

School Committee
January 9, 2006

I. Call to Order

Ms. Eileen Hsu-Balzer called the January 9, 2006 meeting of the Watertown School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present included Ms. Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Ms. Laurie McManus, Mr. John Portz, Mr. David Leon, Mr. William Oates, Mr. Anthony Paolillo, and Mr. Clyde Younger. Also present were Dr. Steven Hiersche, Dr. Stephen Gould and Ms. Allie Altman.

II. Annual School Committee Reorganization: Election of Officers and Subcommittee Assignments

A motion for Chairman of School Committee was made. Mr. Oates nominated Anthony Paolillo as Chairman. Motion carried. Motion to nominate Vice Chairman was made. Ms. McManus nominated Mr. Oates. Motion carried. Motion to nominate a Secretary was made. Mr. Younger nominated Ms. McManus to continue her role as Secretary. Motion carried. Chairman Paolillo announced the Subcommittees as follows:

Athletics Subcommittee: Laurie McManus Chair with David Leon and Tony Paolillo as members.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Bill Oates Chair with John Portz and Tony Paolillo as members.

Building and Grounds Subcommittee: David Leon Chair with Clyde Younger and Tony Paolillo as members.

Curriculum Subcommittee: Eileen Hsu-Balzer Chair with Laurie McManus and David Leon as members.

Policy Subcommittee: John Portz Chair with Eileen Hsu-Balzer and Bill Oates as members.

III. Harvard Technology Grant

Mr. Alan Epstein, Director of Technology reported on the Harvard Technology Grant. The impact of the Harvard University Educational Technology grant to the Watertown Public Schools has been significant. Through this generosity, the Watertown school system was able to take major steps forward toward fulfilling its Five Year Technology Plan. Students at all levels within the district have benefited, and the mission of the schools to improve the achievement of all students has been greatly enhanced by the technologies provided.

The results of this commitment represent some of the school district's finest achievements with respect to technology integration—needs that could not be met by other funding sources. These advances set the stage for an ongoing commitment to

maintain high standards and state-of-the-art facilities, necessary components for providing 21st Century opportunities and instruction for all of its students.

The Committee thanked Mary Power who was representing Harvard at the meeting..

IV. Student Advisors

Ms. Hannah Epstein and Mr. Alex Garbier reported on activities at Watertown High School. Activities included cast of Les Miserables chosen; Winter concert held on 12/21/05, progress reports were sent out and the boy's winter track is at a 3-0 record to start. Boys track is looking to beat last years Middlesex League Champions (Reading).

V. Public Forum

Mr. William Fratto, President of the Watertown Educators Association, read a statement regarding the recent correspondence sent to the teachers from a member of administration. Mr. Fratto stated they would like to move forward and focus on what is important, educating the children.

VI. Presentation/Discussion

A. Standards-Based Report Cards

Dr. Gould reported on the Standards-Based report cards that will be presented to parents at the end of January. A copy of the Standards-Based report card was made available to School Committee members. The purpose of this report is to describe the features of our new standards based summary report of student progress, why it was developed, how it was developed and how it works. The new K-5 Standards-Based Summary Report of Student Progress describes the content standards and what students need to know and be able to do. The new report provides parents with detailed information so that they may help their children at home if they so desire. The new Summary Report is being introduced at the elementary level this year. Summary reports for all elementary students will be distributed to parents on Monday, January 30, 2006. The new K-5 Standards-Based Summary Report of Student Progress has been developed over a two year period by a study group of over two dozen teachers and administrators representing all three Watertown elementary schools. The new K-5 Standards Based Summary Report of Student Progress provides a clear picture of what students are learning and the degree to which they are achieving the standards set by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The new K-5 Standards-Based Summary of Student Progress includes the following features: it states and describes the DOE standards students are expected to achieve in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. The new report indicates whether a student is achieving the standard for a particular marking period or is not

achieving the standard for a particular marking period. It also indicates whether a student has exceeded the standard at the end of the school year. The new reporting system addresses effort, conduct and other life skills through comments. A parent meeting will be scheduled in February to answer questions and receive feedback. Dr. Gould answered questions from the School Committee members.

B. FY '07 Budget

Dr. Hiersche reported on the FY '07 Budget. Objectives for FY '07 are to maintain small class size, reallocate resources to fund new initiatives. In the FY '06 Budget, Special Education department went from one person split between the High School and Middle School to one person stationed at each of the two buildings. High School Civics course added at the High School with a large enrollment. Principals are meeting with Dr. Hiersche on their budgets. The budget presentations is scheduled for February 6, 2006. Budget worksessions are scheduled for February 13 and 27, 2006. The Public Hearing on the budget is scheduled for March 6, 2006. School Committee vote is March 20, 2006. Presentation to Town Council is April 12, 2006. Dr. Hiersche reported that the K-5 class size is a priority as well as working to reorganize instructional leadership and reorganization of student services and a continued commitment to technology.

Ms. Hsu-Balzer referred to the Curriculum Subcommittee a list of items she would like to see in each decision package which would make it easier to have a more thoughtful discussion.

C. Upcoming Subcommittee Tasks

Dr. Hiersche gave a brief overview of some of the tasks facing each of the Subcommittees. The Policy Subcommittee needs to address issues with respect to celebrations, instructional time standards and establish a cycle for review of policies. The Curriculum Subcommittee needs to review key changes in programs proposed by principals in their budgets and examine possible academic opportunities such as the International Baccalaureate. The Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee needs to review and prioritize the Capital Improvement list. The Budget and Finance Subcommittee will oversee the development of the FY '07 budget. Negotiations – all contracts are in negotiations.

D. Personnel Report

Dr. Hiersche gave a report on personnel.

VII. Action Items

A. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the following meetings as written:

11/14/05 Regular Monthly Meeting

B. Acceptance of Gifts

A motion was made and seconded to accept the following gifts:

A gift of \$50 from Lueders Environmental, Inc to the Watertown School Department for whom the company provides lawn care and plant care services.

A gift of \$1,590 from the Miller/Tracy Children's Foundation to purchase an AED (defibrillator) for the Lowell School through School Health

C. Subcommittee on Buildings and Grounds

Mr. Paolillo reported that Mr. Messina, Chairman of the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Present were Mr. Messina, Mr. Paolillo, Mr. Quinn, Dr. Hiersche, Ms. Altman, Mr. Francione, Ms. Dari Donovan, Joe McDonagh from the CEA Consultants Inc. and David Leon. Mr. McDonagh presented the scope of the services provided by his firm which has to evaluate problems that were observed with the concrete stairs, concrete sidewalk, pavement and the concrete handicap ramp. He presented a report on the findings and recommendations and opinions on probable construction cost. Mr. McDonagh suggested the work not take place until the summer break. Mr. McDonagh stated the project would not have to conform to Chapter 149 but rather to Massachusetts General Laws 30. The next step would be to get a detailed proposal, design, refinement, architectural drawing bid specification and construction documents. A motion by Mr. Paolillo seconded by Mr. Quinn, The School Committee agreed to move forward to get a detailed proposal from CEA Consultants. The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m. Ms. Altman reported a bid has been received and has been forwarded to the Attorneys.

VIII. Reports

A. Chairman's Report

Chairman Paolillo thanked Ms. Hsu-Balzer, Ms. McManus and Mr. Oates with their help in the School Committee reorganization.

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Hiersche welcomed the new members and reminding them to call the Superintendents Office if they had any questions/issues.

C. Next Meeting(s)

Chairman Paolillo announced that the next meeting of the Watertown School Committee is scheduled for Monday, February 6, 2006.

IX. New Business

No new business.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the January 9, 2006 meeting of the School Committee at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie J. McManus
Secretary