

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee  
Regular Meeting

Thursday, May 8, 2008

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Becket Washington School, Becket, MA on Thursday, May 8, 2008, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley, Grallert, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, Yates, and Carroll-Lombardi.  
Absent: Members Bantjes, Goddard, Gordon, and Harvey.  
Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Managers Robert Tensel and Marge Foster, 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 9439      RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

None.

ARTICLE 9440      STUDENT AFFAIRS

A.                    Recognition of Becket Washington Students

Becket Washington Principal David Kotowski welcomed the Committee and reported on an event at the school during the year that extended beyond regular classroom activities. Third graders in Mary Kay McCloskey's room ran a very successful food drive. Mr. Richard Furlong, of the Becket Food Pantry, commended the children and the school for collecting 900 items for the pantry. Mr. Kotowski introduced two of the students, Michaela DeFoe and Schyler Tarjick, and presented them with a certificate for the class acknowledging their efforts in feeding the hungry. The Chair thanked those involved.

B.                    Recognition of Nessacus Students

Mrs. Debbie White brought four students who had participated in the ExploraVision competition this year and received honorable mention for finishing in the top 10% of submissions. The students were awarded certificates and prizes from Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association, sponsors of the program. Mrs. White presented the certificates and digital weather stations to Kyle Miller, Nathan Sears, Brenna Budd, and Christian Pickwell. Superintendent Harlan and Chair Carroll-Lombardi thanked Mrs. White, the students and their parents for coming to the meeting and stated the District is very proud of their accomplishments.

C.                    Wahconah Report

Michael Wilson presented the Chair with a petition signed by 200 Wahconah students. He reported the situation (with the teachers) is affecting student morale at the high school. He also reported on recent and upcoming events and commended the work of the custodial crew for their maintenance of a building that is in very poor shape.

ARTICLE 9441      SECRETARY'S REPORT

A.              Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 24, 2008

MOVED BY MEMBER WELTS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 24, 2008, as printed.

Ayes: Six members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Grallert, L. Chivers, Henderson, and Welts.

Motion carried.

ARTICLE 9442      FINANCIAL REPORT

A.              Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*To approve Warrant No. 2008-42, in the total amount of \$659,002.85, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-42, dated May 1, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$484,836.16
Craneville Homework Revolving	\$259.14
Becket Preschool Revolving	\$496.08
School Lunch	\$11,534.24
Federal Funds	<u>\$29,709.95</u>
Sub-total	\$526,835.57
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$5,783.66</u>
Total Payroll	\$532,619.23
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$126,383.62</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$659,002.85

Ayes: Seven members present.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper, Morton, and Welts.

Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*To approve Warrant No. 2008-43, in the total amount of \$257,866.67, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-43, dated May 8, 2008

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$224,110.10
Insurance Payment	<u>\$984.30</u>
	\$225,094.40
Transfers	\$162.18
Federal Funds	\$10,736.77
Circuit Breaker	\$12,076.07

School Lunch	\$1,060.73
WRHS Student Activity Fund	\$3,764.03
Literacy Learning Classroom Revolving	\$124.45
WRHS Cross Country Revolving	\$61.61
WRHS Softball Revolving	\$932.00
WRHS Baseball Revolving	\$1,790.25
WRHS Tennis Revolving	\$473.60
WRHS Boys' Track Revolving	\$1,130.60
WRHS Girls' Track Revolving	\$134.98
Berkshire Taconic Foundation	<u>\$325.00</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$257,866.67

Ayes: Nine members.  
Nays: None.  
Abstention: Member Morton.  
Motion carried.

Committee members were asked to sign a third warrant for a manual check. Mr. Tensel stated a printed warrant would be brought to the next meeting for formal vote.

B. Acceptance of Gifts and Contributions

MOVED BY L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts the following gifts and contributions, as recommended by the District Treasurer:*

- \$1,000 from Robert and Dee Farrell to the Wahconah Senior Assembly*
- \$1,500 from Berkshire Insurance Group, Inc./Reynolds, Barnes & Hebb, Inc. to the Wahconah Senior Assembly*
- \$505 from Shannon Shepardson to the Richard M. Bellinger Scholarship*

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

C. Quarterly Report on the Budget and Finances

Business Manager Tensel distributed the quarterly report of March 31, 2008 (filed with the official minutes) and allowed time for members to read through the figures. He noted the indicated revenue shortfall was due to a loss of \$303,919 in state funding and the reduction of \$46,610 in Charter School funding. The freezing of the budget in late fall will cover these losses. Mr. Tensel also reported the Kittredge School Bond has been refinanced, saving over \$27,000 in FY 2009 capital costs for Hinsdale, Peru and Dalton. An amended capital budget will be brought forward at a later meeting.

Mr. Tensel answered members' questions. Although there is a fuel clause in the transportation contract, revised routing and fewer buses will cover the increase in gas costs. Superintendent Harlan thanked Assistant to the Business Manager Cheryl Cachat for organizing data for Versatran, noting Mrs. Cachat has been a mentor for the person who is working with the collaborative to organize busing routes for the county.

A concern was expressed regarding the uncertainty around anticipated revenues at budget preparation time and the difficulty in bringing forward accurate expenditure figures.

ARTICLE 9443      COMMUNICATIONS

A.                    Report of the Chair

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reported of those legislators invited to attend the May 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, only Representative Guyer has accepted. Senator Downing has offered to meet with the Committee at another time; the Governor is unable to attend.

The Chair had offered to look for various policies on ethics for school committee members. The following items were distributed: Policy 1240: Code of Ethics for School Committee Members, Policy 1205: Powers and Duties, MASC statement “School Committees and School Stakeholders Communicating with the Public”, and MASC statement “News Medial Relations/News Releases”. She asked members to review these documents at their leisure.

The Chair and Members Grallert, J. Chivers, and L. Chivers attended the MASC Day on the Hill. Mrs. Carroll-Lombardi reported the format was somewhat different than the others she had attended and she was a little disappointed there was not more opportunity for school committee members to speak to legislators. Representative Guyer joined the group for lunch.

B.                    Annual Town Meeting Dates

The Chair reported on the budget results in those towns that had held annual town meetings. Becket, Washington, Hinsdale, and Peru have yet to meet.

ARTICLE 9444      SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A.                    Reports

1. Education

a. Award of Recognition Credits

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards three recognition credits to Lynn Clairmont and three recognition credits to Joanne Dowling for their work redesigning the district's science curriculum in grades K-5, as recommended by the Education Subcommittee.*

Assistant Superintendent Stankiewicz stated Mrs. Clairmont and Mrs. Dowling interviewed and surveyed elementary teachers, matched the results to the state standards, and revised the elementary science curriculum. They put in a great deal of work and effort.

Ayes: Ten members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. District Report Card

Mr. Stankiewicz noted there is a legal requirement to provide this report to the public. He reviewed the educator data for 2007-08. A letter has been included in all school newsletters inviting parents to visit the website or to request a hard copy from their principal.

The education subcommittee, at its last meeting, heard a report on the learning center at Wahconah. Teacher Maria Keller reported a high success rate for the targeted population, resulting in a dropout rate of only 1.5% this year. Mr. Stankiewicz reported the requirement for an ELL teacher on staff, with a low population of ELL students, allows Mrs. Keller to spend a great deal of time in the learning center.

## 2. Finance

A date will be set for a short meeting to review budget adjustments and the special education transportation contract.

## 3. Policy Review

### a. Second Reading Policy Revision – 7570: School Building Committee

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading revisions to Policy 7570: School Building Committee, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.*

A question was raised regarding the membership composition on the building committee, which listed “a representative of the school committee” and “one member of the school committee”.

MOVED BY MEMBER WELTS, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

*To change the membership to include the Chair of the School Committee in place of “a representative of the school committee”*

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

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER WELTS

*To change the wording in section 7570.23 to read, “Recommend receipt and disbursement of funds...”*

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

### Vote on amended motion:

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

## 4. Personnel

Member Les reported the subcommittee would meet on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m.

### B. Others

#### 1. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

Member Henderson reported approximately 30 people attended the Open House.

## 2. GIC Committee

Member Welts reported a good attendance at a presentation by Joel Bererra, a statewide expert on the GIC. A formal meeting will be called to look over the numbers for our district. It was noted that Pittsfield will join the GIC. If it is determined that the district will go forward, the study committee will defer to a formal committee of stakeholders. A decision would need to be made by October 1 to get in for the following fiscal year. When a district joins the GIC, control goes to the largest bargaining unit; decisions now made by the school committee would be dispersed elsewhere. Health insurance wouldn't be a collective bargaining piece anymore. The Superintendent pointed out that Pittsfield was not a member of the Berkshire Health Group; and, the savings nuances are not understood by the general public.

The Chair thanked Member Welts for his report.

## 3. School Health Advisory Committee

Member Hopper reported the committee would meet on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m., at Nessacus. He reported Nurse Leader Barbara Westwood has worked hard and the district will receive the school health grant again next year.

## 4. Ad Hoc Letter Writing Committee

The Chair distributed a draft of a district statement on state funding for public education. She asked for member input by Monday, May 12, 2008. The statement will be sent to legislators, other school committees, PTO members and others. Formal approval will be requested on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. She thanked the Committee for their assistance.

# ARTICLE 9445 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## A. Reports

### 1. Quarterly Progress Report District Improvement Plan

Superintendent Harlan thanked Jim Stankiewicz and the Principals for their input. Her quarterly progress report on the District Improvement Plan is filed with the official minutes.

Dr. Harlan announced recognition by the USDA, Nutrition and Wellness Division, of the Becket Washington and Kittredge Schools for their nutrition and wellness programs. She commended Rose Goddard, Terry Goodrich, Barbara Westwood, Laura Dumouchel and David Kotowski for their part in this national competition. She also stated the same program is provided in all district schools; Becket Washington and Kittredge Schools qualified to compete because of their high percentage of student participation in the lunch program. The Gold Awards Ceremony will be held at Kittredge School on Thursday, May 22, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. Numerous invitations have been sent out and School Committee members were encouraged to attend.

The Superintendent reviewed the search process for vacant positions, especially administrative openings.

She reported the receipt of a grant to the Berkshire County/Western Mass. Collaborative for special education transportation, which will pay for planning of routes through Versatran. The collaborative is currently working under the umbrella of Southern Berkshire Collaborative; when the grant funding expires and dues are charged to members, the Collaborative will become the "Berkshire County Collaborative." In

response to a question regarding when the benefits might be realized for special education transportation, the Superintendent responded it was her opinion it would not be ready by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

B. Recommendations

None.

C. Other

None.

ARTICLE 9446 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

The following personnel changes were noted. All salaries are sent in accordance with contract.

- Jennifer Filkins has been appointed assistant cafeteria cook at Nessacus Regional Middle School, approximately 3 hours/day, effective May 1, 2008.
- Margaret Kelleher has been transferred to the position of kindergarten teacher at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, effective the 2008-09 school year. (Mrs. Kelleher is currently the preschool teacher at Berkshire Trail.)
- Charlene Steele has been transferred to the position of grade 2 teacher at Kittredge School, effective the 2008-09 school year. (Miss Steele is currently grade 2 teacher at Becket Washington.)
- John McComish has been transferred to the position of grade 7 social studies teacher at Nessacus Regional Middle School, effective the 2008-09 school year. (Mr. McComish is currently a special needs teacher at Nessacus.)
- Mary DeMaranville has been appointed English teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, effective August 28, 2008, at step C-12 on the teachers' salary schedule.
- Debbie Kowalczyk has been appointed mathematics teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, effective August 28, 2008, at step A-3 on the teachers' salary schedule.
- Adam Young, science teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, initially appointed August 30, 2007, has resigned effective August 30, 2008.

ARTICLE 9447 OLD BUSINESS

A. Executive Session (Strategy Regarding Negotiations)

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

*To move Old Business to the end of the meeting.*

Ayes: Ten members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9448 NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER HOPPER, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

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

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

A. Appointment of Representatives to Berkshire Health Group

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That Business Manager Margaret Foster is appointed board representative to the Berkshire Health Group and that Superintendent Donna Harlan is appointed alternate representative to the Berkshire Health Group, effective May 8, 2008.*

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

B. Appointment of Chief Procurement Officer

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee appoints Business Manager Margaret Foster chief procurement officer to purchase all supplies and services for the Central Berkshire Regional School District, effective May 8, 2008.*

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

ARTICLE 9449 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Hopper reported he had participated in another great community reading day at Craneville. He stated, "Everybody loves it!"

Member Grallert invited those present to attend or participate in the Berkshire Trail 5-K race on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

Member J. Chivers asked if the order of agenda articles was set in stone. The Chair referred the question to policy review.

Member Farley thanked student representative Michael Wilson for bringing his concerns to the Committee. Mr. Farley stated everyone on the Committee is frustrated and feels bad about the deadlock with the teachers and he wanted the students to know that the Committee is working hard to settle the contract.

Member Henderson reported she had been privileged to travel to Paris with Tom Towne and Annmarie Desautelle. As a non-French speaking visitor, it was wonderful to travel with fluent speaking students. It was a great experience.

ARTICLE 9447 OLD BUSINESS

Member Hopper questioned an earlier report from the Superintendent regarding the canceling of all field trips. He reported some are canceled and some are taking place. The Superintendent stated things have changed some from her initial report, and are changing every day.

A. Executive Session (Strategy Regarding Negotiations)

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*To go into executive session at 8:46 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 following the executive session for the purpose of adjournment.

ROLL CALL

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

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 9:17 p.m.

MOVED BY MEMBER WELTS, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Ayes: Ten members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.