

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
Regular Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2008

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Wahconah Regional High School, Dalton, MA on Thursday, May 22, 2008, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes (7:12 p.m.), J. Chivers, Gordon, Grallert, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: Members L. Chivers, Farley, Goddard, Harvey and Yates.

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Managers Robert Tensel and Marge Foster, CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling, Recording Secretary Mary Jo Keiper, and Members of the Audience.

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

ARTICLE 9450 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Chair Carroll-Lombardi extended the committee's best wishes to Member Dick Farley, who was not feeling well and unable to attend the meeting.

Tim Webb, Local 204 representative for custodians and cafeteria workers, read a letter to the Chair petitioning the Committee to adopt the provisions of Section 19 of MGL Chapter 32B, allowing public employees to bargain collaboratively for health insurance benefits. The Chair responded that adoption of Section 19, Chapter 32B would be premature, in that the GIC study committee had yet to make a recommendation regarding membership in the GIC. This statement was refuted by CBEA member Tony Pagliarulo, who stated Section 19 must be adopted before the District could join the GIC.

The following read letters supporting adoption of Section 19: Cozeen Mayotte, representing district paraprofessionals; Joanne Dowling for Diane Drosehn representing secretaries; Karen O'Brien, CBEA president, representing the teachers, who also added personal comments regarding bargaining for health insurance benefits. The Chair stated the district, after listening to the units, has already formed a study committee to consider joining the GIC.

Cindy Polinsky, MTA representative encouraged coalition bargaining in light of the stalled negotiations. The Chair stated the GIC study committee is scheduled to meet on May 28th.

Joanne Dowling referred to the protracted teacher agreement, stating the teachers have requested wage increases of less than 3% per year over three years. It is her belief the teachers' proposal is fair.

The Chair thanked those in the audience for coming.

ARTICLE 9451 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

There was no student present to report.

ARTICLE 9452 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 8, 2008

MOVE BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the minutes of the regular meeting of May 8, 2008, be approved as printed.

Ayes: Eight members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9453 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GORDON

To approve Warrant No. 2008-44, in the total amount of \$682,017.89, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-44, dated May 15, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$494,637.82
Craneville Homework Revolving	\$161.88
Becket Preschool Revolving	\$744.12
Berkshire Trail Preschool Revolving	\$1,796.23
School Lunch	\$14,919.26
Federal Funds	<u>\$34,807.49</u>
Sub-total	\$547,066.80
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$6,090.93</u>
Total Payroll	\$553,157.73
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$128,860.16</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$682,017.89

Ayes: Six members, including the Chair.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper, Morton, Welts.

Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER GORDON

To approve Warrant No. 2008-45, in the total amount of \$585,645.51, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-45, dated May 22, 2008

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$112,535.13
Insurance Payment	<u>\$300,807.86</u>
	\$413,342.99
Transfers	\$70,263.28
Federal Funds	\$11,009.37

Circuit Breaker	\$4,787.16
School Lunch	\$32,490.20
Athletic Independent Games	\$716.00
WRHS Student Activity Fund	\$46,414.58
WRHS Boys' Soccer Revolving	\$38.00
WRHS Girls' Soccer Revolving	\$48.00
WRHS Cross Country Revolving	\$500.00
WRHS Cheerleading Revolving	\$24.80
WRHS Softball Revolving	\$667.00
WRHS Baseball Revolving	\$1,553.75
WRHS Tennis Revolving	\$1,590.92
WRHS Boys' Track Revolving	\$1,589.39
WRHS Girls' Track Revolving	<u>\$610.07</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$585,645.51

Ayes: Seven members.

Nays: None.

Abstention: Member Morton.

Motion carried.

B. Acceptance of Gifts and Contributions

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

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

*\$1,500 from Reynolds, Barnes & Hebb to the Wahconah Regional High School Art Department
\$2,000 from the Pittsfield Cooperative Bank to the Wahconah General Scholarship Fund*

The Chair noted the generosity of the donors.

Ayes: Eight members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9454 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Discussion with Denis Guyer and Others

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reported Representative Guyer could not attend because the House was called into session at the last minute. She will attempt to reschedule the representative and Senator Ben Downing at a time agreeable to both.

B. Report of the Chair

The Chair reported the district's FY-09 budget was approved in Hinsdale, giving the budget the required five positive votes. She thanked Member L. Chivers, the finance subcommittee and other members who have attended the town meetings. She also noted the proposal of the Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee has been well received in the towns. Peru will vote on the Wahconah project at its annual town meeting and Windsor will vote at a special meeting on June 2nd.

C. Remaining Annual Town Meeting Date

The final town meeting will be held in Peru on June 7th at 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 9455 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education – No report.

2. Finance

a. Award of Contract for Special Education Transportation

The Chair reported for Member L. Chivers. The finance subcommittee had met to look at the special education transportation contract. Mr. Richard Labrie, who negotiated the proposed contract and presented to the finance subcommittee, was introduced to the full Committee. Mr. Labrie reviewed the grant-funded Western Mass. Special Education Transportation Pilot Project, which affected the negotiation of the district's special education transportation contract, and the work being done in each of the four collaboratives with which he works.

Mr. Labrie noted that grant funding has been continued by the legislature for the fourth year. There is also a \$2 million appropriation in the state budget for transportation incentive-based reimbursement for collaboratives.

The five-year contract with Dufour Escorted Tours, Inc. allows for multi-district transportation, rate increases of 0% in the first year and 4% in each of the next four years, and a fuel escalation clause that shares the risk between district and contractor. The district will own and be responsible for car/booster seats.

Member Bantjes arrived at the beginning of Mr. Labrie's presentation.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards a contract for Special Education Transportation for the fiscal years 2009 through 2013 to Dufour Escorted Tours, Inc. based on a negotiated proposal that has been incorporated into a contract dated May 19, 2008 and recommended by the Finance Committee.

Member Henderson asked when the Berkshire Educational Collaborative would be operational. Mr. Labrie anticipates that will be in September 2009. The Collaborative now has two grants from the DOESE: start-up administration costs, and special education transportation. A third is in the works for vocational education transportation.

Ayes: Nine members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Carroll-Lombardi thanked Mr. Labrie and the finance subcommittee for their work on the contract.

The Committee took a short recess.

The Chair continued the report of finance subcommittee, stating a motion on budgetary transfers would be made under New Business.

3. Policy Review

a. 2008-2009 School Improvement Plans

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

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the School Improvement Plan for 2008-2009 for Nessacus Regional Middle School and Wahconah Regional High School, as recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Member Bantjes reported the subcommittee had reviewed only the improvement plans for Nessacus and Wahconah. Approval motions for the remaining schools will come at a later meeting. He noted it has gotten easier to review the plans as they become more standardized.

Ayes: Nine members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

b. Approval of Nessacus Student Handbook Changes

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the revisions to the Nessacus Student Handbook, as recommended by the Policy Review Subcommittee.

Ayes: Nine members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Approval of Wahconah Student Handbook Changes

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To table approval of Wahconah student handbook changes.

Ayes: Nine members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Personnel

Member Les reported the subcommittee had met and discussed the superintendent's evaluation as well as changes to the superintendent's contract. They will meet again on June 16th at 6:30 p.m. in the central office.

B. Others

1. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

It was noted there were positive comments and votes at town meetings on the proposal to renovate Wahconah. Member Henderson asked for clarification regarding the regulations governing a building committee. It is the School Building Authority that oversees building committees. The Chair stated she would schedule a formal vote on the building committee for a meeting in June. She acknowledged that

the study committee members are anxious to begin the bid process and thanked the building study committee again for their work.

Member Henderson also reported on the status of the SABIC grant application, noting there were 11 applicants and the Wahconah lab is one of three finalists. Site visits will now be made to the finalists.

2. GIC Committee

Member Welts reported the study committee will meet on May 28th to review numbers from the business office. They will make a report to the finance subcommittee in the near future. Dr. Welts confirmed that all bargaining units are represented on the study committee.

3. School Health Advisory Committee

Member Hopper reported the advisory committee had met the night before. Food Services Director Rose Goddard was present and was congratulated on her USDA award. Regarding the ESH grant, next year's funding will be half of what it has been, resulting in reductions of the nurse leader's position and two clerical positions. He suggested the issue of coverage in the schools and on field trips needs to be addressed. The School Health Advisory Committee would like to have the health department present at a fall school committee meeting.

4. Ad Hoc Letter Writing Committee

The Committee reviewed the draft letter, making minor changes

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the release of its Statement on State Funding for Public Education with the strikeout of the word "reset" in subparagraph 7 (attached to official minutes).

Ayes: Nine members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Chair thanked members for their input, noting that meetings will be scheduled with the towns after the budget is finalized.

Member Henderson asked about the status of the "RED circuit breaker" in regards to subparagraph 4 in the Statement. The Superintendent responded the Department of Education had dealt with that initiative through the Reserve, or "pot hole" fund. Our district applied but did not receive funding in the past two years.

ARTICLE 9456 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

Superintendent Harlan thanked those members who were able and had attended town meetings. She also reviewed for the Committee the celebration honoring Kittredge and Becket Washington school lunch programs on May 22nd. The honor was awarded to only 208 schools, including two from Central Berkshire, a true testimony to our physical education and health staff, food services director Rose Goddard, and the "school lunch ladies".

Dr. Harlan reported the district does have a budget, passed by large majorities in five towns.

The Superintendent also reported on the status of field trips and field days, noting that some are being provided through PTO and parent volunteers, some are being organized by district staff, and some have been canceled this year. She also commended Nessacus sixth graders for their success at the recent Berkshire County Goes to College Day.

B. Recommendations – None.

C. Other – None.

ARTICLE 9457 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent’s Review of Personnel Changes

Lisa Morrison has been appointed physical education/wellness teacher at Nessacus Regional Middle School, effective August 28, 2008, at step E-8.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To move Article 9459 – New Business and Article 9460 – Remarks for the Good of the Committee ahead of Old Business.

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

ARTICLE 9459 NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER HOPPER, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

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

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

A. Approval of Budget Transfers, FY-2008

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECOND BY J. CHIVERS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorizes the budgetary transfers for fiscal year 2008 as shown (attached to the official minutes) and recommended by the Finance Committee at their meeting on May 19, 2008.

There were no questions regarding the budget transfers.

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

ARTICLE 9460 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Henderson reported the Wahconah spring music concert was wonderful – the jazz ensemble was really good and the chorus was fantastic. She had also attended a play the week before, directed by student Dave Lewis, which was also fantastic.

Business Manager Tensel reported the Kittredge project has been rebonded, and will result in first year savings of approximately \$27,000 divided among Dalton, Hinsdale, and Peru. The district has received additional Chapter 71 regional transportation funding of \$65,000. Approval from the towns is required for the district to spend this money. The matter will be referred to finance subcommittee and perhaps to the seven town advisory committee.

ARTICLE 9458 OLD BUSINESS

A. Field Days

Taken up under Superintendent Reports.

B. Executive Session (Strategy Regarding Negotiations)

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To go into executive session at 8:20 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 Bantjes, J. Chivers, Gordon, Grallert, Henderson, Hopper, Les, Morton, Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 9:20 p.m.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

To adjourn the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

Ayes: Nine members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried.