

Pending BOE Approval

**Watertown Board of Education
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: April 13, 2015
Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Lecture Hall, Watertown High School

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dr. Bridget Carnemolla – Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Emma Karpinski – Student Council Representative
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 March 23, 2015 Regular Board of
Education Meeting

Motion Presented By: Mr. Lambert
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Vicenzi

Text of the Motion:	I move that the Board of Education approve the minutes from the March 23, 2015 Board of Education Regular Meeting.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	Mr. Nardella
Vote:	Motion Passes

E. Report from Student Council Representative – Emma Karpinski

At John Trumbull, Teachers are using Columbia University Units of Study to teach writing after participating in 5 days of professional development. Kindergarten students are almost ready for first grade after covering topics in language arts, reading, and math.

In Judson, classes have had the opportunity to practice Smarter Balanced test items to prepare for the test. Third graders visited the Warner Theatre and saw the production of Charlotte's Web.

At Polk, fifth grade student debates were held before April break. Parents were invited and served as judges. Detective Mark Conway held a Cyber Safety Program for fourth and fifth grade students. A parent addition will take place April 15th.

In Swift, a district wide Coffee House musical performance was held in late March and sold out at Swift. Faculty members and students from Swift and the High School performed. The admission cost will be used for the Watertown Music Boosters Association scholarship. The Safe School Climate Committee met to discuss new district policies regarding visitors and survey results.

And finally at the High School, The Spring Art Show at the Watertown Library just had its opening reception. The art will be on display until Saturday the 18th. The show was put together by Lindsey Lawton and myself. The musical "Leader of the Pack" sold out two of the three show nights. All course requests for the 2015-16 school year were entered.

F. Superintendent's Recommendations and Report

1. Appointments (Information Only)

- a) Mr. Richard Brown to the position of Boys' Track & Field Assistant Coach at Watertown High School for the 2014-2015 school year, at the contractual stipend of \$2,167.00, payable at the end of the season.

- b) Ms. Lauren DiSanto to the position of Long-Term Substitute Math Teacher for Watertown High School, effective April 13, 2015, for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year; being hired at \$75.00 per day for the first ten days and on the eleventh day, the contractual salary of \$42,117.00 (prorated), Step 2 of the WEA contract.
- c) Ms. Katelyn Gavagan to the position of Durational Music Teacher for Judson and Polk Elementary School, effective for the 2014-2015 school year, being hired at \$75.00 per day for the first ten days and on the eleventh day at the contractual salary of \$42,117.00 (prorated) , Step 2 of the WEA contract.
- d) Ms. Jennifer Mancl to the position of Long-Term Substitute Kindergarten Teacher for John Trumbull Primary School, effective April 13, 2015 for the remainder of the 2014-2015 school year, being hired at \$75.00 per day for the first ten days and on the eleventh day, the contractual salary of \$42.117.00 (prorated) , Step 2 of the WEA contract.
- e) Mr. Stephen Paternoster to the position of Boys' Track & Field Head Coach at Watertown High School for the 2014-2015 school year, at the contractual stipend of \$3,607.00, payable at the end of the season.
- f) Ms. Brianna Pitino to the position of Girls' Track & Field Head Coach for Watertown High School for the 2014-2015 school year, at the contractual stipend of \$3,176.00, payable at the end of the season.
- g) Ms. Paula Puma, to the position of Special Education Teacher for Watertown High School, effective for the 2014-2015 school year, being hired on an annual contractual salary of \$49,613.00 (prorated), Step 4 MA degree, per the WEA contract.
- h) Ms. Andrea Szarkowicz, to the position of Girls' Track & Field Assistant Coach for Watertown High School for the 2014-2015 school year, at the contractual stipend of \$2,018.00, payable at the end of the season.

2. Resignations/Retirements (Information Only)

- a. Ms. Kelsey Sewell from the position of 5th Grade Teacher at Polk Elementary School effective, June 30, 2015 for personal reasons.

3. 2014 – 2015 School Year Calendar Revision – Last Day of School

Tonight, she will be asking the board to approve the updated calendar. We want to officially be on the record that the last day of school and Watertown is Friday, June 19. That is the only change to be approved on this calendar. We shall also go over graduation dates where we are looking at Thursday, June 18 for graduation at Swift Middle School and Friday, June 19 for graduation at Watertown High School. Friday

works very well for the high school as the seniors will learn how their project graduation that night.

4. Wall of Honor

The Watertown Board of Education is currently seeking nominations for the Watertown High School Wall of Honor. The purpose of the Wall of Honor is to recognize those individuals that have brought distinction to Watertown High School and the community through their commitment to excellence. To be nominated to the Wall of Honor, a candidate must have graduated from Watertown High School at least 10 years prior to the year of induction and consistently demonstrated the highest standards of excellence and honor in his or her chosen vocation. Award recipients will be chosen from the fields of Athletics, Business/Finance, Fine/ Performing Arts, Education, Health/Medical Services, Government/Public Service, and Science/Technology. Nomination Forms can be found on the district's website at www.watertownps.org. The completed nomination forms must be received in the district offices no later than May 21, 2015.

5. Superintendent's Report

Two weeks ago, Dr. Carnemolla spent the day at John Trumbull and visited most of the classes, but especially 2nd grade where she was able to observe them writing to our town's senior citizens. We have a great help is going very well. The kids were very excited to show letters when she is the senior center, they too, were very excited to receive them. The seniors also asked questions schools and the budget. There were several seniors in attendance. Also, two weeks ago, she spent a day at Swift, where she visited some but not all of the classes due to time constraints. We also had the public budget hearing on March 19, and that went well where as the Town Council did approve the Board of Education budget. Both budgets will be put to referendum on Tuesday, May 12. She also attended the Rotary club meeting last Wednesday where they discussed a number of fundraisers that the Rotary club is involved with that may benefit the schools in particular. Right before she attended the Board of Education meeting tonight, she visited the Watertown Library for the exhibit of art on display by students of Watertown High School.

We received an email late last night from the robotics instructor to let us know what a fantastic job they did in competition. This past weekend, they won again, and are now on their way, for their first time, to the national competition. Congratulations to the Watertown High School Robotics Team!

On Friday, the board members received inner packet a list of line item transfers that at the upcoming board meeting on April 27th, we will be looking to discuss again and have a possible action on. As you all know, one of the new policies adopted last March, requires that we bring line item transfers to the Board of Education for approval. Dr. Carnemolla wanted to be safe and bring all of the line items to the board for approval. This is the time to do them, as we have just completed the record of our fiscal year. We have also received first installment of our excess cost grant and we need to allocate those funds.

Ms. Browne – In the memo that was sent Friday's packet, you will see there's a list of item transfers. They are on the bulleted list. Some are reductions that you will see

because of the excess cost grant. They will be flipped towards professional services, pupil transportation, and tuition. Ms. Browne went over some of the numbers and broke down what will be transferred where. She is also moving money from certified salaries where we are down, to tutoring where we are a bit over to help balance that out. We also need to add a little bit the substitute salaries and then we would also like to take some back to give to the instructional supplies. As you recall, to make the cuts we needed back in July we had to take a good amount away from our supplies. Ms. Browne and took the time to go through five or six more transfers she would like to accomplish. There are also some transfers that will be happening within the individual school budgets as well.

Ms. Crotty asked if all of these transfers add up to the excess cost grant amount and the answer was yes whereas Ms. Browne also noted that there is a second installment coming to us after May. The first payment, which is the usual bulk payment, comes in February and the second payment comes in May. She then also asked if the supply budget was frozen, and the answer again was yes, that line item was hard frozen in December.

Mr. Lambert asked if the \$300,000 pupil transportation line was done without historical data or was it from last year we had to raise it? Ms. Browne noted that typically a certain percentage of the excess cost grant usually goes towards people transportation and it's also very difficult to forecast at the beginning of the year. Sometimes we will not know where the outplacements are. It is noted that these change from year to year. Ms. Browne is going to look up historic members from Mr. Lambert. Dr. Carnemolla noted that these are special needs students that we are required to transport.

Mr. Vincenzi asked why the tutoring salaries increased as much as they have and Dr. Carnemolla noted that that is because there have been a number of concussions and the treatment for the concussions has changed. When a student is diagnosed with a concussion the treatment will vary, with time being sent home, no lights, no computers, and we are seeing these diagnosed more frequently. We've also had more students to have had serious illnesses keeping them out of school.

Ms. Rinaldi asked if the new vehicles we purchased will help with the overage in the transportation line, but the answer was maybe yes or maybe no because the vehicles are being used transport students that were already counted on and being driven to schools outside of our district, for instance Oliver Wolcott Tech in Torrington and Bristol Tech. The average that you see is really for our special needs students.

Dr. Carnemolla noted that this Wednesday she will be at the high school, and then that afternoon at 2:30, she will have office hours with Dr. C at the Oakville library. Next week, on Tuesday she will be at Judson all day and on Thursday she will be at Polk.

G. Award Recognition

The Watertown Board of Education would like to congratulate the following Judson Elementary School Students who were recognized for the *Student of the Month* for January, February and March:

January

Grade 3

Owen Brown

Lucy Kite

February

Grade 3

Juan Rentas

Juliann Noyd

March

Grade 3

Joseph Busalacchi

Ella Kijak

Grade 4

Abigail Stinson
Tyler Palmer

Grade 4

Mason Smutney
Daniela Mancini

Grade 4

Jaiden Carter
Eliana Groben

Grade 5

Samuel Summerfield
Alivia Dunn

Grade 5

Ilma Cirikovic
Peyton DeFeo

Grade 5

Avery O'Connell

H. Public Participation

None

I. Committee Reports

Curriculum and Instruction Committee, Mr. Ray Nardella, Chair – No

Policy and Labor Committee – Ms. Leslie Crotty, (Acting 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

J. Communications – Secretary

A letter was received from the Falls Ave. Senior Center. Some members of the Board of Education generously donated money so that our seniors can receive tickets to the WHS play. Mr. Nardella read a thank you note from Catherine at the senior center for the tickets to *Leader of the Pack*. It was noted that 28 tickets were donated by board members and the senior center provided the transportation.

K. Report from the Board Chair

At the Budget Public Hearing on April 1st, 2015 the Town Council unanimously supported the Board of Education approved School Budget. We witnessed over 25 people take advantage of their right as residents of our community to speak at the Hearing, and every single one of those who spoke about the school budget, spoke in favor of it. And they should have.

Like the Town of Watertown, our school district has worked very hard to put forth a sound, transparent budget under huge amounts of financial pressure. When federal and state funding continues to be under the required level, we have had to continue to shift our own spending priorities to cover mandated programs. In many cases over the years, we have had to shut down or significantly decrease programs considered important by our community.

Superintendents all over the state are feeling the same kind of pressure as the state and federal mandates require more and more and Watertown and surrounding communities get back less and less. And if this scenario is not tough enough to keep good people working for Watertown and its Public Schools, getting the public's approval also is getting tougher.

The Watertown School District has done a remarkable job containing each and every single one of our costs, making the system even more efficient than in the past when we were ranked as one of the most efficient school districts in the State of Connecticut. There are some districts that are forced to try and out-source food service, transportation, and other employee jobs to save money, while we have found ways to do these things without outsourcing, and we are saving money by doing it. Talk about turning things upside down. We are in the business of educating students, not laying-off employees, approximately 80% of which are residents of Watertown and Oakville.

People cannot say this budget "is not low enough" because of the 2.99 % increase. We are not afraid to be accountable for our spending, and for those who have read the entire budget and presentation they know this is true. Without the Special Education increases we would be at a .0058% increase- or \$230,104. Even with all of the important Special Education increases within this budget, we have still found a way to make the educational opportunities equal between Polk students and Judson students, and we have found a way to bring in a much needed Social Worker to provide the responsible level of support our Water-Oak students require, all while still helping to bring us into 2015 with technology, oversight, data input, and management. We have gone after and been awarded grants in every possible area where we qualify- except where we cannot provide the competent data that is required.

Folks, we are painstakingly documenting costs at all levels, and making sure that every administrator can see how much they are spending at each school, comparing and assessing how much we are spending per pupil, and looking at the differences in spending and determining how it can affect student performance.

Dr. Carnemolla applied budget strategies that the top thinkers in education recommend, and put her own dynamic spin on it. She started her budgeting at the school level and worked her way up, as a way to develop a budget that is comprehensive and easily understood. We will do

our part to continue with the same budget strategy every day of every single year. And, thanks to some great partnerships with Members of our Town Council, Town Manager Bob Scannell, Financial Director Frank Nardelli, and people like State Representative Eric Berthel and Senator Rob Kane, we will continue to concentrate on working with state legislators so they know how tight finances are and we will push to see what they can do to get more state funding for Watertown, its senior citizens and its Public Schools. We don't really don't have much choice.

We need those with the power to vote to be there on Referendum Day, because cutting this budget would mean residents want the district to scrap the long term efficient cost saving strategies applied. If we cut somewhere costs will go up, not down due to the saving measures we have taken. We scrap the Social Worker and we go right back to paying \$17,000 more in outsourcing fees. We cannot go back to old ways of robbing Peter to pay Paul until Peter gets laid off and Paul just barely gets by. We refuse to let the quality of this town go down because of decisions made by the state, and we will continue to educate responsibly and efficiently, but we need your support in this process. Please vote on May 12th in support of both the Town and School Budget. Thank you.

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

Agenda Item:	L.1
Subject:	Consideration of the Approval to Revise the 2014 – 2015 School Year Calendar
Motion Presented By:	Mr. Nardella
Motion Seconded By:	Ms. Wilk
Text of the Motion:	Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of the revised school year calendar as presented to approve the last day of school as June 19 th , 2015.
Discussion:	None
Opposed:	None
Abstained:	None
Vote:	Motion Passes
Agenda Item:	L.2a

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the High School and Middle School Graduation

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk

Motion Seconded By: Ms. Rinaldi

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of Thursday June 18th, 2015 as the date for graduation exercises for Swift Middle School.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: L.2b

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of the High School and Middle School Graduation

Motion Presented By: Ms. Wilk

Motion Seconded By: Ms. Rinaldi

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the board approve of Friday June 19th, 2015 as the date for graduation exercises for Watertown High School, Class of 2015.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None

Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: L.3

Subject: Consideration of the Approval of an Out of State Field Trip to St. Louis, Missouri

Motion Presented By: Mr. Vincenzi
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Lambert

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approves of the Watertown High School Robotics Team field trip to St. Louis, Missouri from April 21, 2015 through April 26, 2015, for the purpose of competing in a Robotics Competition for nineteen (19) Watertown High School students and six (6) chaperones.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: L.4
Subject: Consideration to Adopt Prior Authorization Regarding an Out of State Field Trip to Worcester, Massachusetts from April 8 to April 11, 2015 for Nineteen (19) Watertown High School

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approves of adopting its previous authorization that took place via email on April 2nd, 2015 to approve the out-of-state field trip to Worcester, Massachusetts from April 8th, 2015 to April 11th, 2015, for 19 (nineteen) Watertown High School Students from the Robotics Team 237

Discussion: Ms. Crotty offered a brief explanation as to why she is asking for an action item for a past event. The robotics team made it to a certain level of at the championships over vacation and between Board of Education meetings and she made the decision to have an electronic vote (which was a unanimous decision) to have their field trip. In doing so, the board was in violation of the FOI. Any time a discussion happens, whether in person or electronically, it is considered a

meeting by the FOIA. So to rectify that, she wanted to acknowledge that we did do a vote electronically as an emergency basis and at this point, she wanted to ask for a consideration to adopt a prior authorization.

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: L.5
Subject: Consideration of the Approval to use John Trumbull Primary School and Judson Elementary School for Religious Education Classes During the 2015 – 2016 School Year

Motion Presented By: Ms. Rinaldi
Motion Seconded By: Mr. Gambardella

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board approve of St. John the Evangelist, Office of Religious Education, to use John Trumbull Primary School and Judson Elementary School for religious education classes during the 2015-2016 school year.

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
Abstained: None
Vote: Motion Passes

Agenda Item: L.6
Subject: Consideration of the Approval of Acceptance of a Gift

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

Text of the Motion: Madame Chair, I move that the Board accept a donation from the Watertown Lions Club in the amount of \$1,270.00 to support eighth grade students in need of assistance to attend the yearly educational trip to

Washington, D.C. It is recommended that a letter of thanks be sent to the Lions Club for their generous donation.

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

M. Future Agenda Items and Board Members’ Comments

Mr. Gambardella – Wanted to let everyone know that he enjoyed Leader of the Pack and all of the musicals put on by the high school. He feels we are very lucky to have such talent and beautiful children in our schools.

Mr. Vincenzi – Was wondering if the minutes from the meeting can be seen online by the board vs. being handed paper copies to save paper and time. Ms. Crotty will get back to the board with the state statute on it, but also noted that a written format was chosen for a variety of reasons.

N. Public Participation

None

O. Adjournment

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

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

Text of the Motion: Madam Chair, I move that adjourn the meeting

Discussion: None

Opposed: None
 Abstained: None

Vote: Motion Passes

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mindi Davidson
Recording Secretary

Ray Nardella
Secretary of the Board