

Central Berkshire Regional School District School Committee, Regular Meeting

Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Wahconah Regional High School

A regular meeting of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, held in-person and remotely at Wahconah Regional High School, on Thursday, January 11, 2024 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, Crane, DiTomasso, Emerson, Farella, Lacatell, Lounsbury, Stuart and Chair Peters  
Absent: Members Craft-Reiss, Eberwein, Gelinas and Lattizzori  
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 12673      RESPONSES FROM THE AUDIENCE

ARTICLE 12674      STUDENT AFFAIRS

A. Student Reports

Aidan Garcia reported midterms at WRHS are in progress. National Honor Society is planning a babysitting night in March for local families. The WRHS environmental group Green Umbrella is planning a trip to Craneville and Kittredge to teach the students about climate awareness in the area. The Best Buddies Group and National Honor Society are working with Mr. Shannon on a Kindness Campaign for March. The spring musical will be 'Into the Woods'.

B. Other

ARTICLE 12675      FINANCIAL REPORT

A. Warrants

Vice Chair DiTomasso reviewed the warrants previously signed.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**December 21, 2023**

**Warrant No. PR24-13**

**PAYROLL**

**General Fund: Operating Expenses**

**Employee Wages** **\$ 606,449.47**

**Other Funds**

Revolving Accounts \$ -

Grants \$ 103,447.55

School Lunch \$ 15,218.27

**Total Other** **\$ 118,665.82**

**Total Payroll** **\$ 725,115.29**

Employer Medicare	\$ 9,826.81
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Total Payroll and Taxes	\$ 734,942.10
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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**December 21, 2023**

**Warrant No. PR24-13D**

**PAYROLL DEDUCTION**

**Accounts Payable from Agency Accounts**

**Payroll Deductions**

403B (Various Companies)	\$ 17,028.92
457 (Various Companies)	\$ 60.00
Wage Garnishments	\$ -
Berkshire United Way	\$ 11.30
Union Dues	\$ 6,768.12
Federal Income Tax	\$ 54,382.57
Berkshire County Retirement	\$ 14,264.56
Mass Teachers Retirement	\$ 113,635.75
OBRA Retirement	\$ 1,784.33
Medicare Employee Contributions	\$ 9,826.79
Massachusetts Income Tax	\$ 31,775.77
Employee Contributions to Insurances	\$ 4,700.98

Total Payable	\$ 254,239.09
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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**December 29, 2023**

**Warrant #AP24-13**

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

**Operating Expenses: General Fund**

Accounts Payable	\$ 823,752.62
Employee Health & Dental Insurance District Share	\$ 298,977.80
Retiree Health Insurance District Share	\$ 138,239.10
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>\$1,260,969.52</b>

**Operating Expenses: Other Funds**

Agency: Employee Share Health & Dental Insurance	\$ 83,398.95
Agency: Retiree Share Health Insurance	\$ 28,562.20
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ 3,120.00
Grants	\$ 50,314.81
<b>Total Other Funds:</b>	<b>\$ 165,395.96</b>

**Revolving**

School Lunch	\$ 70,987.97
WRHS - Athletics	\$ 6,478.15
Revolving - other	\$ 8,728.75
<b>Total Revolving Funds</b>	<b>\$ 86,194.87</b>

<b>Total Authorization for Payment</b>	<b>\$1,512,560.35</b>
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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**December 29, 2023**

**Warrant #AP24-13S**

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

**Operating Expenses: General Fund**

Accounts Payable	\$	600.00
Employee Health & Dental Insurance District Share	\$	-
Retiree Health Insurance District Share	\$	-
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>600.00</b>

**Operating Expenses: Other Funds**

Agency: Employee Share Health & Dental Insurance	\$	-
Agency: Retiree Share Health Insurance	\$	-
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$	-
Grants	\$	-
<b>Total Other Funds:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>-</b>

**Revolving**

School Lunch	\$	-
WRHS - Athletics	\$	-
Revolving - other	\$	-
<b>Total Revolving Funds</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>Total Authorization for Payment</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>600.00</b>
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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**January 4, 2024**

**Warrant No. PR24-14**

**PAYROLL**

**General Fund: Operating Expenses**

**Employee Wages** **\$ 581,966.18**

**Other Funds**

Revolving Accounts	\$	-
Grants	\$	78,890.64
School Lunch	\$	10,733.70
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>89,624.34</b>

**Total Payroll** **\$ 671,590.52**

**Employer Medicare** **\$ 9,018.46**

**Total Payroll and Taxes** **\$ 680,608.98**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**January 4, 2024**

**Warrant No. PR24-14D (Voucher Number 1001)**

**PAYROLL DEDUCTION**

**Accounts Payable from Agency Accounts**

**Payroll Deductions**

403B (Various Companies)	
457 (Various Companies)	\$ 60.00
Wage Garnishments	\$ 16,573.26
Berkshire United Way	\$ -
Union Dues	\$ 6,757.48
Federal Income Tax	\$ 48,206.60
Berkshire County Retirement	\$ 11,739.18
Mass Teachers Retirement	\$ -
OBRA Retirement	\$ 949.58
Medicare Employee Contributions	\$ 9,018.49
Massachusetts Income Tax	\$ 29,297.25
Employee Contributions to Insurances	\$ 116.92

<b>Total Payable</b>	<b>\$ 122,718.76</b>
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**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**January 5, 2024**

**Warrant #AP24-14 (Voucher #1002)**

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

**Operating Expenses: General Fund**

Accounts Payable	\$ 15,190.18
Employee Life Insurance District Share	\$ 928.62
Retiree Health & Life Insurance District Share	\$ 254.30
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>\$ 16,373.10</b>

**Operating Expenses: Other Funds**

Agency: Employee Share Life Insurance	\$ 158.13
Agency: Retiree Share Life Insurance	\$ 136.30
Prior Year Encumbrances	\$ 2,160.00
Grants	\$ 3,886.27
<b>Total Other Funds:</b>	<b>\$ 6,340.70</b>

**Revolving**

School Lunch	\$ -
WRHS - Athletics	\$ 625.00
Revolving - other	\$ -
<b>Total Revolving Funds</b>	<b>\$ 625.00</b>

<b>Total Authorization for Payment</b>	<b>\$ 23,338.80</b>
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**B. Gifts, Donations and Grants**

1. Approval of STEEP Grant from Berkshire Taconic Foundation

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER LACATELL

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee accepts a STEEP grant award in the amount of \$995.00 from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation for Mindfulness: Supporting Students and Staff in embodying learning, as recommended by the District Treasurer.*

Ayes: Ten members.  
Nays: None.  
Abstentions: None.  
Motion carried unanimously.

#### ARTICLE 12676 SECRETARY'S REPORT

##### A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 21, 2023

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

*To accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 21, 2023.*

Ayes: Ten members.  
Nays: None.  
Abstentions: None.  
Motion carried unanimously.

#### ARTICLE 12677 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: Budget 2025, National Assessment Education Program (NAEP), Teaching and Learning and the WRHS Apollonian Players.

###### 2. Initial FY 2025 Budget

Superintendent Blake-Davis opened the budget presentation stating that the budget is an evolving process. The budget season begins at the conclusion of the last budget season. It was noted that it is early in the budget process and there is still information coming in, for instance Health Insurance and state revenue. She spoke to using the Strategic Plan that is in place when looking at the districts needs and the utilization of grant funding. The superintendent's office has also communicated to the seven towns the dates when the school committee would be discussing the budget.

Director Boino reviewed a presentation on highlights of the FY25 Initial Budget that is attached to the official minutes. The following areas of the initial budget were presented: Goals, Projected Increase, Budget Offsets, FY 2025 Initial Budget, 2025 Initial Revenue Projections, Discontinued ESSER III Positions, Special Revenue Sources, District Students, Certified Employees by School, District FTE Teachers Percentage Compared to Students, FY '25 Capital Budget for Town Assessment.

It was reported that the Initial FY25 Budget is an increase of 3.35% over FY24, with a variance of \$1,014,193.

##### B. Recommendations

##### C. Other

#### ARTICLE 12678 COMMUNICATIONS

##### A. Report of the Chair

###### 1. Process for Filling School Committee Vacancy

Chair Peters reported that after speaking with legal counsel that there can be a ballot vote for the election of the Dalton School Committee vacancy.

The process will be as follows:

- The candidates will give their candidate statement and then school committee members can ask questions.
- A ballot will be given to members which will have their name on it and the candidates name on it.
- The chair will direct members to mark their preference on the ballot.
- The member will choose the candidate on the ballot and then the ballot will be collected to be read aloud.
- When reading the ballot, the members name along with their choice will be read.
- After all the ballots have been read the chair will call for a member to make a motion to nominate a candidate.

- The committee will then discuss and vote on the motion.

This is how a ballot process works in an open meeting.

The committee discussed if a candidate does not get voted on first motion, then process begins again with another motion and new candidate. If all members are present standard vote will take place. If vote on motion seems close or members are remote a roll call vote will take place.

## 2. MASC Training Date

Chair Peters reported that the MASC training with Liz Lafond will be January 31, 2024 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Nessacus in the Library.

## ARTICLE 12679 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Reports

#### 1. Curriculum

##### a. Report

Member Alpert reported that the met on January 9<sup>th</sup> and had a presentation on the State Health and Wellness curriculum for CBRSD. All schools use this curriculum, parents can have their student opt out in the middle and high school with the social, emotional piece of curriculum. Assistant Superintendent Henault spoke to the two pilot programs for a new reading program recommended by the curriculum council. This will be funded by a \$100,000. grant that CBRSD received. The subcommittee discussed the Overnight Field Trip to Norwood Ma for students at WRHS that was recommended for approval. Tentative next meeting is February 13<sup>th</sup>.

##### b. Approval of Overnight Field Trip to Norwood MA

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER ALPERT

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee approve an overnight field trip on March 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024, for the Wahconah Business Class to attend the Business Professionals of America State leadership Conference and Competition in Norwood MA, as recommended by the Curriculum Subcommittee.*

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### 2. Finance

##### a. Report

Member Farella reported that they met January 3, 2023. They discussed the '25 Initial Budget that was presented earlier. Also discussed that the whole school committee will have to vote on the Regional Agreements Amendment before it goes to the towns. Member Lacatell attended a Dalton Green Committee meeting; discussion was on potentially pursuing possible solar grants for roofs on CBRSD schools. A suggestion was made to invite the Green Committee to a future School Committee meeting. Next meeting will be January 30, 2023 at 6:00pm at WRHS.

#### 3. Policy

##### a. Report

Member Crane is working on scheduling a meeting time with Liz Lafond.

#### 4. Personnel

##### a. Report

##### b. Executive Session – Negotiations

MOVED BY MEMBER LACATELL, SECONDED BY MEMBER EMERSON

*That the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee moves into executive session at 7:46 p.m. In accordance with MGL Chapter 30A Section 21 (a) (2) and (3) to discuss strategy for negotiations with nonunion personnel, including the superintendent, the teachers' unit of the CBEA, and the paraprofessional unit of the CBEA, 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 and reconvene in open session at the conclusion of the executive session.*

ROLL CALL

Ayes: Members Alpert, Case, Crane, DiTomasso, Emerson, Farella, Lacatell, Lounsbury, Stuart, Peters.

Nays:

Abstentions:

Motions passes unanimously.

c. Approval of Renewal of Superintendent's Contract

MOVED BY MEMBER LACATELL, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

*That the School Committee agrees to rewrite the contract of Leslie Blake-Davis as Superintendent, for the period from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026, to set her for FY25 at \$178,800.00, add an additional holiday as required by the state, and incorporate other provisions of her prior contract, as recommended by the Personnel Subcommittee.*

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously

5. Safety and Wellness

a. Report

Member Lounsbury reported that they have not met since last school committee meeting. They will be meeting on January 17, 2023 and be discussing emergency drill protocols.

B. Others

1. Wahconah Building Project

a. Report

Chair Peters reported that this project is in the last band and audit phase.

2. Regional Agreement Ad Hoc

a. Report

Member Emerson reported that the due date is rapidly approaching for feedback from the seven towns and there are still are some towns they are waiting to hear from. January 15, 2024 is the final due date for all the town feedback.

3. Superintendent Evaluation Ad Hoc

a. Report

Member Alpert reported that there is a meeting scheduled in the February with the Superintendent to go over progress in terms of the superintendents' goals.

ARTICLE 12680 PERSONNEL

Superintendent's Review of Personnel Changes

Paraprofessional	NRMS	Bartlett, Lauren	Hired	2-Jan-2024
Paraprofessional	WRHS	Zink, Nathan	Hired	16-Jan-2024
Paraprofessional	WRHS	Tucker, Cindy	Transfer	16-Jan-2024
Paraprofessional	WRHS	Kovacs, Diane	Retired	12-Jan-24
Paraprofessional	KES	Foggon, Kieran	Resigned	19-Jan-24

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

ARTICLE 12681 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 12682 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])*

ARTICLE 12683 REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair Peters congratulated Patrick McLaughlin for just making his 1000 point at the Boys Basketball game. Congratulations to his family as well.

MOVED BY MEMBER DITOMASSO, SECONDED BY MEMBER CASE

*Moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 pm.*

Ayes: Ten members.

Nays: None.

Abstentions: None.

Motion carried unanimously

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

Superintendents Report

Initial 2025 Budget

Overnight Filed Trip Form-WRHS Norwood MA