

Wachusett Regional School District Committee By-Laws

Article I - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. *Name*

The District shall be called Wachusett Regional School District consisting of the Towns of Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, and Sterling.

Article II - ORGANIZATION

Section 1. *Power and Duties*

The Wachusett Regional School District Committee hereafter referred to as the Committee shall have all the powers conferred, and all the duties imposed, by applicable Massachusetts General Laws inclusive, and any amendments thereto; and all the powers and duties conferred and imposed upon school committees by the Massachusetts General Laws and amendments thereto, the same to be exercised for and on behalf of the Wachusett Regional School District.

Section 2. *Organizational Meeting*

The Committee shall, in accordance with Section 13 of the amended Regional Agreement, organize and elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, and if the offices are vacant a Secretary (Superintendent) and Treasurer at an organizational meeting that shall be posted at least 14 days in advance.

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be members of the Committee that shall be elected by the Committee by paper ballot from its membership in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 16A. The Secretary and Treasurer may or may not be members of the Committee, and if not, may be reimbursed for this work.

Section 3. *Chair/Vice-Chair*

The offices of Chair and Vice-Chair shall be for a term of one year, and they may not succeed themselves more than three additional times. No member may be elected as the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Committee unless said member has served on the Committee for at least two years prior to assuming the office of the Chair.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Committee, shall appoint members of all subcommittees, shall serve as ex-officio member of all subcommittees except as otherwise directed by the Committee and shall perform such duties as required by law. The Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the Committee. The Chair of the School Committee shall be required to vote aye or nay on budgetary matters but may abstain (refrain from voting) on other matters except to break a tie. The Vice-Chair shall, in the absence of the Chair, exercise the powers and perform the duties of said Chair.

Should the chair be unable to complete the one-year term of office, the Vice-Chair shall assume all duties and responsibilities of the Chair to the completion of the one-year term. Should the Vice-Chair be unable to complete the one-year term of office, for reasons including being elevated to the position of Chair, then the Committee, at its next regular meeting, shall elect a Vice-Chair.

Should the Chair and Vice-Chair vacate the positions simultaneously, the Committee, at its next regular meeting, shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair to serve the balance of the one-year term.

Section 4. ***Duties of the Secretary/Assistant Secretary***

The Superintendent shall serve as Secretary to the Committee and shall send out notices of all regular meetings and notices of all special meetings of the Committee, at least forty-eight hours before the meeting. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings and shall be the custodian of all records. The Secretary shall also prepare such reports as may be required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and shall submit an annual report to the selectboard of the member towns. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the treasurer's bond.

The Chair shall appoint an Assistant Secretary to perform the routine work ordinarily done by the Secretary. The Assistant Secretary need not be a member of the Committee and, if not, may be reimbursed for this work.

Section 5. ***Duties of the Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer***

The Treasurer shall be annually appointed at the beginning of each calendar year. The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of all money belonging to the District, and shall pay any bill of the District which shall have been approved by the Committee.

The Committee may appoint an Assistant Treasurer who need not be a member of the Committee, and who shall, in the absence of the Treasurer, perform the duties and shall have the powers and be subject to applicable requirements and penalties. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer may, by vote of the School Committee, be compensated for their services; provided, however, that if the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer is a member of the School Committee there shall be no compensation for services.

Section 6. ***Subcommittees***

The Chair shall appoint standing subcommittees. No member of the Committee shall be appointed to more than three standing subcommittees. The Chair may appoint additional ad-hoc subcommittees as necessary. Should a Management Subcommittee be appointed, the Chair of the Committee shall serve as the Chair of the Management Subcommittee.

The Vice-Chair of the School Committee shall serve as the Vice-Chair of the Management Subcommittee. The Vice-Chair of the Committee and the Chairs of any standing subcommittees shall be appointed members of the Management Subcommittee.

The Chair shall appoint a Chair to each standing or ad-hoc subcommittee. Each subcommittee shall elect its Vice-Chair.

The Committee, by a majority vote of the membership, may require the establishment of a standing or ad-hoc subcommittee.

No more than one-half of the School Committee members may participate in any discussion at a subcommittee meeting. If additional members are present, they may speak if recognized by the subcommittee chair. But if a quorum of the full school committee is present, then only the assigned members of the subcommittee may participate in discussion at that meeting.

Although up to one-half of the members may participate in discussion at a subcommittee level, only the members appointed to the subcommittee by the Chair of the School Committee may make a motion or vote on recommendations to be made to the full Committee. Only appointed members of a standing subcommittee or ad hoc subcommittee shall attend executive sessions of that subcommittee except by invitation or in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B.

Section 7. ***Committee Records***

The Records shall be kept at the office of the Committee, which shall be at the Superintendent's office, in hard copy format, or in digital format.

Article III - MEETINGS

Section 1. ***Proportional Voting***

A majority of the Committee or any subcommittee shall be determined by the proportional (weighted) votes of individual Committee Members. Each Member's vote shall be weighted in proportion to the population of the member town compared to the population of all member towns, as defined in the Regional Agreement.

Section 2. ***Regular Meetings***

The School Committee shall schedule a minimum of one meeting per month.

The School Committee calendar shall be adopted by the Committee. Regular meetings may be rescheduled by a majority vote of the Committee in attendance.

A proportional majority of the Committee or any subcommittee constitutes a quorum. A conference or training program is excluded from the quorum restriction so long as members do not deliberate. The attendance of a quorum at a meeting of another public body is permitted so long as the members communicate at the open meeting and do not deliberate among themselves. Executive sessions may be held by a majority roll call vote of the Committee in accordance with MGL c. 30A.

Town meetings shall take precedence over regularly scheduled School Committee meetings in order to allow respective elected members to participate fully.

Section 2. ***Special Meetings***

Special Meetings may be called any time by the Chair, and the Chair or Superintendent shall call a special meeting upon written request of no less than one-third of the members made to the Chair. In the event the special meeting is being called to reconsider a motion, at least one of the members calling the special meeting must have voted on the prevailing side of the motion to be reconsidered. The motion to be reconsidered must also be identified in the request for the special meeting.

Section 3. ***Emergency Meetings***

An emergency meeting of the School Committee or any of its subcommittees may be called by the Superintendent and/or the Chair of the Committee for a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate attention (M.G.L. 30A:18-25).

Section 4. ***Vote of the Committee***

Action of the Committee shall require a majority of the proportional (weighted) votes of Committee members voting unless otherwise specified by law, by the School Committee's by-laws, or by the Regional Agreement.

Section 5. ***Agenda***

The Chair of the School Committee, conferring with the Superintendent, will arrange the order of items on meeting agendas so that the Committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it votes to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the Committee, or to expedite Committee business.

There shall be at least one public hearing at each regular meeting. Members of the public wishing to speak during Public Hearing are required to sign-in before the start of the public hearing. The Public Hearing may be limited to twenty minutes. The chair will have discretion to limit the time of each speaker. The school committee shall encourage the submission of written testimony.

The following items may be included on the agenda:

- Chair's Opening Remarks
- Student Representatives' Reports
- SEPAC Report
- Superintendent's Report
 - Discussion of Report
 - Recommendations
- Unfinished Business
- Secretary's Report
- Treasurer's Report/Financial Statement
- Committee Reports
 - Standing Subcommittees
 - Ad-Hoc Subcommittees
 - Building Committees (if active)
 - School Council Reports
- New Business
- Adjournment

Article IV - PARLIMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. ***Rules of Order***

Meetings shall be conducted under accepted rules of parliamentary procedure using the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order as a guide.

Section 2. ***Conducting of Business***

In order to ensure the orderly and timely conduct of business at School Committee meetings, the Committee agrees to authorize the Chair or their Designee of the Committee to observe the following guidelines:

- For any given motion, amendment to a motion, topic of discussion, or agenda item, the Chair or their Designee shall allow any member of the Committee two (2) opportunities to speak and each individual will be given two (2) minutes each time they speak on a motion, amendment, topic of discussion, or agenda item.

- The Chair or their Designee will use discretion in deciding whether or not to allow discussion to exceed twenty (20) minutes on any motion including amendments, other topics of discussion, or agenda items. The Chair or their Designee will be responsible for directing the discussions to the business at hand and will limit discussion to the relevant issues and restrict arguments, which are unnecessarily repetitive and redundant.
- The Chair or their Designee may extend the discussion in two ways:
 - 1.) by consensus of members present; or
 - 2.) by recognizing a non-debatable motion by any Committee Member to extend the discussion past the allotted twenty (20) minutes. The motion should include extending the discussion for a specific and appropriate amount of time. The Chair or their Designee will abide by the majority vote of the membership.
- Motions to be acted upon under New Business must be sent to the School Committee Chair, in writing with rationale appended, for placement on the next available regular School Committee agenda. Excluded from this requirement will be routine motions such as acceptance of gifts and other acknowledgements.

Article V - FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

Section 1. ***Contracts***

The Superintendent, or their designee, shall award and administer contracts in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws and Committee policies.

Section 2. ***Bidding Requirements***

The Superintendent, or their designee, shall establish and administer Purchasing and Bidding procedures in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws and Committee policies.

Section 3. ***Disbursement of Funds***

The Treasurer shall pay no money from the treasury, other than court judgments, bonds or notes which may become due and interest thereon, regular payrolls and emergency payments verbally approved in advance by the Chair or Vice-Chair, except upon an order or warrant in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws and Committee Policies.

Section 4. ***Financial Reporting***
The Committee shall in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws each year submit to the Treasurer of each member town its budget for operating expenses for the ensuing fiscal year, with an explanation of same.

Section 5. ***Payment of Bills***
The Committee shall pay all bills as they become due, and no bills shall be held after the end of the fiscal year in which such bills were contracted, except by specific vote of the Committee.

Section 6. ***Annual Audit***
There shall be an annual audit of the Committee's accounts in accordance with Chapter 71 of the General Laws, Section 16E. The auditor shall report to the Committee and their report shall be submitted to the selectboards of the District.

Article VI - LEGAL

Section 1. ***Selection of Counsel***
The Committee shall annually appoint legal counsel to address issues determined by the Committee.

Section 2. ***Policies***
The Committee may make policies not inconsistent with law, with the regional agreement, and with these By-Laws for the operation and maintenance of the school district.

Article VII - BY-LAW REVISIONS

Section 1. ***Amendments***
These By-Laws may be amended by a vote of the majority of the Committee at any regular or special meeting, provided the text of such amendment has been given to each member at least 14 days in advance. The text of such amendment may be amended without further notice, until such amendment has been acted upon by the Committee.

Section 2. ***Repeal***
The repeal of a By-Law shall not thereby have the effect of reviving any By-Law heretofore repealed.

Section 3. ***Validity***
If any Article or Section of any Articles of these By-Laws is declared unconstitutional or illegal by any court, or is disapproved by any state authority having jurisdiction, the validity of the remaining provisions of these By-Laws shall not be affected thereby.

At a meeting of the Wachusett Regional School Committee held on December 18, 1950, at the Town Hall in Holden, it was voted that the above By-Laws pertaining to Wachusett Regional School Committee be and are hereby accepted. Revised March 9, 1953, April 9, 1956, April 8, 1957, September 10, 1962, October 10, 1966, May 11, 1970 (includes votes of October 10, 1966, March 25, 1968, and April 13, 1970), July 12, 1971 (includes votes of April 12, 1971, April 26, 1971, and June 14, 1971), November 22, 1976, March 28, 1977, October 14, 1980, October 27, 1980, June 26, 1995, July 11, 1995, September 25, 1995, June 10, 1996, April 14, 1997, May 6, 1998, April 26, 1999, May 16, 2001, June 11, 2001, October 9, 2001, February 11, 2002, June 10, 2002, July 8, 2002, January 27, 2003, April 28, 2003, January 10, 2005, March 14, 2005, January 16, 2008, April 28, 2008, October 13, 2009, November 10, 2009, April 12, 2010, August 12, 2013, August 11, 2014, December 15, 2014, April 27, 2023, November 13, 2023.