

July 25, 2012

A meeting of the Wareham School Committee was held on Wednesday, July 25, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the Wareham Middle School Auditorium. Present were Geoff Swett, Kenny Fontes, Cliff Sylvia, Michael Flaherty, and Rhonda Veugen as well as Superintendent Dr. Rabinovitch, and recording secretary, Mrs. Ruiz.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Swett at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Brian Fitzgerald, teacher and President of the WEA, thanked the school committee for its leadership ensuring that questions were placed on the ballot and he thanked the community for voting to support education.

GOOD NEWS

Minutes of the Meeting

The following changes were made to the minutes:

- Page 1 under Procedure to Approve Schedule of Bills Payable – last sentence of 1st paragraph change “would” to “could” and “two members” to “one member”.
- Page 1 under Any other business change “\$760,000” to “\$780,000”.

Mrs. Veugen moved to approve the minutes of July 11, 2012, as amended. Mr. Fontes seconded the motion.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain - 1 (Dr. Sylvia)

School Committee Reports

None

Superintendent's Report

- Student/Teacher Ratio – Dr. Rabinovitch explained the data reported on the DESE website of a 12.8 to 1 student/teacher ratio. The October 1st student enrollment (approximately 3,000) was divided by the total number of teachers (regular, special education, instructional leaders and interventionists). He provided a comparison sheet listing neighboring communities and also had a breakout by program area with % of special education teachers. It was noted that our five primary schools are operating at a much higher ratio than other districts.
- Foreign Exchange Student – Dr. Rabinovitch informed the committee that he was approving the recommendation of Principal Palladino to allow Yuliya Valoshyn from the Ukraine to attend WHS for 2012-13 school year.

Global Education Team – Trip to Cape Verde

Ms. Miranda explained the history of Global Education in Wareham and our partnership with Cape Verde. Mr. St. Julien reviewed the Student Trip to be taken April 12-19, 2013 for 12-15 students with approximately 5 adult chaperones, the Motivation, the Goals, the Schedule and the Application process. The students will be ambassadors for Wareham and be required to conduct a Student Community Project.

Ms. Osborn shared that the chaperones are all staff members and that the global team students are making a float for Cape Verde festival. There will also be chaperones from Cape Verde to assisting while on the island.

Mr. Fitzgerald explained the cost of trip including the time involved in obtaining an American passport to receive a single entry visa. The staff chaperones will be paying their own way. Total cost up to \$250 for paperwork and the trip \$1,500 with a payment schedule Sept/Nov/Jan.

Dr. Sylvia moved to approve the trip as presented, seconded by Mrs. Veugen.

VOTE: yea – 5; nay – 0; abstain - 0

Transportation

- **End of Year Report** – Mr. Tatro, Transportation Manager, gave a summary of the FY12 Transportation Department. Highlights included:
 - improved preventative maintenance program
 - staffing adequate for our needs
 - budget was underfunded by \$313,980
 - aging fleet
 - unfunded mandate for homeless students \$167,000
 - increase monitors \$90,000
 - increase in fuel costs \$34,000
 - cost for Regular education (2600 pupils) \$814,000
 - cost for Special Needs/Out of District/Homeless \$860,000 (350 pupils)
 - We were budgeted less than the previous fiscal year and less this year.
 - Equipment continues to present challenges
 - Need to have a replacement strategy

Dr. Rabinovitch reported that the McKinley Vento will be providing approximately \$125,000 to Wareham. We will be asking for these funds to be added to our Non Net School transportation budget at the October Town Meeting.

Chair Swett stated that we need to use the revolving fund, McKinley Vento monies and half of the meals tax along with finding other savings or fees to run the transportation department on a break even basis. There also will be additional Ch. 70 funds coming to the Town which we need to fight for in October.

Dr. Rabinovitch explained that this FY12 deficit was covered through using the revolving account \$250,000 and another \$70,000 from the School Choice revolving account.

Mr. Flaherty disagreed with using these choice funds to make up the deficit and stated that the school department should have gone before town meeting. He wants this committee to see if using choice funds was legal.

- **Proposal to Reduce Services** – Mr. Tatro presented a proposal to eliminate all regular transportation for Grade 9-12 students with waiver exceptions; take 10 buses off the road for a savings in maintenance and fuel; use 13 drivers on a three tier system; a savings of \$20,000 without mid day K; and charge a \$75 bus fee.

There was a discussion by the School Committee on the proposal.

Chair Swett stated that he was asked to look into a hybrid solution whereby privatizing am/pm runs and keeping the sped, homeless, and athletics. Using a current private cost of \$300 per day including fuel x 23 buses would cost us over what we are spending now. We have an obligation to transport K-6 students.

Dr. Sylvia stressed the committee's moral responsibility to keep our kids safe and fiduciary responsibility. He suggested fighting for what we want at town meeting in October and submitting a supplementary budget. He also would like a position statement from the Board of Selectmen on transportation.

Mr. Fontes stated that we have proven we can operate the transportation cheaper than privatizing. With no transportation provided for Grades 9-12 students, we need to be prepared for kids not going to school. He did not wish to go forward with any more committees for transportation.

Mr. Flaherty agreed with fighting for either an out source or supplemental budget and let town meeting decide.

Dr. Rabinovitch told the committee that he must have a decision by our next meeting August 8th and that we cannot operate a budget knowing it will be in deficit. Chair Swett has reconvened the Action Committee, which is meeting next Tuesday night.

Mrs. Veugen believed that all options have not been explored i.e., volunteer bus drivers; working with GATRA ride shares, charging fees across the board.

Dr. Rabinovitch explained that 50% of our students are on free/reduced lunch and it is illegal to charge them for transportation. That leaves 1,500 students of which about 20% are special needs and cannot be charged. We cannot charge K-6 students who are farther than 2 miles away from school by law. This leaves 1,000 students to be charged. He expressed that he was against charging fees.

Chair Swett asked for a motion to act on the proposal submitted by the Transportation Manager in order to function not operating on a deficit for FY'13. No motion.

He asked to post a workshop meeting for 6:00 p.m. on August 1st at WMS Library to discuss Transportation Services.

Approval of 2012-13 District Handbook

Mrs. Rotella had provided the committee with the entire handbook in draft form and a revision sheet. She reviewed the revisions including updates to comply with the law, wording changes and standards of dress for staff which is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

Dr. Sylvia moved to approve the changes to the District Handbook for 2012-2013, seconded by Mr. Flaherty.

VOTE: yea – 5; nay – 0; abstain - 0

Procedure to Approve Schedule of Bills Payable

Chair Swett stated that it is possible to designate one person which can be a non member to approve the bills. We are currently operating under status quo with three school committee members' signatures.

Ms. Miranda recommended designating three committee members, any one of which who can, on a rotating basis, come in to sign the schedules.

Mr. Fontes moved that the Chair, or his designees, which are the other members of the committee, sign the warrants, seconded by Dr. Sylvia

Mr. Flaherty believes that this is a willful abdication of our fiduciary obligation and we should have three committee signatures on the warrants.

Mr. Fontes withdrew his motion and Dr. Sylvia, his second.

Dr. Sylvia moved to continue the practice of requesting three committee signatures on all warrants, and if three signatures are not present before the deadline, the Chair, or his designee, would sign.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay -1(Mr. Flaherty); abstain - 0

Acceptance of Gifts

- \$15,000 donation from Georgia Decas Chamberlain Trust to the John W. Decas School Mr. Fontes moved to accept the gift, seconded by Dr. Sylvia.

VOTE: yea – 5; nay – 0; abstain - 0

- \$50 donation from Dunkin Donuts the Minot Forest School Gr.5 Yearbook Mr. Fontes moved to accept the gift, seconded by Dr. Sylvia.

VOTE: yea – 5; nay – 0; abstain - 0

Any other business

Dr. Sylvia stated that he was not at last meeting and for the record he was not in favor of new superintendent evaluation instrument.

Mr. Flaherty asked that at the August 8th meeting the committee consider having the public speak on the budget during the committee's discussion.

Chair Swett asked place this item to allow full discussion on public participation on the August 1st agenda.

Mr. Flaherty asked about giving out student information upon request from anyone.

Dr. Rabinovitch stated that a parent organization requested student information and it is legal. We will have a letter in September for parents to opt out and it is in the Handbook.

Mr. Fontes moved to adjourn, seconded by Dr. Sylvia.

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____

List of documents:

Student/Teacher Ratio Data
Global Education Team Trip Information
FY12 Year in Review – Transportation Department
Savings Plan for Transportation FY12 to FY13
Revisions to District Handbook for FY2012
DRAFT District Handbook 2012-2013
Email New FY2013 Accounts Payable and Procurement Policies

