

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
Regular Meeting

Thursday, March 27, 2008

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Nessacus Regional Middle School, Dalton, MA on Thursday, March 27, 2008, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Goddard (8:10 p.m.), Gordon, Grallert, Henderson, Hopper, Les (7:24 p.m.), Morton, Welts, Yates, Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: Members Farley and Harvey.

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

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

ARTICLE 9406 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Wahconah science department chair Shawn Therrien reported on a grant for which the department is applying to renovate the science lab. "Share to Gain" is a \$50,000 grant offered by Sabic. The winning project will be chosen by April 30th and includes 100 volunteers from Sabic for two working days, a savings in contracted services of \$20,000. Mr. Therrien believes the budget can be recalculated and the lab ready for AP chemistry by fall, based on the receipt of \$50,000 from Sabic and \$10,000 from another source. The volunteer hours of labor will be enough to make other improvements at Wahconah as well. Mr. Therrien will address Sabic regarding the grant application.

CBEA officer and community member Tony Pagliarulo read a letter addressed to the Chair from MTA legal counsel regarding the raises awarded to central office administrators. He questioned the process, noting the total amount of increases to the three employees and the claim in negotiations that there is not enough money for cost of living increases for CBEA members. He asked that the raises be returned and that any further increases to those employees be granted strictly in accordance with Massachusetts laws.

CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling read from a prepared statement, announcing a recent vote by the membership of no confidence in the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair. She believes the Committee has lost their support of the teachers and voiced her concern over the impact of protracted negotiations, stating the union will walk in unity.

Wahconah student Michael Wilson spoke in support of the teachers, stating the teachers cannot support students without the school committee supporting them. He urged all present to resolve the issues between the two sides.

Superintendent Harlan asked for a moment's silence for the Donovan family. She commended Marcia Koperniak for her work with students with autism and her nomination to receive an Excellence in Education Award at the Autism Annual conference on April 8th. Dr. Harlan also noted several Craneville teachers whose students have won awards in the Real Woman Essay Contest. She commended the efforts of Shawn Therrien, Billie Henderson, Kay Klem and Rosemary Harnett for their efforts in seeking funding for the Wahconah science lab.

Mr. Les arrived during responses from the audience.

ARTICLE 9407 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

Michael Wilson invited everyone to the drama production “Oklahoma” on April 4th and 5th and reviewed current activities at the high school. He acknowledged the Wahconah custodians for their care of the building, noting problems with the overall condition of that building, especially the many leaks in the gymnasium.

The Chair noted the gym leaks would be discussed later in the meeting.

ARTICLE 9408 SECRETARY’S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 6, 2008

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MOVED BT MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 6, 2008, as printed.

Ayes: Eleven members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9409 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-36, in the total amount of \$812,703.24, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-36, dated March 20, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$498,604.17
Craneville Homework Revolving	\$307.60
Becket Preschool Revolving	\$723.45
School Lunch	\$22,176.71
Federal Funds	<u>\$44,601.56</u>
Sub-total	\$566,413.49
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$6,324.63</u>
Total Payroll	\$572,738.12
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$239,965.12</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$812,703.24

Ayes: Eight members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper, Morton, Welts.

Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-37, in the total amount of \$532,748.78, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-37, dated March 27, 2008

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$46,667.50	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$374,576.49</u>	
		\$421,243.99
Transfers		\$67,526.03
Federal Funds		\$17,089.89
Circuit Breaker		\$102.50
School Lunch		\$18,838.37
Athletic Independent Games		\$429.00
Nessacus Student Activity Fund		\$2,460.00
WRHS Cross Country Revolving		\$131.00
WRHS Swimming Revolving		\$50.00
WRHS Nordic Skiing Revolving		\$190.00
WRHS Boys' Basketball Revolving		\$687.00
WRHS Girls' Basketball Revolving		\$654.00
WRHS Boy's Track Revolving		\$50.00
WRHS Hockey Revolving		<u>\$3,297.00</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$532,748.78

Ayes: Ten members voting.

Nays: None.

Abstention: Member Morton.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9410 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

A recent article in the Berkshire Eagle misquoted the Chair as having said “inadequate state and local funding”. In fact, she stated “state and federal” funding.

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reported a meeting will be held with Secretaries on April 14th to set ground rules for upcoming negotiations. She asked volunteers to sit on the Committee’s bargaining team to come forward following the meeting.

Regarding a suggestion to invite local legislators to a school committee meeting, the Chair will coordinate with those representatives to attend a regular meeting in April or May.

B. Annual Town Meeting Dates

The following dates and times of annual meetings were provided to Committee members:

- Cumington (first Friday in May) May 2, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
- Dalton (first Monday in May) May 5, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
- Windsor (first Monday in May) May 5, 2008, 7:30 p.m. (confirmed)
- Becket (second Saturday in May) May 10, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
- Washington (second Saturday in May) May 10, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

- Hinsdale (third Wednesday in May) May 21, 2008, 7:00 p.m.
- Peru (first Saturday in June) June 7, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 9411 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education

Member J. Chivers reported the subcommittee had not met but will meet jointly with the finance subcommittee on March 31st.

2. Finance

Member L. Chivers reported the subcommittee had met and will recommend a vote under New Business to accept a \$10,000 grant.

3. Policy Review

Member Bantjes reported several first reading policy adoptions/revisions would be brought up under New Business.

4. Personnel

Member Les reported the subcommittee would meet on April 14th at 6:30 p.m.

B. Others

1. School Health Advisory Committee

Member Hopper reported three members of the School Health Advisory Committee (Member Hopper, Nurse Leader Barbara Westwood, and Technology Coordinator Rick White), had met and talked about security in the health offices. They also discussed the posting of health related articles on the website and the fact that parents who are nurses and go on district field trips may not be covered for liability. Mr. Hopper invited others to attend meetings of this committee as posted.

2. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

The Chair reported the policy regarding building committee formulation of building committees is being reviewed. The building needs study committee will be disbanded and a formal building committee will be formed.

3. GIC Committee

Member Welts reported a good round of discussion at the first meeting of the GIC committee. A second meeting will be posted soon.

ARTICLE 9412 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

Superintendent Harlan noted she has joined the ranks of approximately 40 superintendents in the state who have received "no confidence" votes from their staff. She stated that over 600 school districts in the Commonwealth are in the same shape financially.

Dr. Harlan thanked teachers and staff for completing their scheduled work, noting that she will sit with the union to establish job descriptions for stipended positions.

She mentioned Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of the MASC, as being someone who would be happy to receive and answer questions about the district and its operations. He has helped other local districts with various issues similar to our current situation, most notably the Lanesborough contract and regional agreement dissolution.

Dr. Harlan has met with Principal Conro, Chief Bartels, Assistant Principal Phillips, and Assistant Superintendent Stankiewicz to talk about the positions of resource officer and dean of students at Wahconah. She described the process in setting the schedule at the high school for next fall, a task that will be completed before knowing if funds will allow for a dean of students. Mr. Conro schedules classes based on enrollment, academic need and certification of staff.

She mentioned various emails she has forwarded; the upcoming presentation of a Healthier U.S. Challenge award to Food Services Director Rose Goddard for the lunch programs at Becket Washington and Kittredge Schools; the resignation of Representative Guyer's aid Lindsay Rowe; the appointment of Paul Revelle as Secretary of Education; and the dates of scheduled town visits (two of which have already taken place). She commended staff and faculty for their work.

B. Recommendations – None.

C. Other – None.

The Committee took a short break.

ARTICLE 9413 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

The following personnel changes were noted. All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

- Judith Dorr, paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, initially appointed August 30, 2007, has resigned effective March 20, 2008.
- Melissa Tarjick, paraprofessional at Becket Washington School, has been assigned an extra one hour per day through the remainder of the 2007-08 school year for the purpose of supervising two special needs students before and after school due to transportation scheduling difficulties.

ARTICLE 9414 OLD BUSINESS

The Chair announced the Committee would return to Old Business following Remarks for the Good of the Committee for an executive session on negotiations.

ARTICLE 9415 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: Eleven members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Acceptance of Grant and Authorization to Establish a Revolving Fund

WHEREAS, the District has received notification of a grant award in the amount of \$10,000 from the Central Berkshire Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation to the Wahconah Regional High School science lab renovation; it was

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts the gift of \$10,000 from the Central Berkshire Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and, upon receipt of the funds, authorizes the district treasurer to establish the Wahconah Regional High School Science Lab Revolving Account, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee.

Ayes: Eleven members voting

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. First Reading Policy Adoptions/Revisions

- 3100: Conduct of Teachers (Staff Conduct)

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER WELTS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading revisions to Policy 3100, Conduct of Teachers (Staff Conduct), as attached (to the agenda packed) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Member Bantjes stated the policy has been completely rewritten based on Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) guidelines and other sources.

Ayes: Eleven members voting

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 5760: Complaint Procedure for Alleged Discriminatory or (Harassing) Condition

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER WELTS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading revisions to Policy 5760, Complaint Procedure for Alleged Discriminatory or Harassing Condition, as attached (to the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Member Bantjes noted this policy was completely rewritten in accordance with updated Mass. General Laws, MASC guidelines and other sources.

Ayes: Eleven members voting

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 6515: Student-to-Student Harassment

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

Member Goddard arrived during Mr. Tensel's report.

Member Welts expressed concern that there is a gap between good news in the district and public perception of what is happening. This will be discussed at the joint meeting of Education and Finance.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

To go into executive session at 8:17 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 reconvene in open session for the purpose of adjournment.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Goddard, Gordon, Grallert, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, Yates, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 9:10 p.m.

Member Les recognized Francis Majchrowski, Mr. Diefendorf, and John Ferris for chaperoning a recent student ice fishing trip and acknowledged Wohrles Foods and the Allegroni family for their contributions as well.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.