



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
School Committee Meeting**

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**MINUTES – March 12, 2009  
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – CALLED TO ORDER: 7:36 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Lee Wolanin, with the following School Committee members present:

1. Attendance:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Richard Allan	<input type="checkbox"/> Robert Dupuis
<input type="checkbox"/> Susan Benedict	<input type="checkbox"/> Charles Miller
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Timothy Williams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peggy Thompson
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joan Paula
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> Anthony DiBenedetto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Worthington
  
3. QRTA Representative –   
 Student Representative –
  
4. News Media:
 

Worcester T&G – Jim Russell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barre Gazette –Ellie Downer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
  
5. Visitors/Faculty: David Conghan

**SECTION II: MINUTES**

	<u>Motion</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opp.</u>	<u>Abs.</u>
Voted: To accept and place on file the minutes of February 12, 2009.	MB	CW	7		1
Voted: To accept and place on file the minutes of the February 25, 2009 Special School Committee meeting.	CM	PT	8		

**SECTION III: WARRANTS/REPORTS**

Payroll and accounts payable warrants # 18 & 19 were presented and signed.

**SECTION IV: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

## 1. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:

- Superintendent Gee introduced Quabbin Education Foundation Vice-President, Dave Conaghan. Mr. Conaghan gave a presentation regarding the foundation and spoke about the work the foundation is doing to help supplement the school district budget. The QEF held its first meeting in April of 2008, and named its board members and officers in August of 2008. From August through December of 2008, the foundation worked on creating bylaws, policies and articles of incorporation. The foundation has also set up a logo, separate post office box, bank account, and EIN # as an entity. Their website, [www.quabbineducation.org](http://www.quabbineducation.org), is presently under construction. From January 2009 to the present, the foundation applied for status as a 501(c)(3) group, and has just received written confirmation that the application was received. Once 501(c)(3) status is granted, the group will receive a grant of undetermined amount from Exxon Mobil, through the assistance of School Committee Member Charlie Miller. All towns are well-represented in this group, with the exception of Hardwick, so the group is seeking members from that town specifically, but all are welcome to join. Mr. Conaghan acknowledged fellow board members Superintendent Gee, Mark Brophy, Michael Riendeau and Chris Nosel and thanked them for their hard work.
- Superintendent Gee gave her report and highlighted areas from reports presented by Administrators and Principals.
- The Preliminary Public Budget Hearing was held on February 25, 2009, and was videotaped by students Molly Delisle and Kyla Dickson, under the direction of Sean Dubois. The Superintendent hopes the video will be aired on public access television in the future.
- The Superintendent has visited the schools in Barre, Hubbardston, New Braintree, and Oakham to give overviews of the preliminary budget to faculty and parents. Additionally, the Superintendent, School Committee Chair Ed Leonard, and Cheryl Duval have visited the Hubbardston Fincom and the Oakham Fincom to give further budget presentations. The Superintendent stressed that since this is the first run of the budget, changes will be made, but noted that this was a great starting effort by Cheryl Duval, especially since the level-services budget is less than the current year's budget. The Superintendent expects to hear in April about the revenue picture from the state level.
- The Superintendent recently visited classrooms in Hardwick Elementary School with Principal Jan Williams and spoke with students.
- Superintendent Gee recently joined in the NEA Read Across America Day at Oakham Center School and read to a class of 5<sup>th</sup> graders. She was joined by fellow readers, Representative Evangelidis and a Revolutionary War interpreter in full costume.
- The Superintendent notified the School Committee that the district did not receive the Regional Planning grant that it had applied for. Superintendent Gee recently spoke with a DESE representative who indicated that the 12 awards went to very small towns who are currently working to consolidate into school districts, and that our goals were a bit more "futuristic" than the DESE was looking for. Future available funds are possible so we will continue to monitor this program.
- Superintendent Gee mentioned that Jason Newton's report has much statistical data and shows a trend of decreased enrollment in the SPED program and also in psychological assessments testing, as the result of work being completed with the Curriculum Accommodation Teams (CAT) teams in the schools.
- It appears that Chapter 70 funds will remain level-funded at this time, as per Cheryl Duval's report.
- Additionally, the Superintendent stated that pursuant to Cheryl Duval's report, E & D has now been certified at \$1,040,941.
- Several sports teams had a very successful season, including the Wrestling team, the basketball team, girls indoor track and as well, Kyla Dickson won a special coaches award from the Massachusetts Field Hockey Association. Congratulations go out to all of these groups and individuals.
- The NJROTC recently held its Navy Ball and will hold a Spaghetti Supper on March 17.
- Congratulations to Bob Kolesnik, Science Department Head, who was recently gifted with a \$2,000 scholarship from a robotics group.
- The Middle School continues to work on power standards for all subject areas as part of the PIM process.
- Ruggles Lane Elementary School began its after school math program for grades 4, 5, and 6 on February 23, 2009. Additionally, the Ruggles Lane PTO has made a very generous donation of purchasing a new PA system for the school.
- Thanks go out to Timothy Williams, School Committee member, who taught some math lessons at Hubbardston Center School during February break.
- New Braintree Grade School has 3 sessions of program together with the Massachusetts Audubon Society and also the DARE program began on March 1<sup>st</sup> for the 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The PTO at the New Braintree will be holding a Spaghetti Supper on March 28, 2009 to raise money for Nature's Classroom.

2. DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES: Payroll warrants #18 & 19 were presented and signed.
3. TEACHER ADVISORY: No representative was present.

#### **SECTION V: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy stated that there was nothing new to report.
2. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING ADHOC SUBCOMMITTEE – Cheryl Wolfe stated that there was nothing new to report.
3. AUDIT/CENTRAL OFFICE SUBCOMMITTEE—Lee Wolanin stated that a meeting was held on February 19, 2009, at which time six (6) proposals for Audit services were reviewed and discussed. The committee voted to recommend the incumbent firm, Sullivan and Powers, for many reasons, one of which was that our district is familiar with this firm, having hired them in the past, and also that Cheryl Duval, Director of Administrative Services, feels that she has learned things from the firm, thereby placing additional value for the district. A motion was made relative to this recommendation. (Please see Action Item #1 below for further details).
4. BARRE BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE – Lee Wolanin reported that this subcommittee met on March 9, 2009.
  - The Barre Police will conduct their active shooter training on Sunday, May 31, 2009 at Ruggles Lane. It will be held at Ruggles Lane this year, as graduation will be taking place the following week and the High School will be busy with other activities at that time.
  - There were some previous pipe issues at Ruggles Lane, however, Lee reported that air quality testing was done and the air was determined to be “better inside the building than outside”.
  - The new after school math program is in full swing. There are some first grade Title 1 teachers who have begun staying after school twice weekly on a voluntary basis to help with this program.
5. BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy reported that the Public Hearing was held on February 25, 2009, and now the district has begun working with the towns to further discuss the budget. Mark requested that the next Budget Subcommittee meeting be scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
6. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SUBCOMMITTEE – Mark Brophy stated that this subcommittee has met for a first time with the QRTA. He noted that additional sessions have already been set and more will follow.
7. POLICY, REVIEW AND REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE – Cheryl Wolfe [in Dr. Allan’s absence] had nothing to report.
8. PLANTS & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE – Ned Kelly stated that the Middle/High School roof examination is still in progress.
9. SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE – This subcommittee had nothing to report.
10. TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE – Therese Salvadore asked that a meeting be set for Thursday, March 19, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. to look ahead at what is planned for next school year. Martha Femino reported that new computers had been ordered for Ruggles Lane. They have been received and will be delivered on Monday of next week, and are expected to be up and running by Tuesday.

#### **SECTION VI: UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**SECTION VII: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS**

- Dr. Tashjian spoke about the historic time we are living in, when everyone is fearful of the collapsing economy. He said it is nice to see that the School Committee counters this fear. He commended key employees for stepping up and not being afraid to work hard to see things accomplished. He spoke of Bill Burnett’s hard work in securing a low bid for oil, which resulted in a substantial cost savings to the district for the upcoming fiscal year. He commended those involved in the QEF, for showing leadership and initiative. He asked that we not just thank everyone in the district as a whole, but wished to publicly thank those individuals who took the initiative and leadership to make some of the tasks become a reality.
- Ned Kelly stated that he spoke with a parent who was concerned that there would only be Honors classes offered at the High School, and not AP level courses. Both Marilyn Tencza, High School Principal, and Bob Berlo, Director of Educational Services, addressed this. Some classes, although named Honor classes, are still AP classes and are weighted exactly the same. Cheryl Wolfe asked if students took the course, but did not take the separate AP exam, would they still be given the honors credit, and Marilyn said they would. Marilyn continued that they are striving to set the bar high for students and would like to see students take the exam, if possible. The exam costs \$86. If families find the cost to be a burden, they may pay in 2 payments. Additionally, for students receiving free and reduced lunches, the fee is only \$10. Dr. Tashjian stated that the guidance office helps and supports those students who wish to take the exam and encourages them to do so. Peggy Thompson asked if any Honors classes have been eliminated and Marilyn said no. Mark Brophy encouraged everyone to remember the 3 R’s: Relationships, Rigor and Relevancy, and asked Marilyn to clearly communicate all information to parents, which Marilyn stated is being done. Superintendent Gee stated that generally students who score above a 4 on the AP exam are allowed to count the course toward college credits. This gives the students a headstart on their college career, their understanding of the curriculum and also lessens their financial burden. Both Marilyn Tencza and Sue Musnicki, Middle School Principal, feel this is a fantastic opportunity.
- Lee Wolanin asked Bob Berlo about online courses that were scheduled to begin through Fitchburg State College but are not going forward and asked what happened. Bob stated that there is a minimum number of students that must be enrolled to begin the course and that number was not met. The plan is to advertise Fall and Spring classes for next year beginning in April 2009 so that students have enough advance notice to sign up for the courses and hopefully the numbers will be met. Fitchburg State facilitates this, not the district. Bob is hopeful that FSC will give the nod of approval that the numbers have been met before the end of this school year. Along those lines, Dr. Tashjian felt that offering satellite courses here at QRSD might be a better idea, and that faculty could be offered a stipend to teach those courses.

**SECTION VIII: NEW BUSINESS**

**SECTION IX: ACTION ITEMS**

	<u>Motion</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup></u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Opp.</u>	<u>Abs.</u>
1. Motion made to recommend that the School Committee accept the recommendation of the Audit Subcommittee to appoint Powers and Sullivan , CPA firm as Auditors for FY2009, FY2010, FY2011, with an optional extension into FY2012 and 2013 if requested. Unanimous.	MW	NK	8	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 or contractor.
- 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:** 8:27 p.m.

**MOTION:** NK **SECOND:** PT **VOTE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FOR:** 8 **OPPOSED:** 0

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Melissa A. Widing, Executive Assistant**