

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: February 11, 2015
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Library/Media Center, Swift Middle School

Members Present: Ms. Leslie Crotty, Chairman
Mr. Tom Lambert, Vice Chairman
Mr. Ray Nardella, Secretary
Ms. Janelle Wilk
Mr. Victor Vicenzi
Ms. Josephine Cavallo-Rosa
Mr. Donato Orsini
Ms. Cathie Rinaldi

Members Absent: Mr. Jim Gambardella

Others Present: Ms. Emma Karpinski – Student Council Representative
Dr. Bridget Carnemolla – Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Jill Browne – Business Manager

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

B. Salute to the Flag

C. Roll Call – Ms. Davidson

D. Minutes

Agenda Item: D.1
Subject: Minutes of the January 29, 2015 Regular Board of Education Meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Wilk

Text of the Motion:	I move that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the January 29, 2015 Board of Education Regular Meeting.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Mr. Nardella
Vote:	Motion Passes

E. Awards

1. The Watertown Board of Education wishes to congratulate the following students from Swift Middle School for their January achievement for: **'Leadership by Example'**. They are students who stand out among their peers in the classroom, in the school in general and/or in activities in the community. They take the initiative, share their expertise with others and model adult behavior-all while showing respect toward adults and towards their peers.

Grade 6:

Nick Mastrofrancesco
Ryan Murphy

Grade 7:

Trista Mader
Priscilla Nascimento

Grade 8:

Jordyn Forte
Nick Pietrorazio
Abby Baker

2. The Watertown Board of Education wishes to congratulate Lindita Kulla, Watertown High School junior, for receiving the "AIEP Host Family Global Citizen Award". This award grants its winner a \$2,000 scholarship towards the cost of Watertown High School's spring trip to Greece. Lindita was chosen for her Watertown school spirit, interest in world cultures, and enthusiasm towards learning. We are honored that Mr. Guerrero has generously offered to make this an annual scholarship! Thank you, Mr. Guerrero for your altruistic contribution to the students of Watertown High School. Mr. Guerrero spoke for a few moments regarding this accomplishment for Lindita and about his company's plans for the future scholarships.

F. Report from Student Council Representative – Emma Karpinski

At John Trumbull, the second grade winter art and music festivals were held last Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Over 500 parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, and uncles came to hear second-grader sing the most beautiful songs under the direction of the new music teacher. Families also enjoyed the lovely artwork that lined the hallways of the main foyer. The art teacher, Ms. Elwell, transformed the walls to look like a museum.

At Polk school, the PTO set up for the book fair in the Polk Library after school last Friday. Students visited throughout the week. A family fun night was held tonight, as well.

At Judson, student Council is conducting a fundraiser to support Angela DeFeo. The Angels for Angela campaign asks students to purchase paper Angels for \$.25 each. Paper Angels are on display in the cafeteria, and students were green last Friday in support of the Angela. The school leadership team presented the STARS program to faculty last week. STARS stands for students, staff, teachers, acting, responsible, respectful, and safe, and is Judson's new motto. It was presented to students this week.

At Swift, the annual fundraiser began last week. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to Angels for Angela. Students can also choose to donate consider receiving fundraising prizes. The staff also has fundraisers of their own, which supports the American Heart Association and Read for Rich, a new organization that promotes literacy.

Finally, at Watertown High School, AP parent night will be held on the 18th to inform parents and students of the AP testing process. Almost 60% of the seniors have applied to college. The principles advisory committee met last week to discuss flex structure.

G. Public Participation

None

H. Committee Reports**Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair – Yes**

Mr. Nardella noted that Mr. Paul Jones, Principal of Watertown High School, updated the committee earlier in the night at a subcommittee meeting regarding the updates to the WHS program of studies. He will also be presenting this later on this evening.

Policy and Labor Committee – Ms. Leslie Crotty, (Acting Chair) - No**Budget and Finance Committee – Mr. Tom Lambert, Chair – Yes**

Mr. Lambert noted that the proposed budget will be presented tonight by Dr. Carnemolla.

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

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

I. Communications – Secretary

None

J. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report**1. Appointments (information only)**

- a. Ms. Susan Petrok to the position of Special Education Teacher at Swift Middle School, effective January 26, 2015, for the 2014-2015 school year, being hired on an annual contractual salary of \$44,670.00, Step 2, MA degree.
- b. Ms. Amy Slattery to the position of Literacy Math Tutor at Polk Elementary School, effective January 26, 2015, for 30 hours per week at an hourly rate of \$16.00.

2. Presentations

Dr. Carnemolla noted that she enjoys bringing the students from the schools up every month that are recognized by their peers so that they can also be recognized by the board in the community. Dr. Carnemolla then stated that Mr. Jones will be coming up to his presentation regarding the update of the program of studies at Watertown High School and asked if the board could continue to review their packets so they can vote on this at the next Board of Education meeting. This will be considered the first reading tonight.

a. Presentation Regarding the Update of the Program of Studies at Watertown High School

Mr. Jones – Began his presentation by letting everyone know presentation will do two things: it will up the amount of credits that are needed to graduate and will change the course of studies that are required to graduate over the next few years. This will help us meet the current legislation for the class of 2020 and meet the reaccreditation part for NEASC in Oct. 2016.

The current program of studies require 23 credits to graduate Watertown high school. He showed a slide what those 23 credits might look like. This proposal will be over a two-year period which will help ease the transitions for teachers, students, schedules, and graduation requirements.

The first big change for the class of 2019 is to add a ½ credit of science. By 2020, we need to be at three science courses to graduate. The next big change for next year would be adding the two credits of world language. The following year we will need to add a credit of math. Currently, students are required to have three math credits; new legislation will require four math credits.

The current seniors are piloting the capstone project as a pass/fail requirement. Next year, this will become a graduation requirement with a full credit added. It also factors in their current requirement for community service hours. Physical education and health will not change on credit requirements, however, we will be changing how we obtain this credits. He went over how the students can obtain these credits in a slide of his presentation. We are proposing adding a counselor workshop as we have heard from many people that students coming in need more preparation on how high school works. Juniors have also requested additional help in preparation for applying to colleges. This course would be ¼ credit to both 9th and 11th graders.

The next major change is to science where we are adding a credit over the next two years. We are proposing adding new courses to help with this transition. There would be no add the staff here as our teachers are certified to teach these courses. World languages would be moving from an elective to requirement, although most students already meet this requirement. In math, by 2020, students will need four credits to graduate. We will be doing the same as in science by adding some new math courses. Another change in math, in the program studies, is requiring students to take personal finance. It is currently a technology elective, but will now become and can be taken as a math course.

As you can see, all of these changes will help with both state legislation changes and the NEASC reaccreditation.

(More information can be found on this presentation by reading the minutes of the Curriculum and Instruction Meeting)

b. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2015 – 2016 Proposed District Budget

It was pointed out that the budget process began much earlier with the idea the approach would be developed in a different way. It actually began on the superintendent's first day of work in July when she had to cut last year's budget. Starting in September, we began to meet with each building administrator and decide where to try to take the budget this year based on needs. We asked everyone to bring back their budget and their needs for us to review by the end of October. Along the way the budget process always included the question of, "What is the ideal Watertown public school?" We need a budget that will get us in sync with the adoptive district improvement plan.

She began by showing a continuation budget strategy with a PowerPoint slide of fixed costs. These costs will basically be rolled over. They also showed the increases that will be needed and Dr. Carnemolla went over each of them in detail. She then went over her strategy and process by saying they want the budget to be as efficient as possible by using the funds for maximum impact for student achievement and to connect expenditures to our priorities.

She went over the priorities and reminded everyone of what they were: teaching and learning, our systems, school and district culture, and communication. She went over each of those in great detail. In order to do all the above mentioned things we have to look for savings. Dr. Carnemolla then went over her ideas for overall cost savings. They include: implementing an HSA, analyzing contracted services, considering transportation options, enacting simple energy-saving strategies, installing a co-gen unit in the pool, reconfiguring the use of staff, and streamlining the HR system. These were all discussed in great detail as well.

Dr. Carnemolla and her team came together to review the administrations requests. She pointed out these were not “wish lists”, but what they believed to be essential to run their buildings and make progress towards the district goals. As I went through each of the requests with them individually I was able to cut out items that we agreed upon together. Just by doing this process with each administrator and department head we were able to cut out over \$1 million from the original requests. It isn't that they didn't need what they requested, but we must work within the confines of our budget.

Dr. Carnemolla and put up a slide for items that were taken out of the original budget and went over each of them. The next slide showed what was left in the budget regarding positions and they include: a kindergarten teacher at JTPS, a third grade teacher at Judson, .5 special education teacher at Judson, a science teacher at WHS, the math curriculum specialist, 2 .5 tutors (K-5), a social worker, and a director of technology. These are not additions to the budget, but changes to the budget.

Each of these again, were gone over in great detail. For instance, currently there are 21 or 22 kindergartners in each class at John Trumbull. While they are doing great work, is almost impossible to get it done in the right way with this many five-year-olds in one class. Going forward, with what is currently registered in the average number of those that will register over the summer, without this additional teacher, the class sizes can get as high as 25 per class. Dr. Carnemolla went over many reasons to reduce class sizes in grades K-5. Her most important point of all she pointed out was that class size makes a positive difference and suggests that if students are in classroom sizes with over 20 students for five or six years, by the end of sixth grade, they have lost an additional five months of learning. That is half a school year! And as you can see, this budget does not even take the class sizes below 20, but will make it close. It also has a direct correlation to whether or not they will graduate high school.

Reasons were gone over for the third grade and special education teacher at Judson as well as a science teacher and guidance counselor at WHS.

The math curriculum specialist is needed as our common core state standards require new approaches to mathematical instruction and so we ensure effective and coordinated practice from grades K-6. While our testing scores have not been where we want them to be, the data demonstrates the need for strategic effort in relation to math instruction. The two tutors for grades K-5 are already being utilized at Polk through a grant and are doing very well. They are doing targeted instruction with small groups of students in literacy and in math. We don't have the same grant dollars to do it at Judson however, but we need to support the students as well and both of our grades 3 to 5 schools should be a similar as possible. When they converge back at sixth grade they need to all be prepared in the same way.

The district social worker is a position that is not only needed, but helps reduce costs with contracted services. We currently contract a person through an outside vendor to come in three days a week to help our students who need this type of help. These are educational needs and plans for the students. There are not enough hours in the school day for the one school psychologists to meet all these needs. So for the past several years we've been paying an outside vendor to come in and help us. That is costing the district \$77,000 this year. Why would we pay someone from the outside \$77,000 a year to work three days a week when we can hire a

full-time, five days a week, social worker for probably around \$60,000 a year? Dr. Carnemolla went over the reasons of why a social worker versus a psychologist is needed and then put up a slide for all of the reasons we needed a social worker and just the time of September 1 to February 1. They included: 71 crisis interventions, 20 "2-1-1" calls, 64 students that receive counseling through an outside vendor, & 190 students who required intervention from a social services department.

The director of educational technology and data services is an incredibly important position to this district. We have a lot of good technology in this district but we don't have anyone who can implement properly and assist the teachers to use it properly. In 2015, most of our learning is done with some type of technology. If we can't support the technology it isn't worth spending the money on it. This person will provide overall coordination on all educational technology and help implement it not only with Ms. Parlato, but in the classrooms as well. They will manage the student information system and websites (which is currently done by the secretaries of those buildings and then piecemealed together and not being used to its fullest advantage, also making it look different in every building), recommend appropriate hardware and software classroom solutions, help teachers and coach them in the use of this technology, and develop innovative programs for teachers classrooms practice. This person will also work with each of the schools in regards to security and its upgrades. For instance, the key cards that allows access to and from the schools. I can call this person in the middle of the night and shut off and access or if someone loses their access card we can just shut it down. At this point we cannot do that. Moving on to technology needs, last year \$200,000 was cut from the budget is allocated for new computer purchases and we pointed out that 512 of our 1100 computers, or 46%, are over six years old, and in computer years they are extremely antiquated. Where applying for a grant to provide for 510 new computers and again, this would be a grant that is reimbursed, similar to the security grant process. We are also operating on some very old versions of our software that are no longer supported. This ties directly back in because the computers are so old, with can't upgrade the software without upgrading the computers as well.

A slide was then put up to discuss the facility cuts. These are things that were caught in the budget and saved over \$440,000. The list is extensive and was placed up on a PowerPoint slide. The next slide discussed the facilities budget history and how much money was spent on capital improvement and facilities maintenance. Historically we have not spent a lot of money however we have to maintain them in order for them to function at the level we need them to be at. John Trumbull is our oldest school now 15 years old. It's time to do the maintenance necessary to keep them up to par. A slide was then put up to show what made the list and each one again, was gone over. They include: energy management building maintenance service, sidewalk repairs, parking lot and playground asphalt repairs, maintenance trailer replacement (these are deemed unsafe for road use by both the DMV and the Watertown PD), furniture and equipment, generator contract (it is important to note that there is no current contract however, one is needed as WHS is used by the town as an emergency shelter and if the generator does not work we cannot use it as such), and phone service contract (it is important to note that in many schools there is almost no cell phone service and if the phones go down, there is no way to dial for emergency services).

Other additional changes to note are the discontinuation of the activities fees, freshman sports reinstatement of only baseball and boys and girls' basketball, and retirement savings. We've been working for months on early retirement package for our teachers, which I cannot discuss tonight, but it does work to our favor in that we are saving the differences in salaries. Retirement paperwork is due in by March 1 to have a definitive number in savings. Finally, the part you were all waiting for, we are recommending a 2.99% increase over last year's budget. Last year, the first budget brought was a 5.1% increase in was approved by both the board and town council. If you go back to all the strategies we applied, you can see we did exactly what we said we would do. It was built from the ground up, is about incremental change in incremental improvement. This is the budget that will move us forward. Dr. Carnemolla also noted she worked directly with the town on this budget and thanked them for all of their help. Ms. Crotty asked about items that were deemed essential in the facilities section of the budget. She asked if Dr. Carnemolla saw them being built back into the budget in the future? Dr. Carnemolla noted that what is in the budget for this year is what is imperative for this year and she will look at each year after this as to what can be built back in. Ms. Crotty then asked the salary range for the Director of Technology position and was told it is approximately \$70,000 to \$105,000. Several other questions were asked and answered.

The superintendent finished her report by saying she will be excited when winter is over but was able to visit Swift this week. She was able to attend a Lions Club meeting last night with Ms. Crotty and had a great evening with her. She had office hours at the Watertown Library last week and the Oakville library today. She was also at the senior center last week. We had a retirement at Munson house with Terry Lumina and she will be very much missed. That is as much excitement, besides the budget, but I've had in the last week. She reminded everyone that tomorrow is a half day, and that we are currently at six days for snow and with our calendar, we have three more to go before we start removing from April vacation.

K. Report From the Chairman

Tonight I would like to talk about two things very briefly. The first being that working with Dr. Carnemolla has been a learning experience for all of us and has been wonderful. With the transition and staff and at the Munson house, the budget you put forward was monumental and what I can say, when she said she built this budget from the ground up, I can say she not only did that, but from underground as well. She also thanked the business manager, Jill Browne, Ms. Parlato, Ray Ceniccola, Donnah Rochester, her cabinet, & her administrators. This process is something that we should bring forward every single year.

The second thing tonight I would like to discuss is that after having four children and many nieces and nephews and cousins, I don't give parenting advice. Every child is different. But as a mother and Board of Education chair, I do want to share a public request that all of our parents in our community, having another conversation with their children in elementary school, or middle school, or high school, in regards to social media. In particular, what they do on their phones, the apps they are using, & the types of access they have to those applications. I am now

in sync with my children's phones so that every application they have downloaded now also comes to my phone. I've taken the time to look into these applications and to see what can be done with them. I will encourage everyone else to do that so that we can limit some of the problems we have and some of the problems that our students have in regards to their accessibility to social media, particularly with their cell phones.

L. Action Items – Adoption of Items to be Approved by Consent

None

M. Future Agenda Items and Board Members' Comments

None

N. Public Participation

None

O. Executive Session

Agenda Item:	O.1
Subject:	To Enter into Executive Session
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Wilk
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the Board entered into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the strategy related to collective bargaining with the Watertown Education Association, specifically with regards to a proposed retirement incentive. Attending the executive session will be: Josephine Cavallo Rosa, Don Orsini, Raymond Nardella, Janelle Wilk, Vic Vincenzi, Cathy Rinaldi, Leslie Crotty, Jill Browne, Dr. Carnemolla, and myself, Tom Lambert.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes

P. Regular Session

Agenda Item: P.1
Subject: Possible action concerning strategy related to collective bargaining with the Watertown Education Association with regard to a proposed retirement initiative

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Lambert

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that we allow Dr. Bridget Carnemolla to enter into a collective bargaining agreement with the Watertown Education Association for the purpose of an early retirement incentive.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Q. Adjournment

Agenda Item: Q.1
Subject: To Adjourn the Meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Nardella
Motion Seconded By: Ms. Rosa

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that we adjourn the meeting.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Ray Nardella
Secretary of the Board