

**WILLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2015  
(Unofficial Until Board Approval)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Erika Wiecenski at the Town Office Building.

**PRESENT:** Erika Wiecenski, Michelle Cunningham, Ann Grosjean, Mark Jones, Barry Wallett  
Herb Arico, Superintendent David Harding

**ABSENT:** None

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

The Board of Education received the resignation of Board member Leo Mercado. Superintendent Harding shared a letter from the Sentinel party endorsing Mark Makuch to fill the Board vacancy.

**PRESENT TO SPEAK:**

None

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS:**

Superintendent Harding reviewed the quotes from EMCOR Services to survey HMS for \$6,000 and CES for \$7,500 which includes checking the condition of the electrical and mechanical systems, logging components indicating condition and recommendation for repairs or replacement with prioritization. They will also make minor repairs with in stock items such as belts. The funds would be transferred from the facilities salary account to the maintenance account to cover the costs. Superintendent requested a recommendation from the Board to proceed with the quoted surveys. Board stated funds are set aside and we need a foundation to be able to go forward so recommend proceeding with the surveys.

Board Chair inquired about the Board of Finance meeting attended by other members and Superintendent Harding. Superintendent handed out a copy of the latest budget packet that was given to the BOF at the meeting. He stated the meeting was well attended and the main discussion surrounded the MBR figure and ways to move money to get the BOE budget to the MBR amount. BOF says to cut the budget for a shared service for IT support and transfer that item to the town budget. A formal decision was not made but there was a discussion around roles and responsibilities of each Board.

**MOTION:** by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to add item 7B Discussion of the 2015-16 Budget to the agenda.

**VOTE:** All in Favor  
Motion Passed

Superintendent stated the snow days as of today has put the final day of school for students at June 18, 2015. He reviewed the process of calling a snow day or a delay. He speaks with public works and has to align with the Superintendents from Ashford and Mansfield and EO Smith. The parties go back and forth in the morning and each listen to the public works directors for their town on the condition of the roads. This process works for the most part but it is not perfect. He reviewed last Thursday stating that there was a morning delay, as recommended by public

works, due to black ice. The weather reports did not accurately reflect the amount of snow we received throughout the day. The snow accumulation was much greater than predicted.

Board Chair wanted to clarify that there is not any built in snow days to the calendar. The end date listed is the date, snow days are added on as they occur. There is not a set number of days till they start taking away vacation days. It is discussed and decisions made as needed. In the past or in other towns it may have occurred differently but to be clear snow days are added to the end of the year on the school calendar as they occur.

Superintendent stated that some people have said the call for snow cancellations or delays has been made too early, such as when it is called the night before. He believes when the confidence level is high of bad weather then parents appreciate the advance notice to make plans for their children ahead of time. Members agreed and thanked the Superintendent. Superintendent thanked the bus drivers for doing a great job.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Herb Arico, Liaison for EastConn stated they met today and will meet again on February 24, 2015.

**MOTION:** by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Mark Jones, to move Agenda Item 6A Fill Board Vacancy to after Old Business and before Present to Speak.

VOTE: All in Favor  
Motion Passed

Superintendent Harding noted that the Board can make a motion to seat Mark Makuch if he is not present. Board wanted to wait to hear from Mark Makuch before making a motion. Superintendent replied he had an email from Mark stating he was looking forward to being seated but the Board was concerned that he was not present yet and it was unusual that he did not communicate with any other members.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

**MOTION:** by Herb Arico, seconded by Michelle Cunningham, to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2015 Board meeting.

VOTE: Yes: H. Arico, B. Wallett, M. Jones, A. Grosjean, M. Cunningham,  
Abstain: E. Wiecenski  
Motion Passed

**MOTION:** by Michelle Cunningham, seconded by Ann Grosjean, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2015 Special Budget Workshop meeting.

VOTE: All in Favor  
Motion Passed

Member noted a typographical error in minutes under the motion before the dollar amount, the *pf* should be *of*.

**MOTION:** by Erika Wiecenski, seconded by Mark Jones, to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2015 Special Budget Workshop meeting.

VOTE: Yes: H. Arico, M. Jones, B. Wallett, E. Wiecenski  
Abstain: M. Cunningham, A. Grosjean  
Motion Passed

Members noted that Leo Mercado should be removed from the absent list because his resignation letter was received prior to that meeting. Also noted a minor grammatical error in the second sentence *Boards* should be *Board's*.

Members inquired about the Board minutes and packets only being emailed and no longer mailed out. Certain members requested paper mailings be sent to them. Also asked about presentation information being included in the packets sent when there is an outside presenter. Superintendent Harding responded that he will have packets mailed to those that requested them and will include the presentation information when it is provided by the presenters.

Superintendent noted there are not any transfers at this time.

Board decided to review committee assignments at the next meeting.

Board scheduled the retreat to work on the Board goal would be on March 2, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hall School Library.

MOTION: by Barry Wallett, seconded by Erika Wiecenski, to add item 7C Discussion of the process of adding Old Business items to the agenda.

VOTE: All in Favor  
Motion Passed

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Superintendent Harding requested that members refresh themselves with the booklet and power point and give him feedback and get ideas together so that everyone is ready for the retreat.

Board discussed the 2015-16 Budget and the Board of Finance meeting proposing a cut to the budget in order to meet MBR. Discussed the shared services between the town and the BOE where the funds for the shared services could be cut from the BOE budget and added to the Town budget instead to make the BOE budget able to meet the MBR figure. The computer services are shared by both the Town and BOE but currently are paid from the BOE budget. They were concerned that at this time the parties all agree on the moving of the funds and meeting MBR when possible but what happens when it is not possible.

Board discussed creating a policy or document to guide the decision for future years so that it does not adversely affect the BOE and/or the Town Budgets.

Members clarified that the BOF decides the amount to be cut but the BOE decides on what gets cut from the budget. Others made it clear that the BOF does not have to work with the BOE on the numbers and moving the funds but are trying to be cooperative and work together in order to maintain the budget asked for by the BOE without actually cutting funds but moving a cost to the town budget so that no one loses anything but the BOE can stay at the MBR. Board discussed the benefits of figuring out how to make things happen and be more efficient with resources and at the same time being concerned with moving monies to get to MBR. Members clarified that MBR was not part of the BOE discussions for the budget but was brought up by the BOF as a concern to meet this. The BOE had already voted on the budget and the BOF is asking for a cut to meet MBR Board recommended that Superintendent Harding meet with First Selectman

Mailhos and discuss the issue to work out an agreement to guide the costs and payments of shared services.

Board discussed the process of adding old business items to the agendas. Barry Wallett brought up five items that he wanted to be revisited on future agendas and Board discussed how to go about getting these items added each month. The enrollment number, status of healthcare liability, and status on the facilities will be reflected in the Superintendent report each meeting. The remaining topics of curriculum and direction of computer usage or any other old business items can be added to the agenda by letting the Superintendent know the week before the meeting. Any new business items need to be sent to the Board Chair to be added into the agenda.

Board Chair noted being concerned that none of the Board members had directly spoken to Mark Makuch, she is not opposed to the seating but the nominee is not present and the Board does not have the opportunity to speak with the candidate.

**MOTION:** by Barry Wallett, seconded by Ann Grosjean, to approve the seating of Mark Makuch as the Sentinel Party nominate to fill the vacant Board of Education seat.

**VOTE:** All in Favor  
Motion Passed

**PRESENT TO SPEAK:**

None

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

Members appreciate the Boards working cooperatively. Thanked the Superintendent and staff for the work on the budget, the public works department for clearing the roads and the schools and facilities for use both during the day and on weekends, the Superintendent for making the hard calls and the bus drivers for the bus situations stating it is a huge responsibility for the drivers. Board congratulated the Lady Falcons for making it into the semi-final basketball tournament.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Nichole Page  
Recording Secretary