

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 24, 2008

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Nessacus Regional Middle School, Dalton, MA on Thursday, January 24, 2008, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley, Gordon, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: Member Goddard.

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Manager Robert Tensel, CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling, Student Representative Patrick Nguyen, Recording Secretary Mary Jo Keiper, and Members of the Audience.

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

ARTICLE 9362 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

The Chair stated her letter to the editor in the January 25, 2008 Berkshire Eagle included an error by the publisher: state revenue decreased by .80%, not 80%. The Eagle will print a correction.

Betsy Nichols, a hockey parent, had asked Rep. Guyer for help with district funding. The representative stated the district first needed to look at GIC opportunities for health insurance. Mrs. Nichols asked that the Committee look into GIC insurance. The Chair responded the Committee plans to do that, but may not be able to do it right now.

Lisa LeBeau, parent and grandparent of district students, asked what concerned citizens can do to help with the impasse between the district and its teachers.

Michael Margolis encouraged the Committee to come forward and sit down with employees and work out a bargaining agreement. He suggested the Committee has the “where-with-all” to do it.

Charles Sturtevant, Windsor select board chair, addressed the Committee regarding a possible budget that includes \$1,000,000 in cuts to meet the request in November from the Dalton select board. He urged the Committee to create a budget that meets the needs of the school district and to reduce it only if voters choose not to support that budget. The Chair stated the possible reductions, drawn up at the last finance subcommittee meeting, were not meant to bring the budget total in line with any town’s request.

Bill Chabot, Dalton select board member responded, stating Dalton’s request was based on its levy capacity. He said the town is trying to make ends meet, noting their employees are paying 20% of their health insurance premiums.

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reminded those present that the Seven Town Advisory will meet at Nessacus on January 31, 2008, at 7:30 p.m., with the Coordinating Council meeting just prior to that meeting at 7 p.m.

Craig Walton, life-long district resident and former school committee member, reminded the Committee of their duties and responsibilities as outlined in their oath of office, the regional agreement, and state regulations. They are mandated to support a budget that meets the educational needs of district students.

Pamela Bachli, paraprofessional at Nessacus, spoke in support of a request to establish a sick leave bank for a Nessacus paraprofessional who is experiencing serious health problems.

The Chair thanked the audience for attending.

ARTICLE 9363 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

Wahconah Senior Patrick Nguyen reported the Latin Club trip was a huge success, thanking the school committee for their support of this annual activity; first semester is ending and the schedule will switch for second semester; sports teams are doing well; and the yearbook committee is soliciting ads. The drama department is working on a one-act play, "Learn Me Somethin'" and the spring musical, "Oklahoma".

Mr. Nguyen added to his report his concerns for the senior class and how they will remember their last year at Wahconah. He did not want his classmates to regret any part of this school year.

B. Yearbook Ad – 2008 Wahconah Arrow

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee votes to purchase an ad in the 2008 Wahconah Arrow, in the amount of \$500.00.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Recognition of John & Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipients

Superintendent Harlan announced 55 students in the current senior class had qualified for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship award which provides a tuition waiver to all Massachusetts public state colleges and universities with the exception of the Maritime Academy and the College of Art. Qualifying students have scored in the top categories of the grade 10 MCAS assessments and have scored in the top 25% of students in the district on these tests. Those students are: Ashley Alberts, Michael Aleska, Jeannette Benham, Kenneth Bilodeau, Matthew Bracci, Melissa Burgner, Thomas Cairns, Bryan Culliton, Jared Defoe, Brian Dolan, Michael Doyle, Christopher Drosehn, Kayla Farrell, Korrie Galliher, Tressa Gamache, Cassondra Goddard, Gerard Greene, Kelly Grogan, Kevin Harnett, Nathaniel Hazen, Tyler Hebb, Tyler Jamross, Jordan Jerome, Emily Kaufman, Colleen Keenan, Dakota Keith, Eliza Keith, Luke Kendig, Danae Lagoy, Lindsay Lancto, Alexander Lenski, Jordan Maynard, Chelsi Morrison-Rohlf, Joshua Nadeau, Patrick Nguyen, Matthew O'Brien, Mary O'Connor, Leianna O'Laughlin, Kaycie Parker, James Parkington, Evan Persson, Patrick Shea, Schuyler Smith, Darcy Tobin, Euneka Trufant, Daniel Warriner, Kate White, Lisa Williams, Matthew Duff, Brandon Gill, Michaela Powers, Austin Sniezek, Joshua Stritzinger, Jason Twomey, Evan Valenti.

ARTICLE 9364 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 10, 2008

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HARVEY

To accept the minutes of the regular meeting of January 10, 2008, as printed.

Ayes: Eleven members.
 Nays: None.
 Abstention: Member Bantjes.
 Motion carried.

ARTICLE 9365 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-28, in the total amount of 550,592.46, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-28, dated January 24, 2008

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$117,305.40	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$302,009.32</u>	
		\$419,314.72
Transfers		\$66,750.27
Federal Funds		\$24,226.62
School Lunch		\$20,459.97
Circuit Breaker		\$12,540.28
Athletic Independent Games		\$1,667.50
WRHS Student Activity Fund		\$2,702.85
NRMS Student Activity Fund		\$2,000.00
WRHS Nordic Skiing		<u>\$930.25</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$550,592.46

Ayes: Twelve members voting.
 Nays: None.
 Motion carried unanimously.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-29, in the total amount of \$787,813.09, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-29, dated January 24, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses		\$482,777.86
Berkshire Trail Preschool Revolving		\$1,796.23
Craneville Homework Revolving		\$323.74
School Lunch		\$20,448.10
Federal Funds		<u>\$43,983.08</u>
Sub-total		\$549,329.01
FICA (Operating)		<u>\$6,083.67</u>
Total Payroll		\$555,412.68
Transfers (Deductions)		<u>\$232,400.41</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS		\$787,813.09

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

MOVED BY MEMBER BENTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To move Article 9371, New Business, ahead in the agenda.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9371 NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER GORDON

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

Ayes: Twelve members voting.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

A. Personnel Employee Request

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorizes the superintendent to sign an agreement allowing district staff to donate up to twenty (20) days of sick leave in the current school year to paraprofessional Cathy Striebel, understanding that this agreement does not establish any precedent or practice and shall not be used in any future proceedings of any kind, as recommended by the finance and personnel subcommittees.

Member Farley reminded the Committee that there is a cost to the district in granting this request.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.
Nays: None.
Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9366 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

Chair Carroll-Lombardi, responding to January 10th audience member Laura Quinn, stated that in fact many of her original concerns of January 11, 2007 were addressed at that meeting. She cited the minutes from January 11, 2007 as well as a number of other concerns that have been or are being addressed through budgeting, changes in scheduling, and by the Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee.

B. Vacancy – Washington Representative

1. Letter from District Secretary, Re: Filling the Vacancy

The Chair reported she has received an inquiry regarding the vacancy.

ARTICLE 9367 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education

Member J. Chivers reported the subcommittee had not met and will hold off scheduling meetings during the budget season.

2. Finance

Member L. Chivers reported the subcommittee had met and reviewed the request for paraprofessional sick bank. They also received the Superintendent's budget of \$25,677,000, which builds in the current year's budget and increases for salaries and health insurance. It is a gross increase of 13.89%, with increases to the towns ranging from 6.53% to 8%. The administration has been asked to prepare a list of potential cuts up to \$1,000,000. Finance subcommittee will meet two more times prior to the tentative adoption. Member Henderson expressed concern about the limited time frame and the amount of work to be done. She distributed a summary of the proposed budget she had prepared. It was pointed out the budget is far from final. The subcommittee also had received the quarterly report at its meeting.

Mr. Tensel distributed and reviewed the quarterly report for the full Committee. The Chair thanked Mr. Tensel for his report. A copy is filed with the official minutes.

3. Policy Review

a. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 5230, Alternative Programs

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 5230, Alternative Programs, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 5240, English Language Learners

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 5240, English Language Learners, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 6110, Equal Educational Opportunities

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 6110, Equal Educational Opportunities, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

d. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 6140, Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 6140, Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

It was asked if the policy addressed students who moved out of the district. It primarily provides for foster placements, as well as children living in motels/hotels (transitional situations). The transportation requirement limits the distance to no more than a one-hour ride.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Member Bantjes stated a meeting would be scheduled in the near future.

4. Personnel

Member Les stated the subcommittee had not met.

B. Others

1. Craneville Short-Term Capital Bonding Committee

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee disbands the Craneville Short-term Capital Bonding Committee, effective on this date, and further that the Committee extends to the members of the Craneville Short-term Capital Bonding Committee its sincere appreciation for their work on behalf of district students.

The Chair stated the Craneville committee will drop its proposal for bonding at this point. It may be reinstated in the future. She thanked all members for their efforts.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee member George Desmarais distributed three documents, which he reviewed with a power-point presentation. The study committee will be available at the Seven Town Advisory Committee meeting on January 31st. Mr. Desmarais and other members of the study

committee answered questions regarding security, windows, and replacements vs. repairs. The Chair thanked them for their presentation.

The Committee took a brief recess.

3. School Health Advisory Committee

Member Hopper reported the advisory committee has met twice. They are looking at the Wellness Policy, whether or not there is sufficient time provided students for lunch, application for renewal of the Enhanced School Health grant, and many other things. The advisory committee will meet again on March 12th at Nessacus. Chair Carroll-Lombardi thanked Mr. Hopper for his report.

ARTICLE 9368 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Official October 1, 2007 Enrollments

The figures and those from October 1, 2006, were provided. The official October 1, 2007 enrollments by school and town are filed with the official minutes.

2. Quarterly Reports

- Financial (reported earlier in meeting)
- District Improvement Plan

Superintendent Harlan distributed the quarterly report on the District Improvement Plan. She referred again to the improved graduation rate at Wahconah, crediting Maria Keller and her work in the learning center for keeping students in school. The report is filed with the official minutes and posted on the district's website.

The Superintendent reported there are 23 retirees this year, noting the need for persons who retire to meet confidentially with the payroll/benefits bookkeeper. She clarified the need to improve workstations in the central office in order to provide central office employees with a private space to do their work and to improve those workstations ergonomically. She briefly reviewed the various responsibilities of central office staff, noting that the assistant to the business manager is responsible for banking transactions and managing checks and balances, the treasurer needs space to balance the books as does the auditor when he examines the books, and the accounts payable bookkeeper manages grants, purchase orders and makes calls to vendors. The total cost of all upgrades was approximately \$15,000.

Dr. Harlan reported kindergarten registrations are being scheduled.

The retirement of executive assistant to the superintendent Mary Jo Keiper was reported. Dr. Harlan noted Mrs. Keiper's service to ten Superintendents over many years and the value of that long service to the district. Her retirement is effective December 31, 2008.

B. Recommendations – None.

C. Other – None.

ARTICLE 9369 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

The following personnel changes were reported, noting that all salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

- Patrick West, language arts teacher at Nessacus Regional Middle School, initially appointed September 1, 1981, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Nancy Gokey, grade 3 teacher at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, initially appointed September 1, 1972, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Marilyn Gattuso, English teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, initially appointed September 2, 1980, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Gary Campbell, Sr., special education teacher at Nessacus Regional Middle School, initially appointed September 1, 1973, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Terry Goodrich, elementary physical education teacher and supervisor, initially appointed September 3, 1985, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Marie Ostrander, social studies teacher at Nessacus Regional Middle School, initially appointed September 2, 1987, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Martha Freedman, kindergarten teacher at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, initially appointed September 7, 1988, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Debra Goodrich, grade 3 teacher at Craneville School, initially appointed September 1, 1973, will retire on November 30, 2008.
- Christine Tietgens, grade 5 teacher at Craneville School, initially appointed January 10, 1974, will retire on January 9, 2009.
- Charles Sturtevant, mathematics teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, initially appointed September 1, 1973, will retire on June 30, 2008.
- Mary Johansmeyer, .8 elementary physical education teacher, has been appointed full time physical education teacher at Craneville School, effective March 10, 2008.
- Donald Campbell has been appointed custodian and head custodian at Becket Washington School, effective January 23, 2008.
- Sarah Gagne, Title I paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, initially appointed September 4, 2001, has resigned effective January 3, 2008.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To move Article 9372, Remarks for the Good of the Committee, ahead of Old Business.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

(New Business was taken up previously.)

ARTICLE 9372 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Hopper asked if there was still no town representative for negotiations. Dr. Harlan explained that Becket Town Manager Richard Furlong, chosen by the Commissioner of Education, had designated Dalton Finance Committee member Terry Williams who has now resigned. Mr. Furlong did not designate a replacement. Mr. Hopper stated it should be made clear at the Seven Town Advisory Committee meeting that that the towns have a responsibility to participate in negotiations.

ARTICLE 9370 OLD BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

To go into executive session at 9:23 p.m. in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B, paragraph 3, “to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining...”

The Chair stated the Committee would not reconvene in open session following the executive session.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley, Gordon, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 10:15 p.m.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 10:16 p.m.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.