



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Committee Meeting**

**MINUTES – January 8, 2009
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – CALLED TO ORDER: 7:35 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Ed Leonard, with the following School Committee members present:

1. Attendance:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Richard Allan | <input type="checkbox"/> Robert Dupuis |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susan Benedict | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charles Miller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Therese Salvadore | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Riendeau |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Brophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lee Wolanin |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ned Kelly | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Thomas Tashjian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timothy Williams | <input type="checkbox"/> Peggy Thompson |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Edward F. Leonard | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Wolfe |

2. Administration:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sue M. Gee | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susanne Musnicki |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clare Barnes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Newton |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Berlo | <input type="checkbox"/> Joan Paula |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Burnett | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Pellegrino |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Duval | <input type="checkbox"/> Debbie Pelley |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Martha Femino | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marilyn Tencza |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tracey Hippert | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan Williams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Anthony DiBenedetto | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Worthington |

3. QRTA Representative –
Student Representative –

4. News Media:
Worcester T&G – Jim Russell
Barre Gazette –Ellie Downer

5. Visitors/Faculty:

SECTION II: MINUTES

Voted: To accept and place on file the minutes of December 18, 2008, as amended to add “and accounts payable #11, 12 and 13”.	<u>Motion</u> NK	<u>2nd</u> LW	<u>For</u> 8	<u>Opp.</u>	<u>Abs.</u> 1
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SECTION III: WARRANTS/REPORTS

Payroll and accounts payable warrants # 14 were presented and signed.

SECTION IV: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**1. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:**

- Superintendent Gee stated that in the aftermath of the December 2008 ice storm, the Middle/High School has altered the semester dates at the school. The semester will now end on 1/23/09, with exams taking place on 1/22 and 1/23. The new semester begins on 1/26/09. [See motion #1 action below].
- The grade 3-6 electronic report cards were completed and the Superintendent thanked Pam Pothier and Amy and Don Lacharite for their efforts regarding the same.
- The Hardwick Youth Center has been eliminated due to budget cuts, however, the program was held at the Hardwick Elementary School and despite a bumpy start, has been running well.
- The holiday concerts at all schools were very nice. Hubbardston's rescheduled concert was taking place this night and the Ruggles Lane concert has been rescheduled to next Tuesday, 1/13/09.
- Emily Arsenault of Ruggles Lane was the winner of Senator Brewer's Christmas Card contest. Her photo appeared in area papers with Senator Brewer and her card design was sent to nearly 6,000 people on the Senator's Christmas card list.
- The Principals evaluations have been conducted by the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent stated that the district has used seven (7) snow days thus far, which now pushes the end date to June 25, 2009, [and June 26, 2009 for Hubbardston where a water pump failure caused that school only to lose an additional day]. This only provides for 2 additional days in the calendar year that may be used for snow cancellations. Area Superintendents have combined efforts to submit a letter to the Commissioner of Education requesting a waiver of the 180-day rule, and the group will have the opportunity to meet to discuss this in greater detail with the Commissioner next Tuesday. The Commissioner, however, did send a memo which crossed with the Superintendents' combined request in the mail, stating that he would not be granting any such waivers. It was noted that this district is in a better position than others, as the school year commenced before Labor Day. Many alternatives of making up the days were discussed, including changing the January 26, 2009 professional development day into a ½ day of school, thereby counting as one full day. Additionally, three (3) days could be reclaimed during April vacation, with a 4th possible for Hubbardston. Monday is a holiday, therefore that must remain in place by law. Taking part of April vacation would allow the parents, students and staff adequate time to alter plans accordingly. Thoughts have been given to the impact on attendance and the AYP rate, as well as to the students and teachers who are traveling to Spain and Barcelona, and the fact that substitutes would need to be hired to replace those teachers for the week. It was noted that we cannot "overlap" fiscal years, therefore we cannot go beyond June 30th. Additionally, we cannot extend the school days by any number of minutes, as this is a state law and new legislation would need to be enacted in order to change that law. Chairman Leonard suggested that the Superintendent send home letters to parents regarding possible options and request feedback regarding the same. From an educational perspective, the students are less productive in the hot summer months, after MCAS is completed, and families sometimes have other obligations on Saturdays. In addition, in another district previously, vacations were set for one in March, as opposed to separate February and April vacations, and the students and staff became extremely fatigued. This was not an ideal set-up. Chairman Leonard suggested setting a Central Office subcommittee meeting to consider the options. Mark Brophy stated that with presumably more snow days coming this winter, January 26, 2009 should be reinstated as a school day. [Please see motion action #2 below]. Bob Berlo had already lined up trainers for this date, they have been notified of change.

2. DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

Cheryl Duval asked Chairman Leonard to recognize Bill Burnett, Support Services Manager, to provide information regarding the FY10 oil bid. Mr. Burnett stated that there was no option to extend the contract for the FY09 oil, therefore a new bid was sought, and in looking at fixed prices, Mr. Burnett was able to get a bid of \$1.7926 per gallon for the FY10 year. Last year's price was \$211.95 per gallon, so a savings will be realized. With this newest bid, the district will have the option of extending the contract, similar to the bus contract. Motion was made to award the fuel bid [please see Motion Action #3 below for further details]. Ned Kelly asked about whether bus bids could be sought at this time, and Mr. Burnett indicated that this is year 1 of a 3 year contract, so the district is still bound by 2 years before any re-bidding can occur. There may be room, however, to advertise bids for field trips and athletic trips, that issue will be discussed in further detail in either February or March.

3. TEACHER ADVISORY: No representative was present.**SECTION V: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy indicated that a meeting would be set by the end of this month for this subcommittee to meet.
2. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING ADHOC SUBCOMMITTEE – Cheryl Wolfe stated that she would like to hold a short meeting immediately prior to another meeting this month. This meeting was scheduled for January 15, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

3. AUDIT/CENTRAL OFFICE SUBCOMMITTEE—Lee Wolanin would like to hold this subcommittee meeting on January 13, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of school calendar change discussion, but the Budget subcommittee meeting would need to be moved to 7:30 p.m. on that evening. Mark Brophy, Chair, agreed that that would be fine.
- Lee reported that two (2) teachers are seeking to retire this year with full compensation and are looking to waive the one (1) year written requirement notice, since in both instances, one is due to a medical reason and the other is due to unusual, extenuating circumstances. Lee went on to state that pursuant to Article 15, teachers with more than 10 years of service to the district are eligible to receive 1/10th of their maximum wages, two weeks after their final paycheck. If the waiver is granted, the employees would receive payment within 90 days of their final paycheck. When asked, Cheryl Duval confirmed that there is no budgetary implication associated with this, as anticipated possible retirement is budgeted for in the fiscal year prior. Discussion ensued about whether to go into executive session to discuss this further, however, Superintendent Gee stated that she has reviewed the circumstances and would recommend that the waivers be granted in both instances. With that knowledge, Chairman Leonard stated that he had spoken with Lee Wolanin about this and agreed that the individuals in question met the criteria for the waivers and he would also recommend granting the waivers. It would not be necessary to go into executive session because the individuals would simply be referred to as “the two individuals” and no further detailed information would be discussed. Lee Wolanin made a motion relative to this [please see Motion Action #4 below for details].
4. BARRE BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE – Lee Wolanin had nothing to report.
5. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy reported that a Budget Subcommittee meeting was held on November 18, 2008 and was attended by members of the district towns, members of the School Committee, the Budget Subcommittee, and the public. Discussion centered around the Governor’s budget cuts that will be announced next week. Districts and towns are being told to be creative and to realize that tough financial times are ahead.
- Mark Brophy also mentioned that several members had attended a public citizens audit committee meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2008 in CT and spoke about how the Quabbin district has a great number of checks and balances and oversight that takes place, and that he is glad to be part of this committee, in an excellent school system that is frugal and always does a great job with its finances, risk assessments and audits.
6. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy stated that he will be setting up a meeting of this subcommittee sometime after February 1, 2009.
7. POLICY, REVIEW AND REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE – Cheryl Wolfe made two motions relative to the work of this subcommittee. [Please see motion actions #5 and 6 below].
8. PLANTS & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE – Ned Kelly gave a report regarding damage following the December ice storm, and stated that New Braintree has experienced additional problems in the school. Representatives of the Selectboard, as well as Plants & Facilities Manager, Clare Barnes and other custodians were recently present when a representative of Royal Steam Cleaners came out to look at the damage. The Plants & Facilities staff has done a tremendous job in cleaning up the buildings quickly and assessing damage so that schools could re-open on time. School Committee Chair, Ed Leonard asked Melissa to send the custodial staff a letter of thanks on behalf of the School Committee. Ned Kelly asked if the district could bill the insurance company for the overtime worked by the custodians and School Committee Chair Ed Leonard asked that this be investigated further. Cheryl Duval agreed to contact the insurance adjuster regarding this inquiry.
- Ned Kelly also stated that a Request for Qualifications for Design Study has recently been put out to bid seeking to complete a design study for the High School glass atrium roof and skylights. At this point in time, 3 companies have expressed an interest in bidding. On January 30, 2009, a bid selection would be made, and then the next part of the bid, for the actual construction could be put out to bid. Ned Kelly made a motion relative to this [see motion action #7 below for details].
9. SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE – Susan Benedict reported that this subcommittee will meet on January 20, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. Melissa will post the same.
10. TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE – Ed Leonard stated on behalf of Therese Salvadore who was absent from the meeting, that this meeting will be scheduled for January 15, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the earmarking of \$300,000 and whether or not it may be used for technology. Dr. Tashjian asked if the committee was looking to change the setup of the money and its designations. Cheryl Duval stated that the account is a stabilization account, not a revolving account. Charlie Miller also suggested looking at freeware which is available on the internet, rather than purchasing new hardware and software. Upon request by Michael Riendeau, Bob Berlo will send electronically a copy of the Technology Plan that is in place before the next subcommittee meeting.

SECTION VI: UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Superintendent Gee indicated that the Regional Planning Grant had been applied for and that notices were sent out that the committee is currently meeting with applicants to determine who will be awarded those grants. As a short term goal, services could be shared and as long term goals, districts could be combined, towns added to regionalization, school choice studies would be completed. The monies given would need to be spent by June 30, 2009. Chairman Leonard asked Superintendent Gee to inform the committee when new information about this grant is received.

SECTION VII: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS

- Lee Wolanin stated that he read in the Barre Gazette that the Barre Police Chief said the police would be taking over the High school for training on Sunday, and wanted to be sure that no activities were planned for the same time. Clare Barnes, Plant & Facilities Manager stated that sports teams were notified in September of this taking place, so they have altered their schedules appropriately. Chairman Leonard said that acting proactively in the future might be best and that the district should give the police a number of dates that the facility is available for use.
- Ned Kelly stated that he received a complaint from a parent regarding the late notice they received from the One-Call System during a recent 2-hour delay. Superintendent Gee informed Ned that she had met earlier that day with Jason Newton, Sheryl Femino and Melissa Widing to discuss the difficulties currently experienced with the system and that we are all working closely with the vendor to resolve those problems.
- Ned Kelly asked the Principals if the students are talking about the world being in fiscal crisis and was told that they are discussing this in the economics and social studies classes.
- Tim Williams asked how parents would be notified regarding potential options for recapturing snow days to make up. The letter will be sent by the Superintendent to the schools, who will send notice home with students, as well as by posting on our website, by sending out to the media outlets, and via the One-Call notification system.

SECTION VIII: NEW BUSINESS

SECTION IX: ACTION ITEMS

	<u>Motion</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opp.</u>	<u>Abs.</u>
1. Motion made to alter the semester dates at the Middle/High School to now end on January 23, 2009, with exams administered on January 22 and 23, 2009, and the new semester beginning on January 26, 2009. Unanimous.	LW	MB	10	0	0
2. Motion made that the School Committee adjust the school calendar to reflect that January 26, 2009, previously a full professional development day, now be considered ½ early release day and that students attend school for ½ day.	MB	SB	9	0	1
3. Motion made to award the #2 Fuel Oil Bid for FY10 to Global Montello Group, LLC at a price per gallon of \$1.7926. Unanimous.	CW	NK	10	0	0
4. Motion made to grant waivers of the one year written notification requirement pursuant to Article XV of the Quabbin Regional Teacher’s Association contract to two individuals who have requested the same of the Superintendent, that upon recommendation the two individuals be allowed to retire in school year 2009 and to receive full benefits as outlined in Article XV. Unanimous.	LW	MB	10	0	0
5. Motion made to remove from the table the Nondiscrimination policy, AC, as well as the Pregnant Students policy, JIE, and to adopt both such policies. Unanimous.	CW	NK	10	0	0
6. Motion made to table the Intra-District School Choice policy, JFBC, to be reviewed at the next School Committee meeting. Unanimous.	CW	LW	10	0	0
7. Motion made to authorize the Plant and Facilities subcommittee to make a bid selection on the Designer Study process and to report that information to the School Committee. Unanimous.	NK	CW	10	0	0

SECTION X: EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session Necessary

TIME: NONE

PURPOSE:

- To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health rather than the professional competence of an individual.
- To consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member.
- To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining process.
- To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices.
- To investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
- To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property.
- To comply with the provisions of any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements. Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 39, 23 (1)-(7).

MOTION: _____ ; **SECOND:** _____ ;

VOTE: RA ; MB ; DO ; MR ; LW ; NK ; CW
 RD ; TW ; SB ; PT ; TS ; TT ; EL

Return to Open Session – Time: _____ p.m.

MOTION: _____ **SECOND:** _____ **VOTE:** _____ **FOR:** _____ **OPPOSED:** _____

Meeting adjourned: 8:58 p.m.

MOTION: NK **SECOND:** CW **VOTE:** _____ **FOR:** 10 **OPPOSED:** 0

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa A. Widing, Executive Assistant