

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee

Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 27, 2007

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, Cummington, MA on Thursday, September 27, 2007, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley, French, Goddard, Gordon, Harvey, Henderson, Hoper, Les, Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi. (Member Grallert took her seat following appointment.)

Absent: Member Shugrue.

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Attorney Joseph Bartulis, 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 9305      RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Berkshire Trail Principal Laura Dumouchel welcomed those present to her new school.

Suzanne Town, parent volunteer at Berkshire Trail Elementary School reported on a newspaper article announcing student test scores across the state are the best in the country. She commended district teachers and expressed her support for them in their request for a fair contract.

CBEA President Karen O'Brien addressed the Committee regarding the impasse in negotiations and noting the Committee's unacceptable salary offer and shifting of health care costs. She praised the work of teachers and paraprofessionals, stating these proposals would result in a decrease in take-home pay for unit members. She announced several of those in the audience were prepared to speak.

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reminded the audience that a total of 30 minutes was set aside for their comments.

Paraprofessional Unit President Carol Darby, Nessacus teacher Pat West, Craneville teacher Peter Bachli, and Wahconah teacher Charlie Bradshaw made separate statements to the Committee in support of teachers, paraprofessionals and district staff in general, asking that the Committee offer contracts that show they value the staff. CBEA Executive Secretary Joanne Dowling was the final speaker, thanking the Committee for hearing their comments.

Chair Carroll-Lombardi expressed her appreciation to all speakers for the respect with which they addressed the Committee.

ARTICLE 9306      STUDENT AFFAIRS

A.      Wahconah Report – None.

ARTICLE 9307      SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 13, 2007

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 13, 2007, as printed.*

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9308 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve corrections to Warrant No. 2008-04, in the total amount of \$545,934.81, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-04, dated July 26, 2007 - **Correction**

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$132,854.05	
Insurance Payment	<b><u>\$304,632.55</u></b>	
		<b>\$437,486.60</b>
Transfers		<b>\$67,526.24</b>
Federal Funds		\$20,675.74
Circuit Breaker		\$1,743.00
School Lunch		\$8,720.66
Reimbursable Property Damage		\$170.40
Summer Drama		\$5,940.00
NRMS Student Activity Fund		\$2,000.00
Literacy Learning Class Revolving		\$347.17
Becket Washington Pre-school		\$25.00
Berkshire Taconic Foundation		\$800.00
CBRSD General Scholarship		<u>\$500.00</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$545,934.81

**Note: Insurance payment higher; transfers lower; total unchanged.**

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve Warrant No. 2008-11, in the total amount of \$785,617.34, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-11, dated September 20, 2007

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$477,630.12
School Lunch	\$15,914.27
Becket Washington Pre-school Revolving	\$826.80

Federal Funds	<u>\$56,123.09</u>
Sub-total	\$550,494.28
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$6,122.07</u>
Total Payroll	\$556,616.35
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$229,000.99</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$785,617.34

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

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve warrant No. 2008-12, in the total amount of \$1,581,290.72, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-12, dated September 27, 2007

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$731,397.24	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$313,558.83</u>	
		\$1,044,956.07
Transfers		\$67,106.75
Federal Funds		\$28,127.43
Circuit Breaker		\$79,036.67
School Lunch		\$10,542.98
Reimbursable Property Damage		\$490.59
Becket Childcare		\$236.00
WRHS Boys' Soccer Revolving		\$234.00
WRHS Girls' Soccer Revolving		\$581.43
WRHS Football Revolving		\$726.12
WRHS Cross Country Revolving		\$615.00
Maturing Debt - Principal Berkshire Trail		\$85,000.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Berkshire Trail		\$7,883.75
Maturing Debt - Interest Nessacus		\$239,487.50
Short Term Bond		<u>\$16,266.43</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$1,581,290.72

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

B. Acceptance of Gifts and Contributions

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

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

*\$100.00 to the General Scholarship Fund in memory of Dr. William Carey, from Wanda Czelusniak  
 \$100.00 to the General Scholarship Fund in memory of Dr. William Carey, from Cynthia Johnson*

*\$2,300.50 to the Becket Washington PTO/SAC from Becket taxpayers*

The Chair noted that Becket taxpayers have an option to include \$1.00 with their property taxes for the PTO/SAC at Becket Washington School. Their generosity is reflected in the gift above.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9309        COMMUNICATIONS

A.                Report of the Chair

No report.

B.                Vacancy – Cummington Representative

1. Letter from Amy Grallert

Committee members reviewed Mrs. Grallert's letter and her completed survey form.

2. Interview and Appointment of Cummington Representative

Mrs. Grallert stated she wants to be a part of the educational system and work to keep the schools going. Chair Carroll-Lombardi noted the time commitment in attending both School Committee meetings and the subcommittees to which a member is assigned.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER WELTS

*To appoint Amy Grallert to serve on the School Committee as representative from Cummington.*

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Harlan administered the oath of office to Mrs. Grallert and she took her seat at the table. Mrs. Carroll-Lombardi welcomed her to the Committee.

C.                Official Delegate – MASC/MASS Joint Conference

Election of an official voting delegate will be brought to the next meeting. Member L. Chivers was selected on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to serve as the alternate delegate.

ARTICLE 9310        SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A.                Reports

1. Education

Member J. Chivers reported the subcommittee had met and revisited the scheduling of classes on Good Friday. The subcommittee voted 3 to 2 to leave the calendar as it is. The full School Committee accepted that recommendation. The Subcommittee also heard a report on Adequate Yearly Progress, received an update on textbooks, and will be looking at other items (including gifted and talented program), all of which will be brought to the Committee at a later date. He asked members to email Mr. Stankiewicz with any

additional items they would like the subcommittee to consider. Upcoming meetings are set for October 29<sup>th</sup> to hear a report from the multi-age committee and November 12<sup>th</sup> for a report on the School Resource Officer.

## 2. Finance

Member L. Chivers reported the subcommittee would meet on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The Superintendent distributed an agenda for that meeting.

## 3. Policy Review

Member Bantjes reported the subcommittee had met and worked on policy revisions/additions which were on the agenda for first reading approval.

### a. Second Reading Revisions to Policy 6860, Pupil Transportation Services

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading revisions to Policy 6860, Pupil Transportation Services, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

Mr. Bantjes reviewed the revisions, which included the underlining of items most frequently questioned.

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

### b. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 7410, Graduating Class Funds

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 7410, Graduating Class Funds, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

The new policy will clarify the handling of class funds.

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

### c. Second Reading Adoption of Policy 7580, Naming New Facilities

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves second reading adoption of Policy 7580, Naming New Facilities, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

The policy was developed to set a process for naming or dedicating a building or space under the jurisdiction of the Committee.

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

d. First Reading Revisions to Policy 1205, Powers and Duties

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading revisions to Policy 1205, Powers and Duties, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

The revision more specifically identifies Committee functions.

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

e. First Reading Revisions to Policy 1570, Quorum and Voting

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading revisions to Policy 1570, Quorum and Voting, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

The revision would waive the second reading of a policy with a 2/3 vote of the Committee.

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

f. First Reading Adoption of Policy 7180, News Media Relations/News Releases

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading adoption of Policy 7180, News Media Relations/News Releases, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

The policy sets the procedure to be followed in making press releases.

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

g. First Reading Revisions to Policy 7250, Uniform Requirements for Designer Selection

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves first reading revisions to Policy 7250, Uniform Requirements for Designer Selection, as shown (in the agenda packet) and recommended by the policy review subcommittee.*

The entire current policy will be replaced in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, c.7, sections 38A<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-0. In answer to a question from Mrs. Henderson, the Chair stated that if the Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee wishes to go forward with any project(s), they will need to first bring a recommendation to the School Committee.

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. Personnel

Member French reported the subcommittee has not met and no meeting is scheduled.

#### B. Others

##### 1. Craneville Short-Term Capital Bonding Committee

Member Henderson reported the flooring is estimated to cost approximately \$400,000. The town of Dalton will call a special meeting later in the fall and would like to be able to include a vote on any proposed capital project at Craneville. She asked if funding needed to be approved prior to contracting for an engineering study. The Chair stated that a formal recommendation should be sent to the finance subcommittee for review prior to coming to the full School Committee. The capital bonding committee is waiting for information from Mr. Tensel.

##### 2. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

Member Henderson reported George Desmarais has prepared a safety and security project plan if anyone would like to see it. The committee has identified over \$5,000,000 in projects, which is well over 30% of the building's assessed value. A status report will be made to the School Committee on October 25<sup>th</sup> or later. The Chair spoke to WBNSC Chair Jim Huebner who hopes to begin some of the projects in summer of 2008. A capital budget package should be ready for annual town meetings. Mrs. Henderson stated there has been a lot of discussion about smaller, immediate needs projects for summer. The Chair thanked Mrs. Henderson for her report.

### ARTICLE 9311 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Reports

Superintendent Harlan reported a \$2,500 donation to the Wahconah Band Booster Club has been received from the Holmberg family. The money will be used to upgrade older computers and enhance audio recording capacity in the music department.

The cost to mail individual bus stops was \$884.86; last year's insert of bus routes in the Eagle cost \$272.40.

The opening day enrollments included an error in the number of second grades at Kittredge School; there is only one class.

Quarterly reports on financials and progress on the District Improvement Plan will be made on October 25, January 24, May 8, and August 21.

At the October 4<sup>th</sup> finance subcommittee meeting: Rich Labrie will attend and review the Collaborative Agreement; Connie West will bring the pre-K data; Mr. Tensel will present the capital costs; CO administrators will provide documentation of the need and history for a building consultant.

Dr. Harlan explained the rerouting of buses to accommodate the closing of a portion of Washington Mt. Road. Kay Hall of Dufour, Inc. has indicated she believes the new route is safe for bus travel and she will contact the town authorities to make sure the roads are kept clean, clear and safe.

Affected bus routes along Old Windsor Road will be temporarily changed from September 28<sup>th</sup> for about three weeks due to the closing of a portion of that road. Planning for the buses began in August. A report in the Berkshire Eagle, describing the location of the work, was incorrect.

Dr. Harlan reported she was misquoted in a recent article in the Berkshire Eagle. She stated, “we did not know the severity of the allergies” until just days before school opened.

A meeting is scheduled on October 4<sup>th</sup> with Dalton Town Manager and Dalton Police Chief to review the SRO agreement.

The Superintendent’s District Improvement Plan has emphasized her communication with the towns and she has met often with town officials during each of her years in the district. The towns have thanked her for the increased presence and activity in the towns. All seven towns have been asked to set a visit for this year. At the last school committee meeting there was not enough time for her to update the Committee on progress of the DIP.

The Superintendent met with the Cummington select board on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Also in attendance and participating were Laura Dumouchel, Laurie Chivers, Bob Tensel and Amy Grallert. Dr. Harlan reviewed that meeting for the Committee. Additional meetings are scheduled on October 8<sup>th</sup> with Peru; October 15<sup>th</sup> with Windsor; November 12<sup>th</sup> with Dalton; and January 3<sup>rd</sup> with Becket. Member L. Chivers pointed out that the towns are reaching their budget limits. This is a serious problem for them and will require overrides. Chair Carroll-Lombardi will provide copies of a pamphlet explaining Proposition 2½ to Committee members.

B. Recommendations

1. Class of 2008 Senior Week Activities

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the schedule of senior activities for the class of 2008, as recommended by the Superintendent and shown below:*

<i>Class Night</i>	<i>Wednesday, June 4, 2008</i>
<i>Senior Assembly</i>	<i>Thursday, June 5, 2008</i>
<i>Senior Class Trip &amp; Banquet</i>	<i>Friday to Saturday, June 6-7, 2008</i>
<i>Graduation</i>	<i>Sunday, June 8, 2008</i>

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Authorization for a Separate Section 125 Plan

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee authorizes the establishment of a separate Section 125 plan to comply with Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006, as amended by Chapters 324 and 450 of the Acts of 2006, as recommended by the Superintendent.*

Superintendent Harlan noted Massachusetts Healthcare Reform Legislation enables employees the ability to purchase insurance on a pre-tax basis. All district employees who work more than 20 hours per week are contractually under a section 125 plan. For those employees who work less than 20 hours per week, we need to have a separate Section 125 plan, as required by Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006, as amended by Chapters 324 and 450 of the Acts of 2006. This will allow district employees to access the Massachusetts Health Connector and take advantage of paying on a pre-tax basis. The district will not incur any cost for these benefits.

Ayes: Twelve members.

Nays: None.

Abstention: Member Welts

Motion carried.

C.                    Other – None.

ARTICLE 9312            PERSONNEL

A.                    Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

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

- Karin Prouty has been appointed half-time music teacher at Becket Washington, Berkshire Trail, and Craneville Schools, at step A-1 (pro-rated for half-time), effective August 30, 2007.
- Nancy Lamoureux, physical education teacher at Craneville School, initially appointed September 1, 1974, will retire on March 10, 2008.
- Sheri Lancaster has been transferred from a 3 hour/day paraprofessional position at Berkshire Trail Elementary School to a 3 hour/day paraprofessional position at Kittredge School (preschool), effective September 4, 2007.
- Hilary Dynok has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School (preschool), 3 hours/day, effective September 5, 2007.
- Dianne Garvey has been appointed school nurse at Becket Washington School, 6 hours/day, effective October 8, 2007. Mrs. Garvey is currently a full-time school nurse at Craneville School.
- Christine Buck has been transferred from a 3 hour/day assistant cook position at Nessacus Regional Middle School to a 3 hour/day assistant cook position at Wahconah Regional High School, effective September 13, 2007.
- Valerie Constantine has been appointed assistant cook at Nessacus Regional Middle School, 3 hours/day, effective September 12, 2007.
- Karen Fisher, family and consumer science teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, initially appointed August 30, 2007, has resigned effective September 17, 2007.

ARTICLE 9313            OLD BUSINESS

Member Farley, referring to a statement made during responses from the audience, asked if central office administrators did receive double digit pay increases, and when that occurred. The chair responded she would get that information for him.

ARTICLE 9314            NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER CHIVERS

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

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Request for Leave of Absence – Holly Hunter

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*That Holly Hunter, school nurse at Nessacus Regional Middle School, be granted twenty-nine (29) days unpaid leave for the completion of a practicum, as outlined in her attached letter and recommended by Nessacus Principal Gerard Dery and the Superintendent.*

In response to a question, the Superintendent stated Barbara Westwood and the .3 FTE district nurse would serve as substitutes during this leave. Mr. Stankiewicz reported pre-approval was granted for this course work. The first four days listed on the schedule were taken as one professional development day and three personal days. It was suggested in future that such requests be referred to Personnel Subcommittee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Abstention: Member Hopper.

Motion carried.

B. Bid Award – Craneville Windows

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee awards a bid for replacement of balance systems for 141 windows at Craneville School to the sole bidder, Window Repair Systems, Inc., in the total amount of \$21,009.00.*

Superintendent Harlan reported three vendors had been contacted; only one responded. A question was asked about the timeframe – the work will be done on work days after the students have gone. The administration is comfortable with the bid, which is within the amount of the approved bond.

Ayes: Thirteen members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9315 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

A. Remarks

Member Hopper attended his first open house at Nessacus. He was dismayed at the schedule for parent teacher conferences, causing as many as three nights out in a row for some families. He had also learned that computers at Craneville keep crashing and students are not using the lab. The Superintendent will report back on this concern at a later meeting.

Member Goddard reminded Committee members that all schools will honor special appointments for parents who are unable to attend the parent teacher conference night/afternoon.

Regarding the computers at Craneville, Member Les stated that Technology Coordinator Rick White has a great deal of work.

B. Level 3 Grievance Hearing

Chair Carroll-Lombardi stated she had a step 3 grievance, filed by the Central Berkshire Teachers Association regarding the dismissal of elementary art teacher Misha Forrester. The Association requested a private grievance session. She noted the Committee would reconvene the public meeting at the close of the grievance session.

Member Welts recused himself, stating Ms. Forrester is a personal friend, and left the meeting prior to the beginning of the grievance session.

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To go into executive session at 8:45 p.m. in accordance with MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B, 3. "To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation...including the resolution of grievances pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement.*

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Bantjes, J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley, French, Goddard, Gordon, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Les, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

The Chair recognized Member French, who came to the Committee in December of 1998 and has resigned effective September 28, 2007. Mr. French served as Chair of the Personnel Subcommittee and sat on the bargaining teams for many negotiations. The Chair will miss him and all he has done for the Committee and the district. Other members stated it had been a pleasure to work with him. Mr. French thanked the Committee for their comments.

MOVED BY MEMBER HOPPER, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.