

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Special Session/Retreat – July 24, 2012

A Special Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Tuesday, July 24, 2012 at 6:00 P.M. in the Conference Room of the Wayland Public Safety Building.

Present were:

Barb Fletcher, Chair  
Beth Butler, Vice Chair  
Malcolm Astley  
Ellen Grieco  
Shawn Kinney

Also:

Paul Stein  
Superintendent of Schools

Geoffrey MacDonald  
Business Administrator

Also:

Irwin Blumer  
Rebecca Chasen, ORC

Chair Barb Fletcher convened the Special Session/Retreat at 6:15 P.M.

1. **School Committee Retreat:**

Dr. Irwin Blumer began the Retreat with an introduction, as well as a brief history of his professional background. He stated the reasons for facilitating this workshop, which included how to work better as a committee and honest and respectful communication in terms of no surprises, resulting in healthy relationships amongst the members of the Committee and between the Committee and the Superintendent.

Dr. Blumer explained the ground rules of the Committee followed by a free writing task in which the Committee members wrote down their thoughts related to identifying the roles and responsibilities of the School Committee as a body and as individuals and how they function as a team. They were also asked to write down what communication between members, between the superintendent and members, chair and vice chair to members and from members should look like.

The School Committee shared their thoughts and concerns acknowledged in the writing task with Dr. Blumer and the other members of the Committee. In doing so, they discussed the basic responsibilities of a School Committee according to law, which are, 1) hire and evaluate the superintendent, 2) develop a budget, 3) create and review policy, and 4) engage in collective bargaining.

One aspect of the conversation revolved around the Superintendent's district goals, which once approved by the School Committee become the Committee's goals. Paul Stein also shared his concerns in terms of School Committee indicators and their expectations.

The School Committee discussed the Open Meeting Law as it pertains to agenda items and backup information. To avoid the element of surprise, it was suggested by Dr. Blumer that the School Committee seek clarity from the Attorney General's office and/or create a policy in terms of the manner in which information can be shared prior to a meeting. He also recommended that the Superintendent act as the vehicle by which information is shared with the entire School Committee.

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Also discussed was delegation of the workload by the Chair to other committee members, which should have a deadline, so that no other issues arise as a result of the deadline not being met.

In addition to the Superintendent's district goals, the School Committee should develop at least 2 of their own Committee goals, and, according to Dr. Blumer, the Committee, in turn, should be explicit about who will carry out and monitor a particular goal of the Committee's.

The Policy Subcommittee will review the three documents provided outlining the School Committee Protocols/Norms of Behavior for the Committees of Leominster, Taunton, and Brockton and compare them to what the Wayland School Committee has in place; they will bring their findings to the other Committee members.

In summary, the School Committee agreed on the following:

- Information will be sent to the School Committee on the Thursday prior to a Monday night meeting, in order to submit questions, if any, to the Superintendent by Monday morning and to eliminate the element of surprise at a meeting.
- Within the district, the School Committee will identify the chain of command.
- A policy will be created regarding the protocol of emails from non-members.

*Shawn Kinney left the meeting at 8:55 P.M.*

2. **Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:**

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following:

- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payable warrant, dated 7/24/2012, in the amount of \$504,769.54

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted (3-1) (Beth abstained) to approve the following:

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll warrant, dated 7/12/2012, in the amount of \$238,992.10

3. **2012 Agreed Upon Procedures for Certain Accounts of the Wayland Public Schools:**

Ellen Grieco stated that she and Rebecca Chasen revised the June 18<sup>th</sup> document based on 3 emails she received from a citizen regarding concerns about the audit. Although Ellen did not have a conversation with the sender of these emails, Rebecca did. Ellen stated that this revised proposal will allow the auditor to decide upon the scope of the audit based on the information provided to them.

Rebecca stated that the scope should be wide, not deep, and should include the following: 1) make sure spending occurred appropriately, 2) determine who had a role in improper activity, as well as understand what it was and the cause of the improper activity, and 3) determine what remediation needs to take place.

*Shaw returned to the meeting at 9:08 P.M.*

Based on Beth's concern in terms of the agreed upon document and procedures by the School Committee at a prior meeting, Rebecca recommended two options in terms of what is presented to the auditors. Rebecca also stated that guidance must be given to the auditors in order to get them started in the problematic areas, as it doesn't make sense for the auditor to spend time in places where there aren't concerns. The School Committee discussed this recommended approach and agreed that it will satisfy the petitioners.

As part of the process, Paul would like to see a clear assessment of what the current procedures are and whether they need to be changed. Thus, at the conclusion of the audit/findings, a list is

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provided of problematic areas/concerns in terms of what didn't happen, what has been corrected, and the current status.

Based on Rebecca's recommended language, Ellen will draft a letter to the auditors and send it to Barb.

Rebecca also recommended the following forensic and accounting firms: 1) StoneTurn Group, 2) McGladrey (Dan Bonnette), 3) Grant Thornton, LLP (Peter Resnick), and 4) Powers & Sullivan (Jim Powers). Barb will contact each of these firms.

4. **Comments & Written Statements from the Public:**

There were no public comments.

5. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Shawn Kinney, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Special Session at 10:21 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein  
Superintendent of Schools

Observers:

Betty Salzberg, WVN

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Revised "2012 Agreed Upon Procedures Re: Certain School Accounts"
2. Document Replacing the Above-Mentioned Document
3. Taunton School Committee – Norms and Beliefs and Self-Assessment
4. Brockton School Committee – Model Standards of Practice
5. Leominster School Committee Protocols
6. Letter from Freedom from Religion Foundation
7. Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants