

Date Approved/Released: 8/3/17

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School Committee Chair: Laurence Murphy

**WINCHENDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2017  
TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

**1. Call to order: 6:00 P M.**

Present: Danielle LaPointe, Dawn Fronte, Larry Murphy, Felicia Nurmsen,  
Steven Haddad, Superintendent, Richard Ikonen, Business Manager

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Audio/Video disclosure**

4. Citizen Questions and/or Comments: Mark Ransom, 285 Melon Rd., recalled his visit 8 months ago at the beginning of the school year. He stated his daughter had negative experiences while attending a school choice option, noting she had left the system after some experiences that were not good. After meeting with Suzanne Michelle, Assistant Director of Pupil Services, he was impressed with her enthusiasm and her plans to help with issues his daughter has. He had that he had been told this before by others with no positive results. Mr. Ransom noted his daughter was 2 (school) years behind but is now she is now testing average if not high average in several categories for where she should be. He stressed that consistent communication made their lives much better. He proudly reported that the final meeting for his daughter demonstrated that the promises? made by the administration not only followed through but far exceeded expectations; he said this is the best academic news about his daughter the family has received in her whole time at school. He also commended Jen Belanger, Kristen Batchelder, and Mary Aker. Mr. Ransom presented a \$3,000 check to the school committee in the name of the above mentioned to help them continue to do their amazing work. L. Murphy asked S. Haddad to accept on behalf of the committee. F. Nurmsen moved to accept the gift of \$3,000 given by Mark Ransom. Second by D. Fronte. Approved 4-0-0.

**5. Student/Staff Recognition: Student of the Month:**

Memorial School - Zachary Carey, 1<sup>st</sup> grade; Toy Town Elementary - Alana Dupont, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade; Murdock Middle School - Allison Cobiski, 8<sup>th</sup> grade and Jessica Murphy, 8<sup>th</sup> grade; Murdock High School - Cera Harris, 11<sup>th</sup> grade; Murdock Academy - Makayla Wright.

6:35 PM D. Fronte moved to take a 10-minute recess/break. Second by D. LaPointe.

Approved 4-0-0.

6:45 PM Reconvened.

D. LaPointe moved to move (Agenda Item) 9.c up before (Agenda Item) 7.  
Second by D. Fronte. Approved 4-0-0.

## 9. New Business:

- c. **School Improvement Plan:** Josh Romano noted it is for the High School; he wanted to have it in place for his successor and noted it is scaled down to make it more possible to complete. He reviewed the 5 sections of the plan that tie into the Principal's evaluation and are based on district goals, and developed in conjunction with the School Improvement Plan. Each goal is followed by an action plan. He reviewed how to accomplish each goal and explained changes from past practices. The plan will expand on work already in Fall 2017.
- S. Haddad noted that now all of the plans line up. He thanked J. Romano for all of his hard work, including the District Improvement Plan. S. Haddad stated "We are going to miss you". J. Romano noted the detailed plan will help with the transition to a new High School Principal. L. Murphy stated he was amazed how much Mr. Romano has accomplished as Principal and his contributions to the district. Mr. Romano credited the good people around him, including the School Improvement Team. L. Murphy stressed the districts need for the override, adding the planned improvements cannot be done on a skeleton staff. He added the district needs the resources to meet its' obligations, including the 7 standards for NEASC in the Fall. L. Murphy thanked him for his commitment to the students and congratulated him on his new position. F. Nurmsen recommended another column be added that identifies by name who is responsible for specific goals, especially in the interim before a new Principal is hired. J. Romano agreed, adding other changes could be made after he meets with his mentor tomorrow. F. Nurmsen advised Mr. Romano to not feel guilty about leaving the district, noting he is taking advantage of career opportunities. She wished him the best. L. Murphy echoed those sentiments, wishing Mr. Romano all the best in Douglas. D. LaPointe stated "You laid the groundwork for us getting to Level 2 and then 1".

## 6. Teaching and Learning Highlights: None.

## 7. Superintendent Report:

S. Haddad reported that the 'kids had a ball' at the Fun-Days at Toy Town and Memorial. The Middle School has planned a similar day. Monday is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition day to the High School.

Breakfast in the Classroom: Memorial and TTE will begin the program next school year. The free, fresh breakfast will be delivered to the classroom before the kids arrive, allowing them to start their school work. The allotted time will count towards 'Time on Learning'. Information will be communicated to parents in the next 2 weeks. He noted this program also removes the stigma of free/reduced meals.

Solstice Celebration and Parade- He reviewed the participants and activities the district will be involved in. Representative Zlotnik will join them. Information regarding the upcoming override vote will be available at the WPS table/booth.

B. Martins noted the June 8<sup>th</sup> Forum/Open Meeting presentation will be rebroadcast on Channel 8 prior to the vote for those who are interested. Representative Zlotnik explained how monies from the state are incurred, how much each town pays to fill the gap.

**8. Old Business:** None.

**9. New Business:**

- a. **Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Representative - Austin Cyganiewicz** thanked the committee for inviting him to be introduced and to speak, saying he is very honored and excited. He noted the town board meetings will be part of an online archive that is being developed so they will be available at any time. He will attend the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School committee meeting next week as an audience member; his tenure as a committee member starts July 1. Recapping his comments at the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, he stated that he wants to change the focus to collaboration and communication and will provide monthly updates if committee wishes, as well as abiding by the charter with a quarterly report. He also suggested bringing a Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School administrator to answer questions. As a student representative on that committee, a former Superintendent proposed the creation of a pilot trade program at one or several sending districts. A Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School vocational instructor would come and offer a vocational opportunity to MS/MHS students. He noted those students would reap the benefits of the vocation education funding. He also spoke about his desire to integrate special education students into the shop/trade week instead of having them attend additional academic classes. He will look into why it is done that way and see if can change. The admissions policy is another area to examine and possibly make fairer to Winchendon and other schools. He will also support Mayor Hawke's efforts to review the matter and will urge an independent committee to look at the agreement, to make it more equitable and current and current law.

D. Fronte agreed that communication has been very difficult in the past. She applauded Mr. Cyganiewicz for his understanding that Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School students are also Winchendon students and suggested they be included in the Student of the Month recognitions.

F. Nurmsen noted that she and L. Murphy sit on the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School sub-committee and offered their full support. She feels Winchendon should have larger clout as the district that sends the majority of the students.

L. Murphy echoed those comments, adding the school committee is not anti-Monty Tech; it wants fairness and equity through collaboration. He added that if all sending districts pooled their resources, Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School could have triple the amount of students. He also noted the need for the state legislature to help.

S. Haddad congratulated him, noting we are here to work with you, to solidify the relationship with Monty Tech. He added the Central Office is open to you, and to contact us and the School Committee at any time.

A. Cyganiewicz thanked the committee for the open door policy, noting it is important, and that he will be there to advance the interests of the community.
- b. **Superintendents Evaluation:** L. Murphy noted the goal is to get it done by June 30<sup>th</sup>. S. Haddad should provide evidence on his goals this year. Committee members will have their evaluations to Chairman Murphy by Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, which gives him 3 days to present the findings to Superintendent Haddad.

**7. Business Office Report:**

R. Ikonen noted that while working to close the books on the '16-'17 school year, he found \$291,000 and open purchase requests that were not going to be used. He worked with the Special Education office to realize the savings. A transfer/reclassification for the Special Ed tuition and Collaborative for \$196,000 and \$156,00 for Day-Time Tuition coming out of the expense of the General Ledgers (GL) and going into the FY17 Special Education Grant 240 Professional Services line. He apologized for the late presentation, noting it was a matter the Finance Committee wanted resolved and the school committee had requested.

L. Murphy congratulated him on his dedication and a job well done, noting the work has allowed complete transparency and accuracy that allows the committee to plan financial decisions.

R. Ikonen noted he is still finding issues regarding the proper and correct alignment of resources and expenses but will continue to work to resolve those issues; he hopes to be finished before the start of the new school year. He is working to correct the payroll issues by the first payroll of FY'18, which is July 20, 2017.

L. Murphy recommended that S. Haddad and R. Ikonen work together over the summer to align all resources and expenses. F. Nurmsen asked them to make sure you have the resources you need to do this, using the consultant/mentor and make adjustments as necessary to get job done.

**10. Consideration of Minutes of Previous Meetings Not Yet Approved or Released:**  
None.

**11. Committee Questions and Comments:** F. Nurmsen stated she hopes we see progress on the matter discussed above and put a timeframe on it. She also loved the idea of including Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School students in our monthly recognitions.

D. Fronte reminded voters to vote on June 20<sup>th</sup>, from Noon to 8:00pm, and that absentee ballots are available at Town Hall.

L. Murphy encouraged people to come to the Summer Solstice and the Winchendon Public Schools booth. He noted the funds, if approved, will be used for tangible plans like the Murdock High School Improvement Plan.

**12. Future Agenda Items:**

- a. "Why Are Students Leaving?" Report
- b. Fox - Zip Trip - June 30, 2017
- c. Water Report - Jim Murphy
- d. How School's Improve by Engaging Families
- e. Ad Hoc Committee - S. Haddad

13. **Executive Session:** None

14. **Adjournment:** 7:52 P.M. D. Fronte moved to adjourn. Second by D. LaPointe.  
Approved 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted: Barrie E. Martins, School Committee Recording Secretary