

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2011**  
**7:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**MC FEE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**  
**108 HIGH STREET**  
**WOONSOCKET, RI 02895**  
<sup>ST</sup>  
**1 FLOOR – CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Called to Order by Anita McGuire-Forcier**

<b>Roll Call:</b>	Anita McGuire-Forcier, Chairperson	Present
	Vimala Phongsavanh, Vice Chairperson	Present
	John Donlon	Present
	Eleanor Nadeau	Present
	Christopher Roberts	Present

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion of FY2011 Audit – Mr. Robert Civetti, Braver PC**

Mrs. McGuire-Forcier asked about the \$1 million that is in an unidentified account. Mr. Civetti explained that over the last week, they have been able to match up the final grant funds and those have since been cleared up. "As late as Tuesday, \$1.1 million is unallocated costs right now. A holding account has been set up and it's up to the school department to decide where those costs should be allocated," said Civetti. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier said she understands that the City hired Braver and that we also pay a portion of their salary. "When information is sent to them, why aren't we receiving the same thing?" asked McGuire-Forcier. Mr. Civetti said he thought that that was happening. "There's no explanation why we don't have this information. We have it from the City Council when they announced it at a City Council meeting," said Mrs. Nadeau. "It was my understanding that you were getting the same information," said Civetti. "I'm not happy with Braver because I don't feel we get the same treatment that the City gets. We got blindsided and we are supposed to know what's going on. We look like idiots!" said Nadeau. **Joe Nadeau (Woonsocket CALL reporter) arrived at the meeting.** Mrs. Busby spoke about a variance in salaries from what Braver has and what we have. "The number in the holding account—do you feel it will be less than \$1 million?" asked McGuire-Forcier. "Yes. I believe we will be able to allocate most of it," said Mrs. Busby. "Once you have this information, how long will it take you to review and update that holding account?" asked Mr. Roberts. Mrs. Busby said that all the changes have been made up until a couple of weeks ago. The last one she did was to the health care line. "What is considered an acceptable variance in a municipality?" asked Roberts. "It varies. For the WED, probably \$400,000 or \$500,000 and \$200,000 on the City side of the budget. Roberts asked if the City has hired Braver to do a half-year audit. "We have talked about it," said Civetti. "Is it realistic for us at the end of January to do a half-year audit to be able to provide that information?" asked Roberts. Mrs. Busby said it was possible. "Why can the City Council hire an auditing firm and we have to pay a portion of that audit, but we don't have any say about it?" Nadeau asked Ackerman. Mrs. Busby added that we have to allocate \$28,000 a year to the auditor that the City chooses. "Why? Who hired Braver?" asked Ackerman. "The City Council," answered Nadeau. "If the City Council says it's for WED's books, you really should pay for part of the bill. I would have to know what the contractual arrangement was to have the WED pay part of the bill. I don't know what the history is. I suppose that we could tell the City that we want to choose our own auditor and will pay for our own," said Ackerman. "This one auditor serves two masters—no one can serve two masters!" said Mrs. Nadeau. "The way the information is disseminated could be argued, but the amount of money is the same," said Ackerman. "The damage is done. Now everyone thinks that we are over \$3 million in debt. It wasn't an internal memo. It was announced at the City Council meeting and they want us to work together?! Come on!!" said Nadeau. "How many years have you been doing Woonsocket's auditing?" asked Roberts. Civetti said it has been about five years. "There was an RFP and we were the only bidder," said Civetti. "Is there any record of how much time is spent on the City side and the WED side?" asked Roberts. Mr. Civetti told him that the billing is separate. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier asked that Braver give the WED the same courtesy they give to the City Council. "It sends the wrong message to the school department," said McGuire-Forcier. She asked Mrs. Busby to cc the school committee on the information she provides to Civetti. She would like to see that variance down to "0". Mr. Civetti told the WSC that his firm didn't announce the information at the City Council meeting. "We are independent auditors. We have gone above and beyond to work with everyone. From Day 1 we have asked to be shown where this \$2.1 to \$2.7 million is and we haven't gotten it. I can't control what gets out there to the Council. We are required to provide monthly reports. If you disagree with the report, provide the information," said Civetti. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier just asked for the same courtesy that is provided to the City.

**2. Vote on City vs. Woonsocket Lawsuit**

Mrs. McGuire-Forcier reported that a vote was taken in closed session. There was a 3 to 2 vote to withdraw the appeal of the lawsuit. Mrs. Nadeau and Mr. Donlon voted to continue. **“We will withdraw the appeal,” announced Mrs. McGuire-Forcier.**

Motion to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.: C. Roberts

2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary