

Central Berkshire Regional School District
School Committee, Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 22, 2009

NESSACUS REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

DALTON, MA 01226

7:00 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Nessacus Regional Middle School, Dalton, MA, on Thursday, January 22, 2009, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Chivers, Conner, Darby (7:11), Farley, Goddard, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Lacatell, Les, Wagner, Welts, Yates (7:13) and Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: None

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Manager Marge Foster, CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling, Recording Secretary Diane Koch, and Members of the Audience.

For the record, Chair Carroll-Lombardi does not vote unless noted.

ARTICLE 9574 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Keith Palmer from Arrow Driving School addressed the Committee on behalf of Arrow Driving School and Dave's Driving School regarding fees being charged for using Wahconah Regional High School classrooms. It is the opinion of the two driving schools that fees being charged are high. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Coco have met with the Policy Subcommittee twice already and would like to further discuss the fees and the service the driving schools are providing to see if an amicable agreement can be reached. The Chair thanked Mr. Palmer for bringing his concerns forward, stated that a policy is in place and invited Mr. Palmer and Mr. Coco to meet again with the Policy Subcommittee regarding this issue.

John Cramer a resident of Windsor and also a teacher in the District said he was speaking tonight as a resident and parent of two children. Commenting that the direction discussions seem to be taking is closing elementary schools, Mr. Cramer made a plea to the Committee to look at all schools in the district and not just those in the hill towns. In closing he asked the Committee if there is a maximum time limit for a child to be on a bus, if there is a way to get an estimate of the length of what the bus ride might be if schools are closed, and what the capital costs would be if fifth grade students were to attend Nessacus. Chair Carroll-Lombardi thanked Mr. Cramer and added that the Committee has looked at those concerns and would forward the information.

Heather Cupo, parent of a student at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, addressed the Committee about the education her daughter is receiving. Ms. Cupo feels the school offers an exceptional education and commented that the idea of closing it is shocking and that busing students long distance would curtail activities outside of school and certainly would not be educational. The Chair thanked Ms. Cupo and invited her and members of the audience to attend subcommittee meetings.

Joanne Dowling, Central Berkshire Education Association Executive Secretary thanked the Committee for considering to allow unit members to donate sick time to another unit member. Unfortunately it was no longer necessary for this request.

Katherine Reed a senior at Wahconah Regional High School addressed the Committee about the Learning Center at Wahconah. Expressing concerns about the possibility of discontinuing the program, Katherine told the Committee it would be a disservice to incoming freshmen and that the program is relatively new, it is difficult to see perfect results right away. Chair Carroll-Lombardi thanked Katherine and added that the Learning Center is one of the items being discussed at the Finance Subcommittee level.

Debbie Fitzroy a resident of Dalton and teacher at Berkshire Trail Elementary School remarked that the Committee is the guardian of the children’s education and responsible for spending the money from the seven towns. Ms. Fitzroy asked that the voters be given the opportunity to decide on funding a budget that would leave the district intact.

ARTICLE 9575 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

Katherine Reed reported that Calliope Café is tomorrow night at Wahconah, rehearsal for the spring musical “Once Upon a Mattress” has begun, the girls’ basketball team is playing Taconic High School tonight and the swim team is competing against Taconic Hills tomorrow night. Katherine added that, the National Honor Society is holding a book drive for Africa and is accepting donations of used books at the high school, the junior class is involved in a Darfur project and had a guest speaker at Wahconah last week and the Wahconah Word is now on the web and has started a morning news program on current events. Katherine also told the Committee that the Wahconah band and chorus is having a Beatles concert in March and Mr. Rabuse, Wahconah Band Director, has written most of the music for the concert. Katherine informed the Committee about expanded dual enrollment opportunities for Wahconah seniors at Berkshire Community College that allows seniors to enroll in evening classes.

ARTICLE 9576 SECRETARY’S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 8, 2009

MOVED BY MEMBER LES, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 8, 2009.

Ayes: Thirteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: Member Yates.
Motion carried.

ARTICLE 9577 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER LES, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

Warrant No. 2009-30, dated January 22, 2009

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$96,305.32	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$327,530.06</u>	
		\$423,835.38

Transfers (Insurance: Employees & Retirees)	\$75,990.68
Federal Funds	\$1,809.22
Circuit Breaker	\$19,712.13
School Lunch	\$24,161.03
Independent Gate Receipts	\$1,268.00
WRHS Boys' Soccer Revolving	\$95.00
WRHS Football Revolving	(\$190.00)
WRHS Swimming Revolving	\$198.00
WRHS Boys' Track Revolving	\$95.00
WRHS Renovation	\$2,600.00
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$549,574.44

Ayes: Fourteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

MOVED BY MEMBER LES, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

Warrant No. 2009-31, dated January 22, 2009

PAYROLL /SALARIES

PAYROLL

<u>Operating Expense</u>	\$496,875.60
School Lunch	\$11,191.84
Becket Washington Preschool	\$1,455.15
Craneville Homework Club	<u>\$246.87</u>
Federal Funds	<u>\$34,562.47</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL	\$544,331.93

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: Members Hopper and Welts.
Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER LES, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

Warrant No. 2009-31D, dated January 22, 2009

PAYROLL /DEDUCTIONS

<u>Operating Expense</u>	\$253,003.90
FICA EXPENSE	<u>\$6,594.02</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL	\$259,597.92

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: Members Hopper and Welts.
Motion carried.

B. Gifts and Contributions

MOVED BY MEMBER CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GRALLERT

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts the following gifts and contributions, as recommended by the district treasurer:

\$100.00 to the Judith Farley Scholarship Fund from Richard Farley
\$100.00 to the Judith Farley Scholarship Fund from William and Lee Desa
\$100.00 to the Judith Farley Scholarship Fund from Richard and Linda Eldridge
\$100.00 to the Judith Farley Scholarship Fund from Suzanne Gonsalves
\$150.00 to the Judith Farley Scholarship Fund from various donors

Ayes: Fourteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair noted the generosity of the donors and expressed her appreciation.

ARTICLE 9578 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

The Chair had nothing to report.

ARTICLE 9579 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education

a. Approval of District Overnight Field Trip

MOVED BY MEMBER CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GRALLERT

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves an overnight field trip for Wahconah Student Council to Fenway Park in Boston, MA on July 8 – 9, 2009, as recommended by the Education Subcommittee.

Ayes: Fourteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

Member Henderson commented that this is an annual trip and that because it is overnight the approval of the Committee is needed. Assistant Superintendent Stankiewicz noted that there was a misprint and the trip is July 10, 2009.

MOVED BY MEMBER CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GRALLERT

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee amend and approve the motion as follows:
That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves an overnight field trip for Wahconah Student Council to Fenway Park in Boston, MA on July 10 - 11, 2009, as recommended by the Education Subcommittee.*

Ayes: Fourteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

2. Finance

Members Chivers and Harvey reported that the subcommittee has met and discussed many options but has nothing concrete at this time. There was discussion about the projected savings if schools were closed, shifting grade five students to Nessacus, extending winter breaks to save on heat and the elimination of some programs. The subcommittee is evaluating all options and will bring a proposal forward in the near future. Superintendent Harlan reported that she, along with Assistant Superintendent Stankiewicz, Business Manager Foster and Member Lacatell are meeting with Katherine Craven of M.S.B.A. in Boston tomorrow and will be asking questions about closing schools and state funding.

3. Policy Review

Member Hopper informed the Committee that the revised policy on Use of Facilities and Fees was voted on in 2006. The policy was based on information gathered from other districts and that Central Berkshire is neither the lowest nor the highest on the fees charged for using school buildings. Member Hopper stated that the Policy Subcommittee would be glad to meet with the driving schools again, but if the fees are the concern, perhaps the Finance Subcommittee would need to address the issue as well. Discussion ensued and after a brief time, Chair Carroll-Lombardi instructed the Committee that the discussion was really for the Policy Subcommittee.

Member Hopper asked about the by-laws and the budget vote. Chair Carroll-Lombardi answered that the budget is passed by a 2/3 vote of the entire school committee or ten members. Discussion followed and the Chair will clarify the vote with the Committee's legal counsel and have an answer for the next meeting.

4. Personnel

Member Les reported the subcommittee had met and reviewed the Berkshire Trail Expanded Learning Time side bar agreement, the paraprofessionals' MOA coming up for a vote later tonight and that negotiations with the secretaries are ongoing. The subcommittee also reviewed Massachusetts General Law with regards to survivor benefits as well as a request for a bus monitor position.

B. Others

1. Wahconah Building Committee

a. Award of Science Lab Renovations Contract

~~BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Berkshire Regional School District awards a bid for renovations of the Wahconah Regional High School science lab, pending bond counsel approval, to the low bidder, SALCO Construction, in the total amount of \$62,902.00.~~

The above motion to award the contract for renovations to Wahconah's science lab was scratched. A motion under New Business replaced the above.

Member Henderson reported that the contract on the Wahconah science lab is being awarded tonight and renovations should begin next week. The special legislation that was needed on the Bond vote was approved and signed by the Governor.

2. Health Advisory Committee

Member Hopper reported that the Health Advisory Committee had met and discussed life-threatening allergies and will develop a policy on handling these allergies. The Wellness Policy was reviewed and will be updated and brought to the Policy Subcommittee. Nurse Leader Barbara Westwood will be sharing more information in school newsletters and will discuss it further at the next Health Advisory meeting.

ARTICLE 9580 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Official October 1, 2008 Enrollments

(October 1, 2007, figures provided for comparison)

Questions were asked about the information and if it would be possible to include statistics on students that choice into district schools, students that choice out to other schools and students that choice through the intra-district policy. Superintendent Harlan told the Committee she would gather the information for the next meeting.

2. Fund Raiser Approved

The Wahconah Regional High School Class of 2012 will hold a comedy hypnosis show, January 22, 2009. (Written parental consent will be required for minors to participate in hypnosis.)

The Committee was told the hypnosis show had been cancelled, no reason was given.

B. Recommendations

There were no recommendations.

C. Other

Several members reported on the recent Leadership Program they attended. Member Wagner added that the event was a professionally run two-day seminar and a wide variety of people attended. The event was very insightful with exercises that brought the group together.

ARTICLE 9581 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

Note: All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

Beth Frederick has been appointed Title I paraprofessional at Craneville School, three hours per day, effective January 5, 2009.

ARTICLE 9582 OLD BUSINESS

A. Executive Session (Strategy with Regard to Negotiations)

MOVED BY MEMBER WAGBER SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

The Chair stated the Committee would reconvene in open sessions following executive session.

To go into executive session at 8:20 p.m. in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B, 3. "To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining..."

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Chivers, Conner, Darby, Farley, Goddard, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Lacatell, Les, Wagner, Welts, Yates and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m.

ARTICLE 9583 NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER WAGNER, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the addition of new business to the agenda.

Ayes: Fourteen members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Award of Contract for Wahconah Regional High School Science Lab

MOVED BY MEMBER CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HENDERSON

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards a contract for general contractor services as defined in its specifications "Renovations to Science Laboratories" to SALCO Construction Company of Pittsfield, MA based on their bid dated January 8, 2009 in the total amount of \$62,902 as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee, and authorizes the Business Manager to execute such documents in the name of Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, as are necessary or advisable to carry out the above mentioned contract.

Member Lacatell commented that the bid was not being awarded to the lowest bidder unless the alternates were included and asked if it would stand up to a legal challenge. In response, Business Manager Foster stated that they had the authority to accept the alternates as part of the project and the bid was awarded on the total. Mrs. Foster added that the district contracted with Barry Architects to handle the details of this contract bid.

Member Conner asked about the bond and specifically if \$500,000 was set aside for fact finding on environmental greening. Member Henderson answered that she did not know the exact amount, but that there were three projects that were design services only: the greening of Wahconah; the parking lots and traffic lanes; and the athletic facilities.

The Chair added that most of the information is available on the website.

Ayes: Fourteen members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Authorization for Bus Monitor Position

MOVED BY MEMBER CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HARVEY

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorize a two hour per day bus monitor for the purpose of monitoring Pre-Kindergarten students being transported to Berkshire Trail Elementary School, effective January 26, 2009 until the end of the current school year as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee. The source of the funds shall be the Pre-Kindergarten revolving account.

Member Hopper noted that the position is self-funded but questioned unemployment benefits. Business Manager Foster answered that the district would be responsible for unemployment benefits, but there

would be no health insurance benefits with this position. Superintendent Harlan stated that the position was seasonal only.

Ayes: Fourteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

C. Ratification of Paraprofessionals' Contract

MOVED BY MEMBER CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GODDARD

WHEREAS, the Paraprofessionals' Unit of the Central Berkshire Education Association, on December 18, 2008, ratified the Memorandum of Understanding between that unit and the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, covering successor contracts for the period July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, and the period July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011,

THEREFORE, that the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee ratifies the Memorandum of Understanding between the Paraprofessionals' Unit of the Central Berkshire Education Association and the School Committee covering successor contracts for the period July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008, and the period July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011, as recommended by the Committee's bargaining team and the Finance Subcommittee.

Member Hopper shared his concerns with the Committee regarding issuing a contract for more than two years and the current financial climate. Member Chivers agreed with Member Hopper's concerns. The Chair thanked both negotiating teams for their time and commitment.

Ayes: Twelve members.
Nays: Members Chivers and Hopper.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried.

ARTICLE 9584 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Goddard congratulated the Wahconah swim team for beating Monument Mountain who had been undefeated for four years.

Member Conner reminded the Committee that it is important to do what is good for the children.

Member Grallert told the Committee that Berkshire Trail Elementary School is be holding a talent show on February 4, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. There are currently four acts signed up.

MOVED BY MEMBER HARVEY, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Ayes: Fourteen members.
Nays: None.
Abstentions: None.
Motion carried unanimously.