here. Welcomed new staff. Asked if a vote needs to be taken to create a Category "A" and "B" for the non-union employees. She asked what the feeling was about creating a subcommittee for the new dress code right now. The Parent Advisory Council wants to be very involved in it. Majewski requested a special school committee meeting to reconcile the 2007-2008 budget and work on the projected 2008-2009 budget. She announced that a parent workshop will be coming up for the new 504 and IEP policies. She would like to get the schedule. She said that we will need to look at the bussing contract during the October meetings. Majewski wished everyone a successful and safe school year.

**A. Forcier:** Welcomed everyone back to school next week. Noted that Burlington Coat Factory works with school uniforms and noted that a pair of pants ranges from \$15 to \$17. She gave a flyer to Mrs. Majewski for the PAC. "If we work with one store, they would probably have order sheets so everyone isn't running around from store to store."

**E. Nadeau:** She noted that when they discussed the school calendar, the private schools had a different school calendar. "We were supposed to have asked if they could follow our calendar so that we aren't having the extra cost

of bussing.” She asked Dr. Gerardi to look into that. She read some material on school uniforms and found that many states have done the ordering after they decided the colors, etc. The parents provide the sizes and they have a pickup at the school.

**M. Williams:** Welcomed Dr. Gerardi. Thanked the custodial staff for the outstanding job that they do getting the school ready. She noted that Burlington Coat Factory only had sizes for uniforms up to juniors. “We need to have a company that can accommodate all sizes.” She mentioned that people who live in the Globe Park area and walk around the neighborhood say that the air conditioning is running in the school when there is no one there. “Why?” she asked. She also mentioned getting the sand cleaned up in the parking lot there. Her daughter broke her wrist in that parking lot because she slipped on the sand because they go out there at recess.

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.: M. Williams

2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dubois (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary