

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee
Regular Meeting

Thursday, March 6, 2008

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Nessacus Regional Middle School, Dalton, MA on Thursday, March 6, 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, Gordon, Grallert, Harvey, Henderson, Hopper, Morton, Welts, Yates, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: Members Farley and Les.

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

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

ARTICLE 9395 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

Dalton Police Chief John Bartels asked if a determination had been made regarding the choice between a school resource officer and a dean of students at Wahconah. He asked that he be a part of the discussion regarding that determination. Superintendent Harlan stated the decision would not be made until a budget was in place; however, she has recommended a dean of students to replace the current SRO. Chief Bartels expressed his hope that the budget would allow for both positions.

Wahconah Assistant Principal Martin Phillips publicly thanked Chief Bartels, the Dalton fire department, central office administrators, and Nessacus administration and staff including the cafeteria personnel for their assistance with the March 3rd evacuation of Wahconah.

ARTICLE 9396 STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Wahconah Report

Wahconah senior Tom Bartels reported on the success of the winter sports teams, the current extra curricular activities, the water problems in the gymnasium, and the orderly evacuation during the recent bomb scare. He asked that the path between the high school and middle school be kept open during the winter and that students be made aware of alternative options if both Wahconah and Nessacus were in crisis at the same time. He also noted the poor condition of the Wahconah driveway and parking lot and invited the Committee to visit upper A corridor which has been repainted by the National Honor Society.

B. Delegates to Boys State and Girls State

Member Bantjes read the following lists: delegates to Boys State at Stonehill College in June are Mason Bushway, James Henderson, Thomas Langendorf, Andrew Klem, and alternate Jacob Defoe; delegates to Girls State at Westfield State College in June are Kathryn Reed, Kimberly Kirchner, Jessica Brandi, Venice Sacco, and alternate Elizabeth Darroch.

ARTICLE 9397 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 7, 2008

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 7, 2008, as printed.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 14, 2008

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 14, 2008, as printed.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9398 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

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

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

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$228,369.84	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$313,558.83</u>	
		\$541,928.67
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 - Interest		\$2,634.43
RAN's		\$500,000.00

Interest on Temporary Loans	\$3,027.40
Short-Term Bond Supplies	<u>\$13,632.00</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$1,581,290.72
Operating Expenses lowered; final four items added; warrant total unchanged.	

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

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-32, in the total amount of \$776,171.07, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-32, dated February 21, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$482,208.33
Craneville Homework Revolving	\$323.74
School Lunch	\$14,692.01
Federal Funds	<u>\$40,343.46</u>
Sub-total	\$537,567.54
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$5,925.77</u>
Total Payroll	\$543,493.31
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$232,677.76</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$776,171.07

Ayes: Nine members.
 Nays: None.
 Abstentions: Members Hopper, Morton, and Welts.
 Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-33, in the total amount of \$555,472.35, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-33, dated February 28, 2008 (Previously signed)

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$140,369.21
Insurance Payment	<u>\$309,011.96</u>
	\$449,381.17
Transfers	\$64,526.53
Federal Funds	\$9,719.92
Circuit Breaker	\$3,647.36
School Lunch	\$23,554.87
Athletic Independent Games	\$2,467.00
WRHS Swimming Revolving	\$1,005.00
WRHS Nordic Skiing Revolving	\$592.50
WRHS Boys' Basketball Revolving	\$407.00
WRHS Girls' Basketball Revolving	\$356.00
WRHS Hockey Revolving	<u>(\$185.00)</u>

TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE \$555,472.35

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

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-33B, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-33B

Accounts Payable

March 6, 2008 - Additional Special Needs Teacher Retirement	\$909.00
March 6, 2008 - Title I Teacher Retirement	\$2,736.00
March 6, 2008 - Title II-A Teacher Retirement	\$2,442.00

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

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

Warrant No. 2008-34, dated March 6, 2008

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$484,920.14
Berkshire Trail Preschool Revolving	\$1,796.23
Craneville Homework Revolving	\$161.88
School Lunch	\$9,862.53
Federal Funds	<u>\$32,699.21</u>
Sub-total	\$529,439.99
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$5,683.33</u>
Total Payroll	\$535,123.32
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$129,016.63</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$664,139.95

Ayes: Nine members.
 Nays: None.
 Abstentions: Members Hopper, Morton, and Welts.
 Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

To approve Warrant No. 2008-35, in the total amount of \$1,806, 891.63, as printed.

Warrant No. 2008-35, dated March 13, 2008

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$263,896.40	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$706.18</u>	
		\$264,602.58
Transfers		\$162.86
Federal Funds		\$7,398.90

Circuit Breaker	\$6,448.72
School Lunch	\$5,032.71
Athletic Independent Games	\$3,276.93
WRHS Student Activity Fund	\$2,058.10
WRHS Cross Country Revolving	\$300.00
WRHS Swimming Revolving	\$302.52
WRHS Boys' Track Revolving	\$150.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Berkshire Trail	\$5,971.25
Maturing Debt - Principal Kittredge	\$250,000.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Kittredge	\$68,768.13
Maturing Debt - Principal Nessacus	\$805,000.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Nessacus	\$239,487.50
Maturing Debt - Principal Wahconah	\$100,000.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Wahconah	\$4,550.00
Short-Term Debt - Principal	\$40,747.00
Short-Term Debt - Interest	<u>\$2,634.43</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	\$1,806,891.63

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9399 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

Chair Carroll-Lombardi reminded School Committee members of the upcoming meeting of the Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee on March 12th at 7:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet was circulated and a room at Wahconah will be selected based on estimated attendance. The meeting is open to the public.

The Chair is working on an article for April school newsletters, encouraging parents to vote on the FY-09 budget.

The Chair is authorized to appoint special committees for specific purposes and she is looking for interested persons to begin writing legislators on various issues concerning the district. Member Hopper suggested that the Committee plan a meeting with local legislators to discuss district needs.

B. Annual Town Meeting Dates

Committee members were given the following list of town meeting dates and times:

Cummington (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 9400 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Education

Member J. Chivers reported he is planning a joint meeting with finance subcommittee; that date is not set.

2. Finance

a. Health Insurance Contribution Rates for Retirees

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That effective July 1, 2008 the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee sets the following health insurance contribution rates for retirees who retired January 1, 1994 or later, as recommended by the finance subcommittee:

*HMO and Medex @ fifteen (15)%
POS @ twenty (20)%
PPO @ twenty-two (22)%
Master Medical @ fifty (50)%*

Ayes: Eleven members.

Nays: Member Hopper.

Motion carried.

b. Final FY-2009 Budget Adoption

Member L. Chivers reviewed the final budget adoption document, pointing out the differences from FY-08. She expressed her appreciation to members of the finance subcommittee, stating she has enjoyed working with Bob Tensel.

WHEREAS, the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee on February 7, 2008 adopted a tentative gross operating budget for FY-2009 in the amount of \$25,689,851, it was

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the School Committee adopts a final gross operating budget for FY-2009 in the amount of \$25,089,909.

Member Henderson distributed an assessment she had prepared comparing revenues and expenses by school and town. She stated she could not support the budget as recommended, because she believed Wahconah students were receiving \$800,000 less than the revenues allotted through the foundation budget. The superintendent read the average class sizes at the high school for the second semester, which ranged from a low of 5.5 in reading to a high of 22.5 in science and social studies, and 49 in physical education. Several members questioned Member Henderson's assessment and backup figures included in the handout she presented.

Member J. Chivers suggested the gross budget be increased by \$1M; Member Hopper felt continuous cuts have never allowed the district to bounce back.

Committee members continued to discuss the final budget, including the effect early payment of the state portion of the Kittredge bond may have on this year's capital budget. Those figures will not be known until mid-May; the capital portion for Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, and Windsor will be adjusted if necessary.

Ayes: Ten members, including Chair Carroll-Lombardi.

Nays: Members J. Chivers, Henderson and Hopper.
Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee adopts a final anticipated revenue budget for FY-2009 in the amount of \$10,826,966.

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

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee adopts a final net operating budget for FY-2009 in the amount of \$14,262,943.

Ayes: Eleven members voting.
Nays: Member Henderson.
Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee adopts a final net capital budget for FY-2009 in the amount of \$674,807.

Business Manager Tensel described the bonding process. He explained when bonds are sold at less than anticipated costs the premium is placed into a debt account. The recent audit recommends that the amounts left in the district's debt accounts be apportioned back to the towns. This one-time payment equals \$270,969 and is reflected in the reduced FY-09 capital assessments to the towns.

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

The Chair thanked Laurie Chivers and the finance subcommittee members for their work.

3. Policy Review

Member Bantjes stated a subcommittee meeting would be scheduled in the near future.

4. Personnel

No report.

B. Others

1. Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee

The Chair introduced Attorney Brian LeBlanc of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey, and Lehane and project consultant Paul Schroeder, who were available to answer various questions. Discussion points included:

- The need to follow MSBA regulations on building committees
- The need to structure the project so that the towns will approve it

- Agreement to go forward with the science lab portion of the project
- Should separate votes be taken on immediate needs and the engineering studies
- The fact that state funding for Wahconah is likely ten years away
- The timing for bids on the science lab
- Grant availability
- Timeline for safety and security projects
- Skylight issues/repairs
- Whether to bring forward the total \$3.4 million and do the entire project all at once
- The fact that the cost of replacement/renovation is \$57,000,000
- The timing of the school committee vote to allow the towns to vote within the 60-day window
- The parameters for a Building Committee

Attorney LeBlanc will research the following questions: Is the Committee required to take separate votes on the capital projects and the engineering studies? Will the Committee be required to begin the engineering studies within one year of the bond? Would the Committee be required to follow the MSBA regulations on Building Committees in order to be eligible for future funding from that agency?

The Committee took a brief recess.

ARTICLE 9401 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

The Superintendent commended the cafeteria staffs at both Nessacus and Wahconah for managing a difficult lunch schedule during the recent bomb scare. She cited the following workers for their attitude and professionalism: Jean Drosehn, Mary Jo Barrett, Joanne Main, Bonnie Fahey, Valerie Constantine, Grace Lacy, Dale Suppappola, Lorinda Smith, Barbara Steele, Barbara Moynihan, Christine Buck, Kathie Caffrey, Karman Lai, Judy MacLeod, Peggy Pomeroy, Dawn Warner, and food services director Rose Goddard.

Dr. Harlan distributed a ten-year state and town revenue cycle. She also reported a recent survey of outgoing school choice students shows choice based primarily on the schools being closer to the children's homes, parents' work sites, and day care. She reviewed recent class size trends, stating that assessments to towns are based on the averages of wealth and property tax as determined by the state formula.

The Superintendent reported on activities and accomplishments at the individual schools and noted that Acting Special Services Director Connie West is organizing training in inclusion and assessment strategies for March 14th. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, school committee members, principals, special needs teachers and Mrs. Dowling will attend.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER YATES

To continue the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m.

Ayes: Eleven members.

Nays: Member Hopper.

Motion carried.

Superintendent Harlan is recommending that several School Committee meetings be held in towns outside of Dalton during the next several months. A letter has been sent to each district town, asking officials to set dates for the Superintendent to visit and present the adopted budget for FY-09.

Dr. Harlan offered the following statistics in response to a request for salary information. In 2005-06 eight teachers received raises between 11.91% and 17.61%; in 2006-07 sixteen teachers received raises between 11.28% and 19.29%; in 2007-08, three teachers received raises between 13.47% and 15.87%; over that three-year period, 56 teachers received between 10.26% and 30.64% and all but three teachers received over 9.26% during the life of the 04-07 contract. This report was requested by a school committee member to clarify the various raises across the district.

Paraprofessional increases from step 1 to step 2 have equaled 19.94%; those receiving a highly qualified increase of 3% have equaled 23.57%. In addition, paraprofessionals receive stipends of 5% for diapering and 5% for PDP achievement.

The GIC ad hoc committee membership has been completed. Member Welts, Superintendent Harlan, Assistant Superintendent Jim Stankiewicz, Business Managers Bob Tensel and Marge Balzotti, Lorinda Smith, Mike Daniels, Joanne Dowling, and Tracey Goodrich will serve.

B. Recommendations

1. Locations of Upcoming Meetings

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HENDERSON

BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee sets the following locations for regular meetings through August 2008:

<i>April 10, 2008</i>	<i>Kittredge School</i>
<i>April 24, 2008</i>	<i>Craneville School</i>
<i>May 8, 2008</i>	<i>Becket Washington School</i>
<i>May 22, 2008</i>	<i>Wahconah Regional High School</i>
<i>June 12, 2008</i>	<i>Berkshire Trail Elementary School</i>
<i>June 26, 2008</i>	<i>Kittredge School</i>
<i>July 24, 2008</i>	<i>Becket Washington School</i>
<i>August 28, 2008</i>	<i>Berkshire Trail Elementary School</i>

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Other

None.

ARTICLE 9402 PERSONNEL

A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

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

- Paul Durfee, school lunch van driver, initially appointed January 13, 2005, has resigned effective March 14, 2008.
- Michael Marchetti, paraprofessional at Wahconah Regional High School, initially appointed February 12, 2007, has resigned effective March 5, 2008.
- Hilary Dynok has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, 6 hours/day, effective February 25, 2008. (Miss Dynok formerly held a 3-hour/day position at Berkshire Trail.)
- Mary Holloway has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, 3 hours/day, effective February 26, 2008.

- Rosemary Morton has been appointed Title I paraprofessional at Craneville School, 3 hours/day, effective March 3, 2008, through the end of the current school year only.
- Jessica Passetto has been appointed Title I paraprofessional at Craneville School, 3 hours/day, effective March 5, 2008.

ARTICLE 9403 OLD BUSINESS

A. Report on Salary Increase History

This item was discussed under Superintendent's Reports.

ARTICLE 9404 NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS

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

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

A. Authorization for Treasurer to Provide for Sale and Issuance of Bonds

MOVED BY MEMBER L. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

That, in order to reduce interest costs, the Treasurer is authorized to provide for the sale and issuance of bonds under G.L. c.44, Sec. 21A to refund all or any portion of the remaining principal of and redemption premium and interest on any of the District's outstanding general obligation bonds; that no bonds shall be issued under this vote unless and until the final interest rate(s) and other terms of refunding bonds are approved by the School Committee, as recommended by the finance subcommittee.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9405 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER GORDON

To adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.