

Central Berkshire Regional School District School Committee

Regular Meeting

Thursday, December 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

**Kittredge Elementary School
Hinsdale, MA 01226**

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held in-person and remotely at Kittredge Elementary School, on Thursday, December 21, 2023 and was called to order by Chair Peters at 7:01 p.m. The meeting was being video and audio recorded. Dalton Community Television and Sabrina Damms from iBerkshire were also recording.

For the record, the chair does not vote unless noted.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Absent: Members Lacatell, Lounsbury

Also Present: Superintendent Leslie Blake-Davis, Assistant Superintendent Michael Henault, Director of Finance & Operations Gregory Boino, Recording Secretary Beth O'Connor, and Members of the Audience.

ARTICLE 12662 RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

A. Student Reports

1. High School Representatives

Oliva Roberts reported that winter sports has begun at WRHS. The winter concert was held at WRHS on December 20, 2023 and went well. National Honor Society held their Empty Bowls fundraiser on December 14th at WRHS and raised close to \$3000.00.

B. Other

ARTICLE 12664 FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

Vice Chair DiTomasso reviewed the warrants previously signed.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 17, 2023

Warrant #AP24-10S

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses: General Fund

Accounts Payable	\$ 34,051.91
Employee Health & Dental Insurance District Share	\$ 296,754.65
Retiree Health Insurance District Share	\$ 131,570.85
Total General Fund	\$ 462,377.41

Operating Expenses: Other Funds

Agency: Employee Share Health & Dental Insurance	\$ 82,809.35
Agency: Retiree Share Health Insurance	\$ 27,245.45
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ -
Grants	\$ 21,651.23
Total Other Funds:	\$ 131,706.03

Revolving

School Lunch	\$ 36.89
Arbiter Pay	\$ 10,000.00
NRMS - Extra Curricular	\$ 43.96
WRHS - Football	\$ 2,647.61
WRHS - Soccer, Boys	\$ 665.01
WRHS - Soccer, Girls	\$ 505.04
WRHS - Swimming	\$ 1,332.00
WRHS - Volleyball	\$ 1,412.00
Total Revolving Funds	\$ 16,642.51

Total Authorization for Payment	\$ 610,725.95
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 22, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-11D

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Accounts Payable from Agency Accounts

Payroll Deductions

403B (Various Companies)	\$ 17,029.06
457 (Various Companies)	\$ 60.00
Wage Garnishments	\$ -
Berkshire United Way	\$ 11.30
Union Dues	\$ 6,772.99
Federal Income Tax	\$ 52,611.51
Berkshire County Retirement	\$ 14,437.04
Mass Teachers Retirement	\$ 116,763.77
OBRA Retirement	\$ 1,637.99
Medicare Employee Contributions	\$ 9,630.41
Massachusetts Income Tax	\$ 31,200.78
Employee Contributions to Insurances	\$ 4,700.98

Total Payable	\$ 254,855.83
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 1, 2023

Warrant #AP24-11

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses: General Fund

Accounts Payable	\$ 440,081.78
Employee Health, Dental & Life Insurance District Share	\$ -
Retiree Health & Life Insurance District Share	\$ -
Total General Fund	\$ 440,081.78

Operating Expenses: Other Funds

Agency: Employee Share Health, Dental & Life Insurance	\$ -
Agency: Retiree Share Health & Life Insurance	\$ -
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ 17,326.00
Grants	\$ 62,567.88
Total Other Funds:	\$ 79,893.88

Revolving

School Lunch	\$ 74,867.03
WRHS - Gift Account, Athletics	\$ 7,540.00
WRHS - Gift Account, Comp Hardware	\$ 75.98
Total Revolving Funds	\$ 82,483.01

Total Authorization for Payment	\$ 602,458.67
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 1, 2023

Warrant #APW24-09

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Capital Expenses: Other Funds

WRHS Building Project	\$ 20,046.00
Total Other Funds:	\$ 20,046.00

Total Authorization for Payment	\$ 20,046.00
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 7, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-12

PAYROLL

General Fund: Operating Expenses

Employee Wages \$ 596,473.45

Other Funds

Revolving Accounts	\$ -
Grants	\$ 88,801.29
School Lunch	\$ 14,363.15
Total Other	\$ 103,164.44

Total Payroll \$ 699,637.89

Employer Medicare \$ 9,439.03

Total Payroll and Taxes	\$ 709,076.92
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 7, 2023

Warrant No. PR24-12D

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Accounts Payable from Agency Accounts

Payroll Deductions

403B (Various Companies)	\$ 17,029.06
457 (Various Companies)	\$ 60.00
Wage Garnishments	\$ -
Berkshire United Way	\$ -
Union Dues	\$ 6,792.99
Federal Income Tax	\$ 51,702.02
Berkshire County Retirement	\$ 13,699.59
Mass Teachers Retirement	\$ -
OBRA Retirement	\$ 1,406.70
Medicare Employee Contributions	\$ 9,439.00
Massachusetts Income Tax	\$ 30,533.51
Employee Contributions to Insurances	\$ 116.92

Total Payable	\$ 130,779.79
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SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 8, 2023

Warrant #AP24-12

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Operating Expenses: General Fund

Accounts Payable	\$ 220,854.31
Employee Life Insurance District Share	\$ 928.63
Retiree Health & Life Insurance District Share	\$ 254.30
Total General Fund	\$ 222,037.24

Operating Expenses: Other Funds

Agency: Employee Share Life Insurance	\$ 158.12
Agency: Retiree Share Health & Life Insurance	\$ 136.30
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ 1,400.00
Grants	\$ 36,196.80
Total Other Funds:	\$ 37,891.22

Revolving

School Lunch	\$ 71.61
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WRHS - Athletics	\$ 1,713.75
Revolving - other	\$ 13,026.42
Total Revolving Funds	\$ 14,811.78

Total Authorization for Payment	\$ 274,740.24
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B. Gifts, Donations and Grants

1. Approval to Establish New Student Activity Accounts

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER STUART

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approve a new student activity account at Nessacus Regional Middle School for the class of 2030 and Nessacus Gender Sexuality Alliance, as recommended by the District Treasurer.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously.

2. Approval of Fund-Raising Events for Student Activities

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CRAFT-REISS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the following fundraising events:

- *Selling positive grams from January 31-February 6, 2024 to raise funds for NRMS Gender Sexuality Alliance Club*
- *NRMS Semi-formal dance on February 9, 2024 to raise funds for NRMS Gender Sexuality Alliance Club*
- *WRHS School-wide dance in late January, early February to raise funds for the Class of 2026*
- *Spring Craft Fair (date to be determined) to raise funds for the WRHS Student Council.*

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously.

3. Acceptance of Donation from Berkshire Taconic

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts the following donations from the Berkshire Taconic Grant, as recommended by the District Treasurer.

- *\$6,100.00 for First Things First*
- *\$2,475.00 for Technology across the Curriculum for Preschoolers*

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:
Abstentions:
Motions passes unanimously.

4. Acceptance of Donation from Berkshire Taconic STEEP Grant

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts the following donations from the Berkshire Taconic STEEP Grant, as recommended by the District Treasurer.

- \$1000.00 awarded to Nessacus Regional Middle School Television Production Project
- \$1000.00 awarded to Wahconah Regional High School Plants and Pollinator Plaques
- \$1000.00 awarded to Wahconah Regional High Culturally Responsive, Diverse Library Materials
- \$1000.00 awarded for Born to Learn Literacy Kits
- \$1600.00 awarded to Wahconah Regional High School for Shakespeare & Company, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:
Abstentions:
Motions passes unanimously.

5. Acceptance of Donation from Aaron's Appliance

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts a donation of \$500.00 from Aaron's Appliance, to be awarded to Wahconah's Renaissance Student Activity Fund, as by the District Treasurer.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:
Abstentions:
Motions passes unanimously.

6. Authorization of Scholarship Fund

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accept the following donations totaling \$2,000.00 as recommended by the District Treasurer:

Brian Fitzgerald and Julie Englund donated 2000.00 to the Class of 1970 Scholarship Fund.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:
Abstentions:
Motions passes unanimously.

ARTICLE 12665 SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 16, 2023

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

To accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 16, 2023.

MOVED BY MEMBER STUART SECONDED BY MEMBER LATAZZORI

To approve the minutes as amended with additions that were emailed in.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinias, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously

ARTICLE 12666 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Report

1. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Blake-Davis reviewed her report, which is attached to the official minutes. Highlighted topics: presentation from WRHS No Place for Hate student group to WRHS faculty, CBRSD Partners with DESE and Imagine Learning, Family Literacy Engagement evening held at Craneville and Nessacus, and Food Insecurity Support for Central Berkshire Families.

Superintendent Blake-Davis reported that Kittredge and Nessacus will be participating in testing through the National Educational Association. This test collects nationwide data on how students are doing in regards to literacy and numeracy.

Digital forms are starting to be created through a new program called Droplet. A shout out to Joe Stergis and Assistant Superintendent Mike Henault for all the behind-the-scenes coding that they are doing to create the forms. The first form that is being created is the bullying form. All forms will be in droplet and ready to use at the beginning of the new school year.

B. Recommendations

None.

C. Other

ARTICLE 12667 COMMUNICATIONS

A. School Committee Vacancy-Dalton-

This was postponed until the January School Committee meeting because of information not on the posted agenda and election process questions.

Chair Peters did call the candidates to explain. He also spoke to the committee about the election process. Members asked about absentee voting if not at meeting. Member Stuart spoke to the election process and being able to vote by ballot. Chair Peters will be talking to legal counsel to get the process set for the January meeting. Member DiTomasso recommended bringing the election process to the January 11th meeting so that the school committee could go over the process before the election on January 25th.

1. Acceptance of the Solar PPA Estoppel Certificate

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER GELINAS

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accept the Solar PPA Estoppel Certificate as drafted and authorize by the Chair to sign said Certificate.

Director Boino reported that Sun Farm Development reached out to CBRSD. They oversee Churchill venture who CBRSD has an agreement with for our solar panels. They are selling some of their membership interests in that company. They need to have an agreement to say that we are in good standing within our current agreement that was set back in 2017. Our attorney has looked at the documentation and all that is needed a vote by this committee. CBRSD does not own the panels, receive a 17.5 discounted rate for electricity for 20 years.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously.

B. Report of the Chair

1. Subcommittee Assignments

Chair Peters has sent out the subcommittee assignments. He tried to give members their first choice and if that wasn't available then second choice. Two chair changes: Charlotte Crane will be the chair of the Personnel Subcommittee and Paul Farella will be the chair of the Finance Subcommittee. The Superintendent Evaluation Ad Hoc was left off the subcommittee list but that was in error, this Ad Hoc committee is still active.

ARTICLE 12668 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reports

1. Curriculum

a. Report

Member Latizzori reported that the subcommittee met Nov. 20th. Presentation by Dr. Alison Druin, Dr. Ben Benderson and Pepper Fornier of the J.S Bryant School in Cummington. They are in the process of trying to open a private school in the district. They will be presenting to the full school committee in February. Information on the school was sent to school committee members. Anytime a private school wants to form they need approval from the district they are in, and that approval comes from the school committee. Then they will need approval from two to three districts in the surrounding areas.

Director Nathan Loux reported on the Special Education Review that the District is in the middle of. Student Services is now housed at Nessacus. There are five department with in that, they are: Special Education, 504's, English Language Education, DCF and Homelessness. They are being reviewed in two areas: English Language Education and the Special Education Program. Director Loux went over the process that they are going through in each area and will report back to the committee when the review is finished.

Director Loux did report since the beginning of his tenure there is a slight increase in IEPS. This could be due to COVID or a better review process. The percentage of students on IEP in CBRSD is twenty percent. A new State IEP has been released for implementation on September 1, 2024.

Member Craft-Reiss reported on the Curriculum Council. This council came out of a discussion in September at curriculum subcommittee. It is part of a grant for High Quality Curriculum updating and is under the guidance of Assistant Superintendent Michael Henault. The council is made up of teachers, parents and school committee members. The focus is on finding a new kindergarten through eighth grade reading curriculum.

The next meeting will be on January 9, 2024 at 7p.m. On the agenda: Superintendent will be giving a report on the Curriculum Council, Presentation from Kerry Mason on State Health and Wellness Standards and reviewing an Overnight Filed Trip Request.

b. Presentation from Dr. Allison Druin-J.S. Bryant School

Postponed until the February School Committee meeting.

2. Finance

a. Report

Member DiTomasso reported discussion on Rural Aid. CBRSD received 1.325 million for 2024, discussion on allocating the money in the timeframe allowed. Fiscal '25 initial budget was discussed. Director Boino shared that they were looking at an amount of 32,000,511.00, \$511,842.00 represents an increase of 7.29%. Noted that in 2024 the preliminary budget reflected an increase of 5.86 percent. Historically the number comes in high and then moves down. A brief discussion on the School Resource Officer. The grant did not come through and there is no money currently in the budget for this position.

School Lunch rates were discussed. The last time it was raised was 2008. Supported increase to allow better quality of food. First breakfast and lunch are free, if student wanted a second meal they would pay. Director Boino stated that the rates are set by the federal government and aligns to the reimbursement.

Discussed the conflict-of-interest form that Dalton, Peru, along with two other towns received from their legal counsel. All four towns share the same legal counsel and had to sign the conflict-of-interest form that they were all willing to accept the same attorney.

The next meeting will be January 3, 2024, in person at the WRHS Learning commons. On the agenda will be an update on the Regional Agreement Amendment and 2025 Initial Budget discussion.

b. Approval of New Rates for School Breakfast and Lunches

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER STUART

That the Central Berkshire Regional School District approves the following increases in school lunch prices effective February 1, 2024, as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:

- *Regular student lunch from \$2.25 to \$4.30*
- *Regular student breakfast from \$1.50 to \$2.28*

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously

3. Policy

a. Report

Member Stuart reported that the subcommittee met December 18th at Nessacus. Liz Lafond joined the meeting and continued to work on Section B that deals with the school committee. A few highlights under B that covers powers and duties. We have a self-evaluation that school committee currently does but may want to look at adopting goals to measure our work against. Oath of office and role of town clerk will be looked into. Ethics certification that needs to be done every two years by school committee members. Open meeting law certification. When re-elected the member needs to recertify, and submit to the town clerk and the school committee keeps a copy. Filling a vacancy of a school committee may need to be looked at as well by RAAC for regional agreement for a procedure.

Charlotte Crane will be the new chair of the policy subcommittee. Member Gelinas mentioned that a handbook for new members would be nice to have. This would give new members an overall view of how things work and information on the different subcommittees.

4. Personnel
 - a. Report

No Report.

- b. Executive Session – Negotiations and Approval of Executive Session Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED that the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee moves into executive session at ____ p.m. in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A Section 21 (a) (2) to discuss strategy for negotiations with nonunion personnel, including the superintendent and to review and approve minutes of prior executive sessions for which the chair has declared an executive session is necessary to protect the bargaining position of the Committee without reconvening in open session at the conclusion of the executive session.

5. Safety and Wellness
 - a. Report

Member Latazzori reported that Kerry Mason presented the new Health and Wellness standards. Went over District report on illness, and Superintendent reported on bullying data.

The next meeting is to be determined.

B. Others

6. Wahconah Building Project
 - a. Report

Chair Peters reported that the audit process has started. CBRSD is in the final phase of this project.

7. Regional Agreement Ad Hoc
 - a. Report

Member Emerson reported that due date is approaching. Starting to hear back from towns.

8. Superintendent Evaluation Ad Hoc
 - a. Report

Member Craft-Reiss reported the committee met on December 13th. They are bringing to the school committee the recommendation to approve the superintendents' goals. The goals were in the meeting packet.

- b. Approval of Superintendent Goals

MOVED BY MEMBER CRAFT-REISS, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approves the Superintendent's Goals.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinas, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc committee will be in February, and they will be meeting with the Superintendent as part of their quarterly meetings.

ARTICLE 12669 PERSONNEL

Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

Custodian	BWES	Raymaakers, Eric	Hired	11/20/2023
Paraprofessional	NRMS	Fachini, Shirley	Hired	11/29/2023
Custodian	WRHS	Card, Kurt	Transfer	12/4/2023
Paraprofessional	CES	Wagner, Jazmine	Transfer	12/4/2023
Paraprofessional	CES	Gabrielle Gingras	Resigned	12/5/2023

Note: All salaries are set in accordance with current contracts.

ARTICLE 12670 OLD BUSINESS (Unfinished Business)

(Any business not completed or postponed from a previous meeting, or not covered if a meeting had to be adjourned for any reason prior to concluding entire agenda)

ARTICLE 12671 NEW BUSINESS (Emergency Business)

(Unforeseen business developed subsequent to posting of meeting and requiring timely attention. Member requests to place items on a future agenda [without deliberation of the substance of such item])

Chair Peters announced that the MASC training is rescheduled for January 30, 2024 with Liz Lafond.

ARTICLE 12672 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Member Craft-Reiss commented on how wonderful it was to see teachers being taught by students during the presentation of No Place For Hate. This was a great forum for student leaders to shine and teach teachers, what a great experience.

Member DiTomasso met with Legislator Marks Aid and thanked them for the rural aid that we received. She asked if there was any way to look into the possibility of more flexibility.

MOVED BY MEMBER CASE, SECONDED BY MEMBER STUART

Moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15pm.

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Craft-Reiss, Crane, DiTomasso, Eberwein (remote), Emerson, Farella, Gelinis, Lattizzori, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously.

The following documents were emailed to members and are filed with the official minute

Superintendents Report

Superintendents Assessments and Goals

General Terms and Conditions Solar Power & Service Agreement

Amendment to Solar Power & Service Agreement

Solar PPA Estoppel Certificate

R. Branch Letter of Interest

J. Diver Letter of Interest

S. Tucker Letter of Interest