

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: September 9, 2013
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

Members Present: Mr. Guy Buzzannco, Chairman
Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chair
Mr. Eric Berthel
Ms. Susan McCabe
Ms. Mary Colangelo
Mr. Ray Nardella
Mr. Richard Beland
Mr. David Guerrero
Atty. Sean Butterly

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Thomas McDowell, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Pasquale Buccitelli, Business Manager
Mr. Andrew Terzigni, Student Council Representative

A. Convene Regular Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

B. Salute to the Flag

C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson

D. Award Recognition

Mr. Buzzannco – We will move on to item D, award recognition and I would like to turn it over to our superintendent, Dr. McDowell for this very important part of our meeting this evening.

Dr. McDowell - Thank you Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to ask Claudia Deary to come up to the...come up here some place, Claudia. This is the tough part and you can stand anywhere you want up here while I read these wonderful things about you that are all true.

The Board wishes to recognize and congratulate Watertown's 2013-2014 Paraprofessional of the Year, Mrs. Claudia Deary. Claudia is currently a Grade 6 Paraprofessional at Swift Middle

School. She has been employed by the Watertown Public Schools in her current position for the past eight and a half years. She has served as both a one-on-one and a classroom para. Prior to this, she was a substitute at John Trumbull Primary School.

Mrs. Deary begins every day with a smile and positive attitude. She is highly respected by her administrators and among her peers and cooperating teachers because she exemplifies true professionalism on a daily basis. Claudia is patient and has a great sense of humor that helps in the most challenging situations.

Mrs. Deary has lived in Oakville for 14 years. She is married to John Deary. They have two boys who attend Watertown High School; Michael, a sophomore and Joseph, a junior. Mrs. Deary has worked with young children since high school and never thought she would enjoy working with middle school aged children as much as she does. And, one of my stints in education was a middle school principal, so I know exactly what that means. Claudia is truly an asset to the Watertown Public Schools and most deserving of this recognition! Please join me in congratulating Claudia.

Actually, one of the reasons that I got into the superintendents business was to present plaques and congratulate, especially students, but it doesn't get much better than being able to do that and giving people the recognition that they so deserve.

Our next awardee is a student, I am going to ask Jessica, would you stand up here next to the counter so that we can talk wonderful things about you?

We would like to congratulate Jessica Ney from Watertown High School for organizing a Swim-a-Thon at Watertown High School to raise money for the victims of the Oklahoma Tornadoes. Members of the Watertown High School swim teams collected pledges from donors for swimming a specified number of laps. Through their efforts, the group raised over \$1600 for disaster relief. The donation is to be made to the American Red Cross. Thank you Jessica for your leadership and efforts in organizing this event. Please join me in congratulating Jessica. Thank you very much, keep up the good work.

Mr. Buzzannco – In just a moment, I will call for a 5 minute recess so that more pictures can be taken and people can excuse themselves if they don't want to attend the less riveting part of our meeting, but I wanted everybody to be present for the first report from student council representative Andrew Terzigni. He represents the third member of the Terzigni family to be a student council representative at our Board of Education meetings and I have no doubt that the family saved the best for last. It is wonderful to have you with us and we will turn it over to you.

E. Report from Student Council Representative – Andrew Terzigni

Andrew Terzigni – Thank you. Hello, my name is Andrew Terzigni. I am a senior here at Watertown. When I'm not at school, I am actively participating in many clubs and events. I'm the director of this winter's play. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, stage manager for whatever the upcoming musical will be, (I don't get to pick that one) I'm co-president of the Interact Club,

co-commissioner of the Link Crew, and I'm an athlete on the track and field team. When I leave high school, I plan on studying file editing in college.

Now down to business. Over the past week, the administration has held a class meeting with all four classes. These meetings are to be held every month from now until the end of the school year. At this particular meeting, they went over school policies such as emergency procedures and dress code.

Last Friday night, WHS hosted a "Movie Under the Stars" event in participation with the Watertown Public Library. It was part of the "One Town, One Read" program. The movie shown was *October Sky* based on the book *RocketBoys* by Homer Hickam. Unfortunately, no town residents were in attendance but a large number of Watertown High students and faculty went. Watertown will be holding the PSATs this October 16th. This year the test is being offered to all grade 10 & 11 students. The PSATs are a way to meet grade requirements and they are also a great way to collect data.

This is exciting news: Watertown High's football team has been nominated for the NBC Connecticut Football Game of the Week. There are four games in the running and our match vs. Holy Cross on this Friday, September 13th, was nominated. The game with the most votes by then end of the week wins. The schools from the winning game will be featured on NBC Connecticut this Friday and both teams will receive a free meal from Subway and be featured on NBC Connecticut. Vote for the Watertown game at the WHS Athletics page on Twitter or on the NBC Connecticut Facebook page. Also, as of this morning, our team was tied for first.

As of tomorrow, all fall sports will be in contest. All 9 fall sports; boys and girls cross country, boys and girls' soccer, field hockey, football, girls swimming, girls volleyball, and cheerleading, have been practicing for weeks, but tomorrow marks the first game of the season. Fall previews will be in tomorrow's Republican American and Thursday's Town Times.

One final topic, Watertown will host the Thanksgiving game again this year. It will be held on Thursday, November 28th at 10:15 a.m. vs. Torrington.

Mr. Buzzannco – Andrew, thank you for that excellent report. It is great to have you with us. At this point, I will call for a 5 minute recess and we will reconvene at 7:47 to allow folks to have some time to excuse themselves and have some time to take some pictures. Thank you.

F. Public Participation

Mr. Buzzannco – It is 7:50 p.m., exactly when I said we would reconvene our Board of Education meeting, lets move on to item F, Public Participation. Is there anyone tonight that wishes to address the board this evening? Is there anyone tonight that wishes to address the board this evening? If not, we will close item F and move on to item G, Budget Status.

G. Budget Status

Mr. Buzzannco – Board members, you will recall that Dr. Gilmore presented to the board in July, a report outlining how potential savings from teacher retirements be consumed by certain line items in the budget and carried a fair amount of uncertainty. Tonight, Mr. Buccitelli will drill down a little more deeply into those budget line items to address where we expect to be under in the areas of revenue because of grants and where we expect to have overages in the areas of cost in the areas of our budget. So I will turn it over to you, Mr. Buccitelli.

Mr. Buccitelli – Just to briefly touch on some of these items, and as you pointed out and as the chairman pointed out there is a level of uncertainty. In some cases we are pretty certain that these things are going to happen, and that is in the reduction in the IDEA and the title one, two and three grants. Reduction of 5% grant. What we have to do there, is we have to pick up the services that were provided in that grant and those services are very important to us. And so we will, we will use the funds to provide for those services. On the Excess Cost Grant, now this is an area where you have the state reimbursing the districts for large out of district special education placements. And, what happens in that particular place, they pay, or are supposed to pay over 4.5% over our/per pupil's expenditures. And the reimbursement is supposed to be 100% of that on a per pupil basis. That is not the case here. And what happens in this situation is, in the state now, the state get so much funds, an allocation, to pay for the reimbursement of these out of district placements throughout the state, and what happens is that they pay as much as they can for the amount of placements that occur throughout the state. As the placements increase over what they have budgeted, on the state basis, beyond their allocation, then the reimbursement rate decreases. So, if you have a large number of students, in one particular year, the reimbursement rate would go down, relative to say, some other years. So what you have to do, is be careful, in terms of what you might have to, or what you might expect, from that reimbursement. We budgeted 70% reimbursement. We could end up with 50% reimbursement. We don't know. We will have some information on that, probably in December, in terms of if the state is going to pay for, as far as the reimbursement, we will get some type of indication as to what that reimbursement rate is. So that is crucial, that is unknown, and that varies year to year. The other areas where we had some disability that occurs during the year is the out of district placements in special education. You get a new student moving in that requires an out of district placement, that can be, in this particular case, an average of \$42,000 per placement. So, it just takes one student, to basically effect, or have an increase, or say a need for \$42,000. The other area I put down is the IEP, supporting the IEPs. This is for the special education services that occur during the year where we didn't budget for these particular services. An example of that would be paraprofessionals. A student moves into the district, which we had, and it's a new student that we did not have before, that requires one on one situation or programming, we have to provide for a paraprofessional. As of this moment now, we had to hire an additional paraprofessional, one additional paraprofessional, and we are looking at the very real possibility of hiring a second paraprofessional. This is special education, now. To follow the education plan that the state requires. Now, the cost of that, each

paraprofessional costs, with the benefits, costs \$30,000. So we are talking about two individuals, or two additional paraprofessionals, we are already at \$60,000 using that 55-6 that I mentioned. So that is the types of things that we are dealing with, the types of unknowns that we basically have to plan for and if we have some funds, we can set some funds aside, that is what we are planning on to do with them.

Mr. Buzzannco – Pat, you mentioned that the access cost grant is supposed to cover 100% of the 4.5 times of the per pupil funding, but did you say that the amount in our budget is estimated at 70% over that? Plus the \$756, 553? And so the additional uncertainty is an additional 10% above that.

My second questions is that with the out of district placement of two...I just lost the thread there, just give us a sense of why you anticipate two more placements this year.

Mr. Buccitelli – Well, what happens, well, its not know. Basically, what we are saying, what could happen, is that a student moves in during the year and that student requires a placement.

Mr. Buzzannco – I understand that, but my question was this is just for speculation, a what if, we have no probability assigned to whether we need to spend another \$84,000. This is a placeholder in anticipation?

Mr. Buccitelli – A placeholder for that probability, that is correct.

Mr. Buzzannco – Ok, and then again, going back to finding that the additional IDP, did you say we have already hired one para? (Yes) Then what is the \$55,600?

Mr. Buccitelli – Well, I put 55, but that is really an estimate here. When I developed this, I wasn't thinking about hiring two additional paraprofessionals, it might be additional services that might be required, it might be a paraprofessional, it might be other services.

Mr. Buzzannco – My question was of the one we have already hired , would that consume \$30,000 of the \$55, 600 you identified?

Mr. Buccitelli – Correct

Mr. Buzzannco – One final question. We have covered IEP, primarily special education, with regard to fluctuation in the budget, there have also been some fluctuation in health claims this year beyond what we budgeted for. The June number came in at \$30,000 over what was budgeted for. Can you speak to that?

Mr. Buccitelli – Yeah, I think what we would do with that...yeah, that is out there, that is an issue that down the line has to be addressed in one way or another. I think what we would do with that, and of course, just my opinion at this time, is to consider that and look down the line.

In other words, as the budget unfolds, and we can basically determine that a level of certainty, that we are going to have extra dollars available in certain accounts, then that money would be free. That is one way to deal with it, that money would be free to help pay for the health/medical. It is similar to what we did last year. In order to play for those claims, we would have to identify specifically where that money is coming from and have a certainty that we know where it is coming from so we don't have a deficit in operating the schools in the end of the year.

Mr. Buzzannco – I am going to recommend what we did last year, which was mostly track this with the town, work with our insurance administrator to validate the charges that are coming in for catastrophic cases. And certainly be prepared, if necessary, as early as possible to invoke a budget freeze, if necessary.

Mr. Buccitelli – Yes, yes, that certainly is an option as well. That is beyond saying we have monies in X accounts. We could put a budget freeze on.

Mr. Guerrero – Mr. Chairman? (Please, go ahead) Mr. Buccitelli, when was the second budget referendum? I forgot, was it in July? I don't remember when it was in July. (Multiple answers – July 2nd) And when do the teachers have to let us know when they are retiring?

Mr. Buccitelli – Well, the teachers basically have until July 1st to tell us that they are retiring. And we did get some information in June & July in terms of retirement...that was coming in.

Mr. Guerrero – So, what I guess I am trying to get at is between June and July, when we started thinking about teacher retirements, and today, August, a little over two months later, what happened in the past two months that we didn't know....that we didn't know two months ago, as it seems like a lot of these shortfalls...did something happen in the last two months to warrant them? What happened?

Mr. Buccitelli – Basically what you are saying is that you are setting aside funds for possible changes and unforeseen events where you have to apply additional funds.

Mr. Guerrero – Yes, but this is two months after the referendum. So, usually, at the referendum, we look at the year ahead and we set the budget based on what we expect...why are we setting aside....I guess what I am asking, is if we didn't have the teachers retirements, how would we set aside these funds?

Mr. Buccitelli – If you didn't have the teachers' retirements, then you would have to look for other ways of dealing with that throughout the budget. One way of dealing with that, that we don't want to do, is freezing the budget. If you have no other alternative, and you have these obligations that you have to pay for, you would have to freeze the budget.

Mr. Guerrero – But it seems that a lot of these are speculations, though, its nothing where we...it doesn't seem as if there is an impact and we are in an emergency and we have to fund these accounts. It seems as if a lot of these short falls...did something happen in the last few months to warrant them? What happened?

Mr. Buccitelli – No, it's not that. Basically what you are saying is that you setting aside funds for possible changes and unforeseen events. Where you have to apply additional funds.

Mr. Guerrero – Yes, but this is two months after the referendum. Usually after the referendum, we look to the year ahead and we set the budget based on what we need, but why are we setting aside.....I guess what I am asking is if we didn't have the teachers' retirements, how would we set aside these funds?

Mr. Buccitelli – Well, if you didn't have the teachers' retirements, then you have to look at other ways of dealing with that throughout the budget. And one way of dealing with that, that we don't want to do, is freezing the budget. If you have no other alternative, and you have these obligations that you have to pay for, you would have to freeze the budget.

Mr. Guerrero – But it seems that a lot of these are speculation, its nothing where....it doesn't seem as if there was an impact and we are in an emergency and we have to funds these accounts. It seems as if a lot of these are speculative. I mean, hiring additional funds to support IEP through out the school year, we may hire another professional for that. Out of district placement for special education, we may have two placements at \$42,000 each. Additional funding for special ed, we may have to spend another 15, grants may go down 10%....from the last meeting we had, I am still unclear as to what makes this up and why two months later, we have these in front of us. What happened? Something had to happen in the last two months to say, oh boy, we have to budget for these, something happened....it just seems like, well we have some savings, so we will just put it in account in case of a rainy day.

Mr. Buccitelli – Well these types of things can happen all the time. In this particular case, we have funds set aside for this possibility, that's all, that is the only thing that is really different. We will be monitoring it.

Mr. Guerrero – But there is something that had to have happened from referendum to today to warrant them. I guess what happened since the referendum to say we need to look at these items and see where we can get money for them. That is what I am unclear about, because here we have \$285,000 in teachers' retirement savings, which we knew about some of them before the referendum, why, now, do we have to put money aside for these accounts? Especially grants, I mean, grants are short term in nature, and they are supposed to supplement the budget, but its like they are supplanting the budget here. Because we are picking up the tab for grants that are going to run out? I mean, I don't get it.

Mr. Buccitelli – When there is a reduction in the grants, we have to try to find a way to provide the same service that was in place with those grants in general fund. So what you are doing is you want the same services, those services are important, finding ways to do this, so we have the opportunity....in this particular case, in order to do that, we use the funds that are available to be consolidated.

Mr. Guerrero – Isn't that right there the definition of grant supplanting the budget? The grant was right there, now we don't have it, so we have to come up with the money for it, to continue those programs.

Mr. Buccitelli – For the money, in terms of finding the money, the same thing for what the grant was doing. It is not supplanting.

Mr. Guerrero – Another thing, is that we have July 1st for the teacher retirement, I wonder if it is wise, as we discussed earlier to possibly change the date to say, December 1st, instead of July 1st.

Mr. Buccitelli – That is one of the things that I mentioned to you, and that is....we run into this because the teachers are not obligated to tell us that they are retiring until July 1st. In most cases, teachers contracts, there is a date much earlier than that, in other words, it might be earlier than that, but the date would be like mid December, so you would know, who is retiring and then you factor that into the budget, once you know, at that point in time, then you can reduce your budget at that time when you have the information before the budget is adopted.

Mr. Guerrero – I would like to suggest to the board that maybe we consider that. Giving the upcoming budget year falls in the same time frame, with these retirements, it might help us to figure out if we have any savings earlier than July 1st. I would like to recommend that we take that up and discuss it and see if it might be.

Mr. Buzzannco – Is that in the union contract? I think that is in the union contract, so we would have to work to negotiate that in. It is not within board control. (Dr. McDowell speaks, but is not picked up)

Mr. Guerrero – Ok, thank you.

Ms. Colangelo – Mr. Buccitelli, when will you have a better idea on when our reimbursement will be from the state?

Mr. Buccitelli – I believe around December. It is about December when the districts have to report to the state. I think the first report goes in about that time. That is when the state has an idea of what it will cost them reimburse.

Mr. Buzzannco – Mr. Buccitelli, thank you. Just to summarize, you identified approx. \$285,000, in savings in teachers retirements at the end of June, 2013. Based on the report tonight, you identified an increase in the budget of \$78, 000 that we can count on, a reduction of \$48,000 in grants, we have \$30,000 in additional paras that need to be hired, we expect that number to be even worse with the trend through the rest of the year, and additionally, we’ve noted that our health claim account for July was \$300,000 over budget. So we have a net overage of \$378,000 and a savings of clearly \$5000, so we do not have that buffer account that we might have been able to apply to be able to hire and retain employees, that now we have the opposite challenge to make sure we end the year in the black with a cost reduction and other management of the budget. Thank you and keep us informed, please.

H. Committee Reports

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Mr. Eric Berthel, Chair-No

Policy and Labor Committee, Mr. Eric Berthel, Chair-No

Budget and Finance Committee, Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair-No

Facilities/PBC/Operations Committee, Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair-No

Governance and Community Engagement Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair-No

I. Communications – Secretary – Mr. Berthel

No report

J. Minutes

Mr. Buzzannco – Corrections were submitted to the board, you received that in your packet on Friday of last week, are there any further corrections to the minutes of August 26th?

Mr. Butterly – Mr. Chairman, I have give to the clerk a couple of minor typo changes, but one substinent change was my comment that we consider our jobs, not to be a job, but a calling, and it says colleague. I attribute that because I am a fast talking lawyer, but in the meaning of that, we are saying that this calling came full bearing on opening day, as we had two deaths in our student body, just since we opened school, here in Hamden in the last two weeks, and one of the students I had just seen. They were a new student from the Carolina’s and this poor young man is a sophomore and I spoke to him Wednesday

afternoon and on Thursday morning, on Rosh Hashanah, on his day off, he was in an accident on Dixwell Ave. and passed away. So, with this calling, and when we go to these schools every day as teachers to help these young students, we have so much responsibility and so much we can do for them, it's a daunting task, but we are up to it and our schools pull together and try to help these families and the survivors. So, the word is calling. And I thank the clerk, and I thank the chairman for listening to that part. Thank you.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thank you. That was very tragic news. Are there any other further corrections to the minutes? Hearing none, is there a motion to approve the minutes of August 26th, 2013 as corrected?

Agenda Item Number:	I.1a
Subject:	Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting – August 26 th , 2013
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Berthel
Motion Seconded By:	Mr. Nardella
Text of the Motion:	I move that we approve the minutes of the regular Board of Education meeting on August 26 th , 2013, with corrections, as submitted.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

K. Superintendent's Recommendation and Report

Dr. McDowell –Thank You Mr. Chairman. Just information on the 2013-2014 Bilingual Education Program Grant Application has been completed and submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education for approval. The total amount of the grant is \$2,100.

The award for this grant is intended to provide children identified as limited English proficient with materials such as iPads with native language/English language practice applications and dual-language readers. The grant was written and submitted by Mrs. Janet Parlato. Then we have appointments, I want to make a clarification on appointment G, if I may, because I know there was an issue with cutting a .6 Spanish teacher at the middle school and I am going to read a synopsis today that I worked with Mrs. Lerz on. You all know that Swift Middle School offers French and Spanish to all 8th grade students that meet the criteria for eligibility. These courses

mirror those at Watertown High School and students who successfully meet the demands of the courses receive a high school credit at the time of completion. Successful mastery of these courses also allows students move to Spanish II or French II in their freshman year of high school and be eligible to take a fifth year of a language, if they so choose, which is actually the reason why we have the level one of those languages at the middle school. At Swift Middle, there is currently one World Language teacher full time available to teach these courses. She is assigned to teach one French I class and four Spanish I courses daily. Students that are eligible to take the World Language courses in grade 8 must meet the following criteria: a grade of 85 or better in language arts classes in grade 7, in grade 6, a CMT score in reading of "at goal or above level 4 or 5", and grade 6 CMT score in writing of "at goal or level 4 or 5". Also in grade 6, the CMT DRP at 63 or above and teacher recommendation. Student eligibility is identified at the end of grade 7 and students and parents are notified. Students are asked to select their world language preference in grade 8, Spanish or French, or reading, in the Spring of grade 7. Once the grade 7 CMT scores are received in August, and this year they were embargoed until late August, which is one of the problems we have here, we find that these students have invariably increased their CMT scores from grade 6 to grade 7 and then, therefore, become eligible for a world language. There are also a select number of students that standardized testing scores do not reflect their abilities and who should be given the opportunity to take the courses based on teacher recommendation or daily performances in the classroom. Yearly, we have been unable to meet the needs of our student population and to keep class sizes below 30. In the past, we have hired additional staff, or shared staff with Watertown High school. So, by the end of the 2012 – 2013 school year, 127 students qualified for World Language and 4 courses of Spanish I, with class sizes being one at 30, two at 28, and one at 25 respectively, and one class of French at 27 students. In August, the CMT scores were analyzed from 2013 and then 28 additional students then qualified for a World Language. In order to satisfy this need, Ms. Lerz requested an additional .24 Spanish teacher. Three applicants were selected to be interviewed, but only one came to the interview on August 30 and remember that school started on August 28th. So, Ms. Lerz, and a team, interviewed and recommended, the person who was hired. She currently a daily Spanish I class with 28 students and an additional seminar class on Wednesdays, hence the .24. The pay rate is not determined at the school level. The application would be reviewed at central office and would be based upon the degree level and the years of experience. So that is how we ended up with that particular person at that particular pay rate.

Mr. Buzzannco – I have one question I guess I would ask for that, just in light of the conversation that we had regarding budget overruns, is the \$64,000 question, or in this case the \$20, 703 question, do we have room in this object code for this expenditure in this budget?

Dr. McDowell – We do. And just to comment, on something, Mr. Guerrero asked about some of the things that have taken place since the referendum and today. I think I have been here three weeks, it seems like a lot longer some days, but in that time, we had to hire a new paraprofessional, the .24 Spanish person, and today, our director of student services, alerted me

that we may be needing to hire another paraprofessional because of an IEP with a student at Watertown High School. So a lot of these things are unforeseen and if we didn't have the money, we would be coming to the board and saying we have to find the money. Because anything that is associated with an IEP is not a choice, it is a legal contract and is required by the state. Before the meeting, the chairman and the vice chairman and myself were talking about the hypothesis of the budget, and it's important to note, that when we developed the budget, it's an estimated guess. And once that budget is approved, everything above the line changes. I should not say everything, a lot of the stuff above the line changes and the only thing that doesn't change is the bottom line. So it is a fluid document, as I was reminded this evening, and we will certainly keep the board abreast as to how we are doing on a monthly basis.

Mr. Guerrero – Dr. McDowell, the .24 Spanish teacher, the question I had was a while back, we discussed this position and we approved a certain salary and then the previous superintendent ended up hiring this person at a higher salary, then we approved.

Dr. McDowell – Because it was .6, right?

Mr. Guerrero – I think it was the .6, but it was also a higher salary as well.

Dr. McDowell – Well, when we calculate a teacher's salary, we do it by tenths. So, a once class a day would be a .20 and if they are teaching full time it would be 1.0. So this person is really .20, which is one class a day, plus the seminar on Wednesday is the .4. So if this person was teaching .6, it would be at the salary that you are referring to.

Mr. Guerrero – I don't remember the specifics, I just remember that it was a different fraction but it was also a different prorated amount. But anyways, that person was hired, then I remember, not too long ago, this position was removed. (Correct). And now it is being rehired again at the higher fraction and the higher prorated amount than we originally discussed. So, I guess I am just confused how we voted on an amount and fraction and the person was hired, and there was some disagreement with the board, I clearly remember that, requesting why that happened, then the position was removed and we had a lot of reductions in staff, and now the position is being reinstated again. I have nothing against the position or the person, but it's just, when I saw it, I was like...wait didn't that position...didn't we just remove that position, why is that back in front of the board?

Dr. McDowell – Again, we are reacting when it would be better for....I mean if we received scores way earlier than we do, because of the embargo from the state department, those 28 kids that weren't scheduled to take this World Language class, would have been scheduled long before August 30th. So, let's back up even more. Had we known, we were going to have to add one more section, we would have come to the board and say we are going to have to decrease this .6 to .24. But we didn't know we were going to have 28 more kids. So, like I said, you have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5...you have 6 classes World Languages and here's where they are: 30, two at 28, one at 25,

one at 27 and one at 28. Those are extremely high classes for students that are just beginning to learn a World Language. I mean, you will hear me say this a lot, if I had a magic wand, and I don't, I would like those class sizes to be around 20. That's where they need to be. But they are not going to be because we are not going to say all right, let's just hire a full time teacher to decrease class sizes. But it's a mold that we are in; it's reactionary. I would much rather be proactive, but we don't get a lot of this information from the state until it is too late.

Mr. Guerrero – And for the interviews, there was only 1 person who applied so....

Dr. McDowell – Three people applied, but only one person came to the interview. I mean, think about this, if I am a certified teacher, and I have a certification in this thing, I am going to tie myself up for .24? When I can go down the street and get a .8 or a 1.0 position at the full salary? Those positions are hard to fill like that.

Mr. Guerrero – All right, thank you.

Mr. Berthel – Dr. McDowell, I appreciate the transparency here in this discussion about the hiring of this position. Last year, we were, and I think this is in part what Mr. Guerrero is stuck with this year, last year, this was just blasted upon us and the position was hired and there was not a whole lot of discussion. We did not have the privilege of hearing the synopsis as to why we needed this position and how we got there with the increase of the CMT scores etc, etc, etc...So I appreciate that transparency tonight, at least as one member of this board, so thank you.

2. Appointments – (Information Only)

- a) Ms. Michelle Andrade to the position of In-School Suspension Facilitator at Watertown High School, effective for the 2013-2014 school year, being hired on a salary of \$25,000 prorated, at \$138.12 per day, 7 hours per day.
- b) Ms. Marybeth Ford to the position of Long-Term Grade 2 Substitute Teacher at John Trumbull Primary School, effective August 26, 2013 through December 23, 2013 at the rate of \$75.00 per day for the first ten days, and then placed on the first step of the WEA contract of \$42,117.00, prorated.
- c) Ms. Christine Halloran to the position of Long-Term Substitute Guidance Counselor at Watertown High School, effective August 26, 2013 through December 23, 2013 at the rate of \$75.00 per day for the first ten days, and then placed on the first step of the WEA contract of \$42,117.00, prorated.
- d) Ms. Linda Lee to the position of ELL Tutor at Watertown Public Schools, effective August 28, 2013 for the 2013-2014 school year, at the rate of \$125.00 per day.

- e) Ms. Shannon McDonnell to the position of System Wide Reading/Language Arts K-5 Coordinator for the Watertown Public Schools, effective for the 2013-2014 school year, being paid the contractual stipend as represented in the MOU with the WEA of \$3,276.00.
 - f) Ms. Jenna Nixon to the position of Math Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2013-2014 school year, being hired on an annual contractual salary of \$42,117.00, Step 2, BA Degree.
 - g) Ms. Janice Pond to the position of .24 Spanish Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective for the 2013-2014 school year, at the annual rate of \$20,703, being hired on Step 14, 6th Year degree, \$86,261.00 prorated.
-

L. Report from the Chairman

Mr. Buzzannco – Our last meeting was held just two days before the opening of school, and I reported that our staff and teachers had been working hard to ready every aspect of our school system for our first day of classes.

Tonight, it's clear that those efforts were a success. Our schools, at least during my time here in Watertown, have never looked better on the first day of class. The few transportation issues we had were addressed immediately, our cafeterias were absolutely sparkling and well prepared and our teachers had exciting and productive days planned for their 3,000 students. So our thanks go out to our administrators and building staff for a terrific start to what I know will be a positive and successful learning experience for our children this year.

The energy and commitment to the excellence we saw in the weeks leading up to the opening day are still apparent. School residency issues are being addressed. Policy related to school safety and other critical areas will be developed in the coming weeks. Curriculum and technology are being rapidly and thoughtfully managed.

And, tonight, we want to extend a very warm welcome tonight to David Foulds, who joined us last week as our new Food Service Director. His experience will help further the great work of that department, led so ably by Maggie Dreher over the past 15 years. Maggie left the district in late July, David joined us just last week and the demands of our food service program didn't let up in the interim. So how did we manage? Well, just fine, thank you very much, because we have Terri Downey as our Food Service department secretary. So, on behalf of the entire board, we want to thank Terri for taking care of the many tasks and responsibilities that just can't be kept waiting as school approaches.

Parents and guardians, in fact, received their first communication from David already today, as our district launched its Breakfast in the Cafeteria program to all of our schools this morning. All children are eligible to receive a healthy and delicious breakfast every morning in our five of schools. The price is just \$1.55 for paid students, just \$.30 for students who qualify for reduced

price lunches and free to students who qualify for free lunches. I just want to point out that there's no new additional paperwork to fill out. Students who already receive free or reduced lunches automatically qualify for free or reduced price breakfasts. Letters were sent home to all district parents about this exciting new program today, and I want to thank our cafeteria staff and building principals and teachers for making this program a reality and an eventual success. A successful year depends on more than the work of staff and students. We couldn't get the job of educating and developing our children without our parents. Their involvement in setting the right expectations and creating the right conditions for success makes all the difference, and if time permits, we beg them to volunteer in our classrooms, and our PTOs. Such work brings achievement and growth for students throughout our schools.

Finally, we noted with sadness the passing of Sydney McKean Rehkamp last week, at the age of 93. I have to tell you, she may have retired from our schools in 1984, but her impact and love is felt today by her former students just as strongly as when they first felt it over 20 years ago. I wish I'd have the privilege of knowing Sydney, or, better yet, that my son could have had her as a teacher among the outstanding ones he's had in just his first four years.

Sydney started her teaching career at Baldwin School on September 1, 1962. She taught 2nd grade and retired on September 1st, 1984. Her obituary summed it up beautifully by saying she treated her students as if they were her own children. In the words of her former principal, Bernard Beauchamp, who wrote years ago in her evaluation, "Sydney has continued her excellent teaching since my last evaluation. She has unusually good support with pupils, parents, and other teachers. I have always been pleased that she is a member of the staff." Later on, he wrote, "Sydney is and consistently has been an excellent teacher. She is one of several faculty members at Baldwin School who enjoy a fine reputation in the community. Her success is the result of planning, hard work and dedication to teaching. She exhibits warmth in dealing with children and motivates them to do their best and encourages creativity. She is well prepared for the teaching day."

We want to extend to Sydney's family the condolences and appreciation of the Watertown School District and the thanks of every former student who was blessed with to call her their teacher.

M. Action Items – Items to be Approved by Consent

Mr. Buzzannco – That concludes my report for this evening and we will move on to items to be approved by consent.

Agenda Item Number: M.1

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the Change in Names on the
Watertown Public School Lunch Program

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Beland

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve the change in the names on the Watertown Public Schools Lunch Program Account to add Dr. Thomas McDowell, Interim Superintendent of Schools, effective August, 15, 2013.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: M.2

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the Usage of John Trumbull Primary School and Judson Elementary School for Religious Education Classes during the 2013 – 2014 School Year.

Motion Presented By: Ms. Colangelo

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Butterly

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board approve St. John the Evangelist Office of Religious Education to use John Trumbull Primary School and Judson Elementary School for Religious Education classes for the 2013 – 2014 school year.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: M.3

Subject: Consideration of the Approval that the Board appoints its members to function as a Personnel Search Committee in its search for a new Superintendent of Schools

Motion Presented By: Mr. Berthel

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board appoint its members to function as a Personnel Search Committee in its search for a new Superintendent of Schools.

Discussion: None
Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item Number: M.4

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of Gifts

Motion Presented By: Mr. Nardella

Motion Seconded By: Mr. Berthel

Text of the Motion: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board gratefully accept the donation of school supplies in the amount of \$400.00 to John Trumbull Primary School from Litchfield Bank Corporation

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes – It is recommended that the board accept the generous gift and a letter of thanks be sent to the donor.

N. Future Agenda Items and Board Members' Comments

Mr. Buzzannco – Do any board members have any comments or future proposed agenda items for this evening?

Ms. McCabe– Mr. Chairman, I have to share a story, I took in this afternoon. I was out walking my dog, and ran into a colleague, and we got to talking and she said that last week, Watertown Public Schools got some good PR on the radio. A story was told about a 5th grader, a new 5th grader starting the year at Judson was very much looking forward to being the big guy and took ill and was running a high fever and he had to stay home the first day of school and he was horribly disappointed. His mother sent an email off to his teacher saying, you know, my son is so upset, he was looking forward to the first day of school, I hope that this won't pose any problems and during lunch, the phone rang and it was the woman who did not identify herself, picked up and it was the young boy's teacher, the 5th grader's teacher, and she spoke to the mom for a minute, but then said, I am really calling to talk to your son. He got on the phone, they had a nice conversation and I guess the boy was thrilled and really it made his day. And this teacher is Mrs. Beliveau at Judson. And she was on the radio, she was mentioned on MPR last week

and I just wanted to give her a little shout out because those are the stories that I like to hear.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thanks for that Susan. Chryll Beliveau is an outstanding teacher and that is not a surprising story, and that is such a wonderful story to hear. She made that young man feel like a big man on campus and made the first day of school, as everybody in this room knows, it has a lot of moving parts and surprises, for her to find time to do that, on the first day of school, it is so much about the culture and she showed that, so thank you for sharing that. Do any other board members have comments or proposed agenda items?

Mr. Berthel – Mr. Chairman, I would just like to a moment to extend a further welcome to Andrew Terzigni, this evening, our student council representative. Before we began this evening, I went over and introduced myself and I told Andrew I remember the day he was born. And he kinda looked at me a little funny and he said, well how is that? And the fact is that many years ago I worked with his dad, he was a police officer in Waterbury and his mom is actually a nurse for our school system, but his dad and I worked together at the old Med Star Ambulance, his dad was a paramedic and I was and EMT, on that crew and I remember very proudly, when Mike, his dad, came in and showed us pictures of the newly arrived Andrew. So here we are many years later, Andrew, and as I mentioned to you before, and I will mention again for the benefit of the board, many times the report from the student council representative is the most exciting part of our meeting, so I'll be sure to reach out to your mom and dad and let them know you did a fine job tonight and, on behalf of the board, welcome. We look forward to your reports. (Thank you!) Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Buzzannco – I bet you can't wait to get to college and get away from your parents (laughter, can't hear entire sentence)...no pictures, though....

Ms. Colangelo – It should be noted he is also the third Terzigni to serve. And he noted to me he is the last.

Mr. Buzzannco – That is very sad. Do any other board members have any other comments or proposed agenda items?

Mr. Lambert – One other thing I would like to shout out is the that the board members here and I know Mr. McDowell, expect clean schools, neat schools, trim, and everything put in order, especially at the beginning of the school year. And rumors have it that there were some errant principals around the Swift Middle school area out there picking weeds and priming and propping, and we don't know for sure, but there is a rumor out

there and also some PTO people helping out also at John Trumbull Primary. So we really do appreciate it and we commend anyone who takes those kids of actions for us and the kids, so thank you.

Mr. Buzzannco – Thank you Mr. Lambert. Do any other board members have any other comments or proposed agenda items?

O. Public Participation

Mr. Buzzannco – Does anyone wish to address the board? Does anyone wish to address the board? If not, we will close our second round of public participation and move to adjournment.

P. Adjournment

Agenda Item Number: P.1
Subject: Adjournment

Motion Presented By: Mr. Berthel
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Nardella

Text of the Motion: So moved.

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted:

Eric Berthel
Secretary of the Board of Education

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary