

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2012**  
**6:00 PM – OPEN SESSION**  
**McFee Administration Building**  
**108 High Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895**

**Call to Order by Mrs. McGuire-Forcier.**

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

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Discussion/Vote to hire Interim Executive Director of Finance and Operations – C. Roberts**

Mr. Roberts introduced a resolution and read it in its entirety regarding the establishment of the position of Interim Executive Director of Finance and Operations, that position's authority and responsibilities, etc. "The way it was posted on the agenda, people think that we are creating a new position and we are supposed to be under a hiring freeze. Where does the money come from?" asked Mrs. Nadeau. Dr. Donoyan explained that there is a position that is vacant due to a termination. "There is approximately \$40,000 that we want to use to pay for this person. The position of Executive Director of Finance and Operations has not been filled in the new organizational chart yet. I don't know if we have exactly \$40,000—it could be \$38,000 or \$41,000. The person we want to hire would make \$80 per hour," explained Dr. Donoyan. "Interim means temporary to me. This position is vacant after this person leaves?" asked Mrs. Nadeau. "Yes," answered Donoyan. "The whole perception out there is that we are hiring someone on a permanent basis," stressed Nadeau. "We are not," said Donoyan. "Suppose we hire this person and it takes longer than we have the money to pay them for?" asked Nadeau. "I am going to monitor it very carefully. There will be check-ins along the way. We will not go one cent over \$40,000. The person we want to hire has a significant amount of experience here and at the city level and can hit the ground running. I would like to have her start on Monday on a day-to-day basis until the next school committee meeting on Wednesday," said Donoyan. "What do you plan to do with the Business Manager in the new organizational chart?" asked Ms. Phongsavanh. "Mrs. Busby will still be in that position. She will be more like a controller," explained Busby. Mrs. Nadeau asked if next year we would have two positions or one. "We will still have only one position. There will be movement," said Donoyan.

**Motion to modify the resolution with the addition of a Section 9 which would give the superintendent the authority to enter into a contract with Dina Dutremble for this position at an amount not to exceed \$40,000: C. Roberts**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon**

**DISCUSSION FOLLOWED.**

"Mrs. Dutremble is retired, so she is limited to working 75 days," noted Mrs. Nadeau. Dr. Donoyan said that she and Dina have come to an agreement that she must work no less than three full days per week. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier wanted an amendment made to Section 4 stating that "the City Council will be paying for the additional audit for the period ending December 31, 2011.

**Motion to approve the original resolution with the addition of a Section 9 which would give the superintendent the authority to enter into a contract with Dina Dutremble for this position at an amount not to exceed \$40,000 and an amendment to Section 4 stating that the City Council will be responsible for payment of the additional audit review for the period ending December 31, 2011: C. Roberts**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: E. Nadeau**

**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes APPROVED**

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## 2. Discussion/Vote for Cash Flow Projections – C. Roberts

Mr. Roberts read the resolution regarding the submittal of detailed cash flow reports in its entirety, which state that the report for the current fiscal year will be produced no later than 12 noon on Monday, January 9, 2012, and immediately upon any future demand, by the Superintendent to the Woonsocket School Committee, the City of Woonsocket Finance Director, and the Director of Revenue for the State of RI. They will also be provided immediately upon request to contracted auditors, financial institutions with an interest in the WED, bond rating agencies, and any other entity which the WSC may authorize. Failure to comply with this resolution will result in a review of the WED Finance Dept. by the Superintendent, the WSC, the City of Woonsocket Finance Director, and/or the RI Director of Revenue. Atty. Richard Ackerman asked if this request is fiscally feasible to be done by Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, because there wasn't much time before then. "This is not a new request. It should be something typically available quickly," responded Mr. Roberts. "In the real world, it would be more than reasonable to expect something to be ready at the drop of a dime. But due to the circumstances that we are under right now with the skeleton crew that we have and the complexity of the matter, we will fail. I don't feel that Dina will be able to do that at this point in time. We are not ready. I think she will need at least a week," said Donoyan.

**Motion to amend Section 1 to a date no later than Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012: A. McGuire-Forcier**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh**

Atty. Ackerman asked what report should be provided immediately under Section 3. Mr. Roberts said that it was the cash flow report and that the Director of Revenue for the State of RI has been looking for it for weeks. He hopes that it's ready sooner than the 16<sup>th</sup> of January. Mrs. Nadeau asked if that person is Rosemary Gallogly. "Yes," said Roberts. "Rosemary Gallogly has been corresponding directly with Mr. Bruce and Mrs. Busby. I had no idea that this has not been turned in. I think I deserve to be contacted directly also so that I can put a little pressure on my staff," noted Dr. Donoyan. "It appears that at the minimum, we need a resolution to get cash flow projections," said Roberts. Mr. Donlon thinks that the bond rating agency needs to be taken out of Section 3. "The City would be giving them this information," he said. "Have we ever had a bond rating agency contact us for information?" asked McGuire-Forcier. Dr. Donoyan said, "Not since I've been here."

**Motion to amend Section 3 to remove the bond rating agencies: 2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon**

Dr. Donoyan said she worries about the resources that we have here to meet the demands and requests of so many people. It bothers her to see additional stress being placed on these people on top of what they are already under. Atty. Ackerman said that it also says that the information would be released upon authorization of the WSC in Section 3 last line.

**Motion to delete the word "demand" and add "reasonable request" in the last sentence of Section 1: A. Forcier**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh**

**Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (CR)**

**Motion to approve all the above amendments: A. McGuire-Forcier**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: V. Phongsavanh**

**Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (CR)**

**Motion to approve the original resolution with the amendments: E. Nadeau**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon**

**Roll Call Vote: 5 yes**

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## 3. Discussion/Vote to support Superintendent's spending freeze – C. Roberts

Mr. Roberts read the resolution in its entirety. Mr. Donlon asked where the money is coming from to make a series of payments to address the previous deficit. "We are instituting a spending freeze. We will employ cost-saving measures to save on utilities, etc., to save as much as we can to put towards a deficit reduction plan," said Donoyan, explaining how much the out-of-district placements have gone up and the fact that we are already over budget in this line item at less than half-way through the year. "So what you are really saying is that we will SAY we are going to pay it off, but we actually will never be able to pay it off," observed Donlon. "We will make a good faith effort to pay it off. There are many factors we can't control, such as the number of DCYF out-of-district placements that are required," said Donoyan. Mrs. Nadeau wants to see some data on this that tracks the kids in DCYF care. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier added that the state is moving towards having each district pay for each child that is at the training

school from their district. "There are so many things that happen in the school department that are requested that you do not hamper. That's the normal operation of a school department. I have to have a teacher in front of a classroom," said Dr. Donoyan. "Section 2 was taken from current policy. Someone could come and say, 'I have expended the substitute budget and I need another \$40,000 to make it through the school year,'" suggested Roberts. "We can't. We don't know in advance how much we will need," said Dr. Donoyan. "We cannot leave children in danger without an adult in front of them if a teacher is out," stressed McGuire-Forcier. "I never said that," said Roberts. Atty. Ackerman added, "There are going to be periodic reports. There will be a much more careful review of expenses so it would be hard to have another deficit like this that no one new about. Can we use that word 'reasonable' again?" "If part of tonight's good faith effort is to not leave this in, how can we do that?" asked Roberts. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier thinks that "reasonable" or "for the safety and health of the students" would suffice. "Mr. Roberts, your intentions are good, but you work in a private business run by your family, Mr. Roberts. Public education is not a private business! We are dealing with the lives of children. You want controls that are totally unreasonable. With all these whereas' and therefores, you should go to the City Council because that's where you belong!" said Mrs. Nadeau. Mrs. McGuire-Forcier said that the policy committee will be meeting on Tuesday. "Can we send this there for them to review?" she asked. Atty. Ackerman said that "As per the policies of the Woonsocket School Committee" should be taken out of Section 3. "If this has been a school committee policy for over 50 years, why was the City allowed to take out a bond reduction if there was the proper oversight? If there had been a \$5.8 million dollar surplus, we would not have had this conversation at all," noted Donoyan.

<p><b>Motion to Table this resolution to Wednesday, January 11, 2012 meeting: A. Forcier</b> 2<sup>nd</sup>: J. Donlon <b>Motion tabled.</b></p>	<p><b>Roll Call Vote: 4 yes – 1 no (CR)</b></p>
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Motion to adjourn at 7:15 p.m.: A. Forcier

2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Roberts (Unanimously Approved)

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy G. Belisle, WSC Recording Secretary