

**WILLOWS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Special Meeting, Monday, February 25, 2008**

**Special Session 5:00 P.M.**

**Willows City Council Chambers  
201 N. Lassen Street, Willows, CA 95988**

**UNAPPROVED - TO BE  
ACTED UPON AT NEXT  
REG. BD. MEETING  
4-3-08**

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.1 Roll Call – President Brott called the Meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Present: Mrs. Brott, Mr. Parisio, Mrs. Ward, Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Domenighini Absent: None
- 1.2 Welcome to Visitors
- 1.3 Flag Salute – The flag salute was led by Mrs. Teresa Woods, WHS teacher.

**2. AGENDA**

- 2.1 Consider approval of Agenda for 2/25/08 – Mr. Parisio moved, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to approve the 2/25/08 Agenda. The motion passed unanimously with 5 yes votes.

**3. DISCUSSION/ACTION CALENDAR**

**A. GENERAL**

- 1. Discussion/Possible Action: Potential conflict of interest with Board Member – Matt Juhl-Darlington, WUSD legal counsel, was asked by President Brott if he felt there was a conflict of interest regarding Board Member, Mrs. Domenighini, and her employment at Glenn County Office of Education. Mr. Darlington said he had discussed this situation with two individual Board Members and felt there was a potential for ethical conflict of interest. (“No one can serve two masters.”) He stated there was no legal conflict, but, ethically? It was up to the Board to decide. Board Members do not have the right to tell another member of the Board to vacate. However, individual Board Members could say how they felt if they thought there was an ethical conflict.

Mr. Thompson asked if there was possible action that could be taken if the Board felt there was a conflict. Mr. Darlington said there could be a motion made regarding an ethical conflict, but the Board did not have the right to demand another Board Member to vacate their position on the Board. He cited examples from the United States Supreme Court. He said he would step back now and let the other Board Members speak and let the person make the call themselves.

Mr. Thompson said Mrs. Domenighini’s initial job was different when she was appointed to the Board. She worked in Adult Literacy, but now, was principal of the William Finch School. He said he would support a motion that there was a conflict of interest.

Mr. Parisio commented, because her position had changed (and he wasn’t questioning her judgment ), he felt it would be hard for her to make decisions knowing her boss was on the other side of the table.

Mrs. Brott said it was a difficult for the entire Board, but they needed to discuss this. She asked Mrs. Domenighini if her job duties at GCOE included ROP. Mrs. Domenighini said no. Mrs. Brott said that the need to discuss a conflict arose when Mrs. Domenighini sent an email to all of the Board Members to rescind the letter that was sent out. Mrs. Brott asked Mrs. Domenighini if she had shared the email with her boss at GCOE. Mrs. Domenighini said no. Mrs. Brott then stated it was a conflict of interest when Mrs. Domenighini had shared a personal letter Mrs. Brott had written with her boss. She also felt it was a conflict of interest when Mrs. Domenighini, in her role as Principal at William Finch, recommended a WUSD student attend school in another District. In regards to the second letter that had been sent to GCOE asking for more information, Mrs. Brott felt all the rules had been followed.

Mrs. Domenighini disagreed. She felt the second letter was not authorized. She then read a statement to the Board and the Public regarding her objections to the second letter.

Mr. Thompson commented it was unfortunate that all the information did not go out with the first letter to GCOE asking for information. He asked if we had received the information requested. Mrs. Brott said no. Mr. Thompson stated WUSD was facing a \$600,000 deficit (most of that was SELPA bill back), and he wanted to know why they were not getting information from GCOE. He asked Mrs. Domenighini if she was OK with the questions asked in the letters and what her problem was with the second letter. Mrs. Domenighini said the writers of the letter had plenty of time to think about the questions and they should have all been included in the first letter.

Mrs. Brott said the letters had all gone out at the same time. She hadn't changed the date on the letter when she sent it out. She felt, after looking at the minutes of the meeting, that Mrs. Domenighini had agreed to send out the letter. She felt Mrs. Domenighini's email regarding the second letter called into question their honesty and integrity.

Mrs. Ward said she stood by the content of both letters. She said the Board was requesting to know how the money is spent at GCOE and how it was going to affect WUSD's budget. Willows is a small town and each of us faces conflict of interest issues. She felt there was diversity on the Board and she couldn't support any individual Board Member being singled out.

Mr. Thompson said the Board had made a reasonable request for public documents. It was difficult but he felt there was a conflict of interest, due to Mrs. Domenighini's position at GCOE.

Mr. Larry Domenighini, husband of Susan Domenighini, said his wife had been cleaning up the mess Willows Unified had made for the past twenty years. There is no conflict of interest. She is careful about procedures. He said there were many conflicts in Willows and his wife was just trying to do what is right. Her salary had erroneously been reported. He questioned another Board Member about sending the email to the local newspaper. Mr. Thompson responded he had provided the email after he had been asked by the newspaper and he had questioned if the email was a Brown Act violation. Mr. Thompson felt Mrs. Domenighini's email had alluded to the fact the other four Board Members were illegal or unethical. Mr. Domenighini said that in his years in the District, he had seen many gross conflict of interest instances with Board Members.

Mrs. Ward said she would hope to avoid some of Mr. Domenighini's comments. She didn't think anyone's integrity should be questioned. However, the tone of the email was certainly in question. She felt the Board needed to move forward.

Mrs. Brott stated this was an open meeting and this is what the Board was doing – discussing the topic in open session.

After further discussion, Mr. Thompson moved, seconded by Mr. Parisio, that the Board did find Mrs. Domenighini did have a conflict of interest because of her employment with GCOE. The motion passed with 3 yes votes. Mrs. Ward voted no and Mrs. Domenighini abstained.

## **B. BUSINESS**

1. Discussion/Action: Direction to Superintendent regarding Budget adjustments – Dr. Olmos thanked everyone for working together for the good of the community. The reason for the \$600,000 cuts were because of declining enrollment and the SELPA bill back. If the Governor goes through with his proposed budget, the District will be looking at an additional \$400,000 in cuts.

Mr. Steven Rudy, Interim Business Manager, explained the list of possible cuts to the Board. He said they had some very difficult decisions to make. He also offered opportunity for input from the public for other options to be presented.

Mr. Joe Zaragoza, Custodian, suggested Management take a 10-15% pay cut. He also suggested the teachers take a 1-8% cut and CSEA a 3-4% pay cut. He suggested everyone pitch in and do the right thing.

Pa Lee spoke in support of keeping the counseling position.

There was lengthy discussion regarding the different proposed cuts on the list. Mrs. Ward suggested the Board give up their stipend.

Mrs. Woods, WHS teacher, spoke in favor of keeping the counselor position.

Mrs. Judy Corum, parent of former WHS students, read a statement of support for the counseling position.

Mr. Parisio stated no one on the Board was questioning the effectiveness and dedication of the counselor and the secretary. He asked for suggestions on ways to cut the budget without affecting positions.

Mr. Geivett suggested they divorce themselves from names and just consider positions. The Board has to look District-wide for cuts. He suggested eliminating class size reduction and increasing class size.

Ms. Linda Joseph, employment services supervisor, spoke on behalf of keeping the counseling position. Mr. Neil Potts, WIS teacher, spoke in favor of keeping the counseling position.

Mr. Erik Korling, WHS teacher and Grand Jury member, made several suggestions. He is pursuing a grant to help fund his AP History program and recommended other teachers do the same. He suggested cutting J.V. sports and/or making athletics a “pay as you go” program. He suggested looking at the MAA funding. He also recommended the Board look at the \$1,000,000 cuts that were a possibility with the Governor’s proposed budget.

Mrs. Cynthia Bryant said she didn’t see any cuts at WIS or Murdock. She recommended looking into solar energy and other cost saving measures.

Mrs. Cheryl Masters, parent, said she read where a San Francisco school made money by selling energy created from their pool.

Dr. Olmos mentioned the Bond proposal on the ballot and said the money could not be used for salaries. PG&E will be doing an analysis of the District energy usage. The WHS pool cost more than \$750 a week to use. The high school has some solar panels, but they are old now and need to be replaced.

After lengthy discussion, Mr. Parisio moved, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to cut items #1-25; #30 and #39 on the list. The motion passed with 3 yes votes. Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Domenighini voted no.

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There will be a Regular Meeting on March 6, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Willows Civic Center.

The Meeting adjourned for a 5 minute recess before Closed Session at 8:10 p.m.

**5. CLOSED SESSION**

5.1 Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9(b)(1)(a) - Significant Exposure to Litigation, 1-7 potential cases.  
Possible discussion with District Legal Counsel

5.2 Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR, Steven Olmos;  
Employee Association: WUTA/CSEA

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

The Meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.