

Central Berkshire Regional School Committee

Regular Meeting

Thursday, September 13, 2007

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held at Becket Washington School, Becket, MA on Thursday, September 13, 2007, was called to order by Chair Susan Carroll-Lombardi at 7:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Bantjes (7:08 p.m.), J. Chivers, L. Chivers, Farley, French, Goddard, Gordon, Henderson, Hopper (7:06 p.m.), Les, Shugrue (7:08 p.m.), Welts, and Carroll-Lombardi.

Absent: Member Harvey.

Also Present: Superintendent Donna Harlan, Assistant Superintendent James Stankiewicz, Business Manager Robert Tensel, 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 9294      RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

None.

ARTICLE 9295      STUDENT AFFAIRS

A.                  Wahconah Report

Wahconah Principal James Conro introduced four students who had addressed the faculty at the opening day meeting. Danae Lagoy, Caitlin O’Handley, James Parkington, and Evan Valenti read their speeches on teachers and learning experiences. Mr. Conro noted all four students were excellent representatives of Wahconah and the Class of 2008 and that the school is looking forward to another wonderful year. The Chair thanked the students and Mr. Conro.

ARTICLE 9296      SECRETARY’S REPORT

A.                  Minutes of Regular Meeting of August 23, 2007

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 23, 2007, as printed.*

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9297      FINANCIAL REPORT

A.                  Warrants

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve Warrant No. 2008-09, in the total amount of \$603,408.92, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-09, dated September 6, 2007

PAYROLL

Operating Expenses	\$439,545.88
School Lunch	\$2,075.62
Federal Funds	<u>\$33,522.47</u>
Sub-total	\$475,143.97
FICA (Operating)	<u>\$4,989.15</u>
Total Payroll	\$480,133.12
Transfers (Deductions)	<u>\$123,275.80</u>
TOTAL PAYROLL & DEDUCTIONS	\$603,408.92

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: Members Hopper and Welts.

Motion carried.

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER BANTJES

*To approve Warrant No. 2008-10, in the total amount of \$363,377.13, as printed.*

Warrant No. 2008-10, dated September 13, 2007

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses

Accounts Payable	\$219,541.21	
Insurance Payment	<u>\$992.63</u>	
		\$220,533.84
Transfers		\$163.03
Federal Funds		\$30,302.42
School Lunch		\$17.85
WRHS Student Activity Fund		\$3,602.86
WRHS Football		\$236.00
Berkshire Taconic Foundation		\$120.00
Short Term Bond		\$35,083.00
Maturing Debt - Interest Kittredge		\$68,768.13
Maturing Debt - Interest WRHS		<u>\$4,550.00</u>
TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		\$363,377.13

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9298 COMMUNICATIONS

A. Report of the Chair

1. Seven Town Advisory Committee

The Chair reported on a meeting of the Seven Town Advisory Committee on August 30<sup>th</sup> at Nessacus Regional Middle School. There was a small turnout of town officials to hear a report on the Wahconah Building Needs Study Committee by its Chair James Huebner. Business Manager Tensel and Finance Subcommittee Chair L. Chivers presented transportation budgets and actuals, showing revenues and past givebacks to the towns. The total transportation costs last year were higher than budget due to unexpected special education transportation costs. The group also discussed the absence of any reference to preschools in the regional agreement, and received a request that the district consider a different way of apportioning assessments to the towns. A community member will bring a proposal to the next seven town meeting for revising the method of assessment, although a meeting will not be scheduled until January. Superintendent Harlan shared the district improvement plan and goals; the advisory committee would like periodic updates on their progress.

## 2. School Committee Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation was reviewed item by item, with discussion primarily on those sections where there was disagreement among the respondents. The Chair noted it was the first time the committee had participated in a self-evaluation and a number of suggestions were referred to the administration and subcommittees. A legal opinion will be sought regarding the publishing of the Superintendent's evaluation. Following lengthy discussion with at least half of the evaluation yet to be reviewed, the following motion was put forward.

MOVED BY MEMBER HENDERSON, SECONDED BY MEMBER FARLEY

*That the Committee agrees on a stopping place, and continue with the agenda.*

Ayes: Members Bantjes, Farley, Goddard, and Henderson.

Nays: Eight members.

Motion defeated.

Additional discussion included the suggestion of a long range task force, which Member Welts agreed to look into; additional MASC training to be scheduled between now and December; design and format of the budget documents; more newsletter articles by Committee members; oversight of press releases; and quarterly reports on a variety of data.

### B. Vacancy – Cummington Representative

There have been no applicants and the deadline will be extended.

### C. Official Delegate – MASC/MASS Joint Conference

The Committee will consider an official delegate at its next meeting. Superintendent Harlan noted a representative may attend the assembly voting on Wednesday at no cost to the district.

## ARTICLE 9299 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Reports

#### 1. Education

No report. A meeting has been scheduled for September 24, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the central office.

#### 2. Finance

Member L. Chivers reported retirees were invited to the Finance Subcommittee meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup>. There was a lot of response and many concerns were expressed. Retirees will be invited to another meeting. It was suggested the district, at the next meeting, should be better prepared, include an agenda in the invitation and make a formal presentation on the changes. Committee members expressed the following concerns: Section 18 has already been adopted by the Committee; the Committee must do what is best for the entire district; the decision on percentages should be made prior to discussion; retiree benefits are not negotiable.

Regarding the original letter to retirees announcing the September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, Superintendent Harlan stated the text had been designed by Central Office administrators and the Finance Subcommittee Chair. It was sent out over Chair Carroll-Lombardi's signature. That was a mistake, for which she apologized to Ms. Carroll-Lombardi.

Member Hopper asked about the cost of the bus stop information letters to parents. The business manager will get that information. There were several positive comments regarding the change in the method of notification.

### 3. Policy Review

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

Member Bantjes reviewed the changes to the transportation policy.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

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

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Member Bantjes reviewed the new policy for class funds.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

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

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Member Bantjes noted the new policy will address a recent request.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER HOPPER

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

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. Personnel

There was no report; no meeting is scheduled.

#### B. Others

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

The Chair stated several questions have been asked of her that she does not feel qualified to answer. Mr. Tensel is working with an attorney to better understand the new building regulations. Dalton Selectman William Chabot was recognized by the Chair and asked the Committee for a timeline on bringing forward a request for bonding to the town of Dalton. The district has received legal advice that it must go through a designer selection process; our current policy is outdated and must be replaced. Policy Review will look at it on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Chabot stated the town would like to schedule a special meeting for consideration of several agenda items, taking into consideration the 60-day requirement for a vote on bonding.

Superintendent Harlan stated the need for a project manager, possibly a consultant. The subject will be placed on the agenda for September 27<sup>th</sup>. Questions about regulations will be referred to Attorney Brian LeBlanc (an associate of Joe Bartulis). It may be possible to waive the second reading of a new policy to speed up the process. The Chair will keep Mr. Chabot updated.

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

Member Henderson reported on the most recent meeting. Science department chair Shaun Therrien brought a detailed plan for the science labs with an estimated cost of \$73,000. The committee hopes to put the engineering together for that plan. She reported Wahconah's listed value on the tax rolls is \$10,337,400. Member Henderson noted there are many good workers and thinkers on the needs study committee.

### ARTICLE 9300 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Reports

##### 1. Open House Schedules

The Committee received the following schedule of open houses and parent-teacher conferences. The Superintendent stated that both Wahconah dates would be open to all parents/guardians.

Becket Washington School, Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Kittredge School, Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Craneville School, Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Berkshire Trail Elementary School, Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Nessacus Regional Middle School, Tuesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Wahconah Regional High School will hold parent teacher conferences on November 14, 2007 and March 12, 2008, in the evening.

All schools will hold parent teacher conferences on the afternoon of November 15<sup>th</sup> and one evening during that week.

## 2. Opening Day Attendance

Opening day attendance numbers for 2007 and 2006 were provided to Committee members. An error in the total number of students for 2007 was noted. A revised document will be provided.

The Committee talked about the numbers as presented, including the student-teacher ratios at various grade levels at the middle and elementary schools. The superintendent will report on the concerns expressed at the next meeting. Member Les was pleased to see the growth in the Becket Washington preschool; another member asked about the number of special education students in the Becket Washington and Berkshire Trail preschools.

### B. Recommendations

None.

### C. Other

Superintendent Harlan received several positive comments about the peanut issue at Craneville School. Dr. Kulberg and the Department of Education have been very helpful. The school will have two tables for student eating; there are seven students with allergies, three of those have life-threatening allergies. The school will remain nut-safe.

She reported on the initial meeting with State representatives for the district's CPR review. The visit, in the form of an audit, will take place during the week of December 3<sup>rd</sup> and will focus on special needs, civil rights, career and vocational technology, and ESL.

The monthly Nessacus newsletter is available on the Nessacus website. Anyone wishing that it be mailed to him/her should call Nessacus directly.

The rural schools pothole money, for which the district has made two grant applications, is yet to be awarded. A study on small rural schools will be done by the University of Massachusetts.

Responding to a question from Member Bantjes, Dr. Harlan stated there are many students with allergies in our schools but only two allergies are life-threatening – peanuts and bee/hornet stings. Member Hopper praised the Superintendent for her patience at the Craneville PTO meeting on Monday evening.

## ARTICLE 9301 PERSONNEL

### A. Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

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

- Kathleen Marran, assistant cafeteria cook at Nessacus Regional Middle School, initially appointed March 20, 2006, has resigned effective August 21, 2007.
- Kelly Genzabella, assistant cafeteria cook at Craneville School, initially appointed November 20, 2006, has resigned effective August 2, 2007.
- Jennifer Smith, paraprofessional at Craneville School, initially appointed December 14, 2006, has resigned effective August 15, 2007.
- Dawn Hall has been appointed paraprofessional, 3 hours/day (Title I funded) at Craneville School, effective August 30, 2007.

- Beth Psutka has been appointed paraprofessional, 3 hours/day (Title I funded) at Craneville School, effective August 30, 2007.
- Jodi Alpert has been appointed paraprofessional, 3 hours/day at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, effective September 4, 2007. (This appointment brings her assignment to 6 hours/day.)
- Heather LaFogg has been appointed paraprofessional at Nessacus Regional Middle School, 6 hours/day, effective August 30, 2007.
- Kathleen Marran has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, 3 hours/day, effective August 30, 2007.
- Judith Dorr has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, 3 hours/day, effective August 30, 2007.
- Angela Golembeski has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, 2 hours/day (Title I funded), effective August 31, 2007.
- Sandra Powers has been appointed paraprofessional at Berkshire Trail Elementary School, 3 hours/day (Title I funded), effective August 31, 2007.
- Cynthia Tucker has been appointed paraprofessional at Craneville School, 3 hours/day, effective September 4, 2007.
- Beth O'Connor has been appointed paraprofessional at Craneville School, 4.5 hours/day, effective September 4, 2007.
- Peggy Ross has been appointed 6<sup>th</sup> grade math/reading teacher at Nessacus Middle School, effective August 30, 2007, at step A-4.
- Dale Finnegan-Graham has been appointed special education teacher at Becket Washington School, effective August 30, 2007, at step A-2.
- Christopher Trager has been appointed mathematics teacher at Wahconah Regional High School, effective August 30, 2007, at step A-6.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*To move Article 9302, Old Business, to the end of the meeting.*

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9303      NEW BUSINESS

None.

ARTICLE 9304      REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair Carroll-Lombardi invited any interested member to join the Policy Review Subcommittee, noting the loss of Member Dextraze.

Member Les reported the closing of a section of Washington Mountain Road due to damage/safety issues. A large school bus is traveling on Lover's Lane, a dirt road, which may pose a concern in the winter. The administration will bring the concern to the bus company.

It was reported the district's website contains stale information.

Member Shugrue's children, who live on Washington Mountain Road, were picked up by a small bus after the first day; she was very happy with the bus stop notifications this year; she has found the Wahconah website to be not very user-friendly.

Member L. Chivers asked about the new schedule at Wahconah and Nessacus. Member Goddard responded the kids at Wahconah hate it, she loves it, and it is working well at Nessacus.

Member Farley asked how much it cost to have the bus routes published. Assistant Superintendent Stankiewicz will look it up and report at the next meeting.

Member Henderson reported she had covered a lot of new textbooks this year, calling it very good news.

MOVED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS, SECONDED BY MEMBER FRENCH

*To continue the meeting past 10:00 p.m.*

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 9302 OLD BUSINESS

MOVED BY MEMBER FRENCH, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

*To go into executive session at 10:01 p.m., in accordance with Chapter 39, Section 23B, 3, "to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining..."*

ROLL CALL

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

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Committee came out of executive session at 10:47 p.m.

MOVED BY MEMBER BANTJES, SECONDED BY MEMBER J. CHIVERS

To adjourn the meeting at 10:48 p.m.

Ayes: Twelve members voting.

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.