



**QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Special School Committee Meeting**

**MINUTES – April 28, 2009  
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER  
SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – CALLED TO ORDER: 8:30 p.m.**

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

- 1. Attendance:
 

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Richard Allan <input type="checkbox"/> [open] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Therese Salvadore <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark Brophy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ned Kelly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timothy Williams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Edward F. Leonard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Dupuis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charles Miller <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paula Bolger <input type="checkbox"/> Lee Wolanin <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Thomas Tashjian <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peggy Thompson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Wolfe
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- 2. Administration:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Sue M. Gee <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clare Barnes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Berlo <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> William Burnett <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cheryl Duval <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Martha Femino <input type="checkbox"/> Tracey Hippert <input type="checkbox"/> Anthony DiBenedetto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Susanne Musnicki <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Newton <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joan Paula <input type="checkbox"/> Mark Pellegrino <input type="checkbox"/> Debbie Pelley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marilyn Tencza <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jan Williams <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patricia Worthington
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- 3. QRTA Representative – Dennis Dextrateur   
 Student Representative –
  
- 4. News Media:
 

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

**SECTION II: MINUTES**

**Motion    2<sup>nd</sup>    For    Opp.    Abs.**

**SECTION III: WARRANTS/REPORTS**

**SECTION IV: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**SECTION VI: UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

FY10 Budget discussion was the topic of this Special School Committee meeting. A motion was made regarding the budget (please see Action Item #2 below for further detail).

**SECTION VII: SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONCERNS**

Ned Kelly would like permission to form a Building Committee to address the needs of the school roof projects at both Oakham Center School and the Middle/High School. This will be included on the May 14<sup>th</sup> agenda.

**SECTION VIII: NEW BUSINESS**

Sue Musnicki, Middle School Principal, was present to request approval for the Canobie Lake Park trip. (Please see Action Item #1 below for further detail).

**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 approve the 7 <sup>th</sup> grade Canobie Lake field trip to Salem, NH on June 18, 2009, with the usual provisos.	RA	RD	11	0	0
2. Motion made to adopt the FY09-10 level-services budget of \$33,467,634. Roll Call Vote: 2/3 vote required: unanimous.	RA	RD	10	0	1

**VOTE:** RA ; MB ; CM ; PB ; LW ; NK ; CW   
RD ; TW ; [vac] ; PT ; TS ; TT ; EL

Chairman Leonard invited those present to engage in budget discussion. Chairman Leonard noted that Sgt. Deschenes’ previous letter would be included in the School Committee record. Sgt. Deschenes summarized the earlier presentation he made at the Budget Subcommittee meeting regarding budget concerns.

Sgt. Deschenes stated that all departments are being asked to make cuts, and the Police Department is no exception. Sgt. Deschenes said that they are not trying to be vindictive, however, he feels that the schools should be looking at cutting back similarly to what all other town departments are cutting.

Sgt. Deschenes stated that the police union had agreed to all of the proposals made by the town, including the loss of guaranteed overtime. Generally, the police department lays off Full-time officers first, then part-time officers, which decreases the amount of experienced officers and related efficiency, and actually forces the police department to take a backwards step.

Chairman Leonard stated that he is sensitive to the human compassion of potential lay-offs in all areas, however, this situation has been the case before and this first number is not “the” number that will be finalized to the towns. Chairman Leonard stated that the committee should wait to hear what the government will report for local aid figures. Chairman Leonard did state, however, that once the budget is voted on and assessments are given, the numbers cannot be changed. For example, if the state gives more money to the district, we cannot incorporate that money back into the budget, so the district is slower to make decisions to try to work with the most accurate information available. Chairman Leonard invited everyone present to attend all meetings, as they are public meetings and would be useful information regarding cuts made by the district.

Chairman Leonard further stated that the negotiating units, particularly the teachers union who has already worked on negotiations have been extremely reasonable, much like the police department. Police Chief Demetropoulos was present and stated that although the school district was showing a \$50,000 budget cut for last year, the police department had an \$80,000 budget cut, and there is not much similarity between the school district and the police department.

Chairman Leonard reiterated that 38 positions had been cut and not replaced over the past 5-6 years and that the amount of local budget that the school district requests from the town each year is less, not more. Additionally, the district ranks in the bottom 15% of per pupil spending, and in the 6% for support from local taxes, meaning that 94% of the districts rely more heavily on the towns to support them. Chief Demetropoulos asked if the minimum local contribution figures are available as he has not been able to secure the same. Cheryl Duval stated that they are available on the DOE website, under “Cherry sheets”. It was noted that the formula is a variable, since the numbers

of students sometimes fluctuate.

Tom George of the Barre DPW, also a Firefighter, was present on behalf of both of those groups. He stated that he would reiterate what Sgt. Deschenes previously stated about the towns being in dire straits. He noted that all employees are participants in the union and that the DPW department is down to 3 employees in total. Those 3 individuals must patch, repair, edge and plow the town roads so that schools can be open. The Fire Department relies heavily on mutual aid and unfortunately is “going backward” since they are not able to reciprocate. Tom continued on to say that some members of the department are even volunteering their time to attend professional training days, despite not being required to do so. The DPW is hurting and needs assistance.

Stephanie Carpenter, Director of the Woods Memorial Library was present. She stated that the library budget is contingent upon the school district budget. She stated that the library provides formal learning support and outreach to schools using the identical curriculum. Additionally, the library provides opportunities for the National Honor Society students to earn their community service hours by working there. The library provides books needed for some home schoolers, as well as an inter-library lending program for the students of Barre. Stephanie worked with Bob Berlo to purchase books for the district that were needed. Stephanie stated that she shows students how to do research and work on citations. Stephanie noted that Hubbardston is now decertified because of a lack of funds and worries that the same could happen in Barre. Local libraries do not have to reciprocate their borrowing privileges. Stephanie implored the board to have a consistent working relationship with greater communication so that she and her staff may continue to assist students in the journey of education. Chairman Leonard agreed that the schools do depend on the local library and further that the school committee is deeply committed to education and children.

Further, Chairman Leonard stated that times are desperate everywhere, and more efforts need to be made to reach the community to gain their support.

Sgt. Deschenes stated that the school district has a reputation for being out for themselves. Chairman Leonard stated “let’s work together to change that”.

Tim Williams stated that the teachers should be commended for the large amount of volunteer time they give, (i.e. the Destination Imagination program).

Therese Salvadore reassured those in attendance that they are heard and encouraged everyone to continue attending meetings to be heard further.

Richard Jankauskas, Chair of the Barre Selectboard was present and stated that the School Committee appears to represent the schools and not the towns.

Charlie Miller praised the town DPW and Police for their hard work during this unusual winter and said that the School Committee will continue to strive to represent the towns, the students and the district as a whole.

Samuel Lipson, Barre citizen was present and asked to be heard. He stated that he has lived in Barre since 1976 and that he has seen townspeople already cutting back on things. Even large companies are scaling back on jobs, etc. and CEO’s are foregoing raises as well. Mr. Lipson stated that cuts need to be made from the top down, and that in these difficult economic times, cuts

should be made across the board. Ned Kelly stated that he understands what Mr. Lipson is saying, and as a school committee member he has promised to do his best and to follow the laws and regulations that bind him.

**SECTION X: EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**TIME:** 9:30 p.m.

**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:** RA ; **SECOND:** RD ;

**VOTE:** RA ; MB ; CM ; PB ; LW ; NK ; CW   
RD ; TW ; *[open]* ; PT ; TS ; TT ; EL

Return to Open Session – Time: [unknown] p.m. **\*Melissa was directed to leave the Exec. Session prior to commencement, per Chairman Leonard and was told that Cheryl Wolfe would take notes.**

**MOTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SECOND:** \_\_\_\_\_ **VOTE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OPPOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Meeting adjourned:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SECOND:** \_\_\_\_\_ **VOTE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FOR:** \_\_\_\_\_ **OPPOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa A. Widing, Executive Assistant