

**JOINT MEETING OF  
THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
AND THE SELECTMEN OF THE TOWNS OF HAMILTON AND WENHAM**

Thursday, May 11, 2017 7:00 PM  
Buker School Multi-Purpose Room

<b>Hamilton-Wenham School Committee</b>	<b>Hamilton Board of Selectmen</b>	<b>Wenham Board of Selectmen</b>
Michelle Bailey	Bill Wilson, Chair	
Jeanise Bertrand	Sean Farrell	Catherine Harrison
Kerry Gertz	Alison Jenkins	John Clemenzi
Gene Lee	Scott Maddern	
Josh Liebow, Chair	Jeffrey Hubbard	
Stacey Metternick		
David Polito		

Present:

Also present:

- Michael Harvey, Superintendent
- Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator, Wenham
- Mike Lombardo, Town Manager, Hamilton
- Jeff Sands, Assistant Superintendent
- Nancy Bergner, H-WRSC Meeting Clerk

## **I. Call to Order**

Josh Liebow called the meeting to order at 7:05

## **II. Pledge of Allegiance**

## **III. Discussion**

[point of order: although the meeting was posted on the Hamilton website on 5/9, there is concern that it was not on the website for a full 48 hours before tonight's meeting was called to order. Hamilton Selectmen agreed that sufficient notice had been given in good faith, and that they, as a Board, could come to Order.]

Hamilton and Wenham Boards of Selectmen were also called to order

### **A. Apportionment Formula**

- Wenham Selectman Catherine Harrison urged that agreement be made to study the situation rather than moving precipitously to change the formula.
  - School Committee Chair talked about projected enrollment based upon Kindergarten registration. It is hard to predict families coming into the towns. Stacey Metternick and Michelle Bailey are the current SC members on the SC working group. Deb Evans and Larry Schwartz are past members, so there has been a several-year history of School Committee interest in the study of projected enrollment in order to help the Towns understand investment in the District. Both Towns have areas of difficulty in establishing residency numbers due to a lack of clarity about the residency status of students at Gordon College (Wenham) and Gordon-Conwell (Hamilton). The most recent proposal from the SC is the same agreement which had previously stood.
1. Review of existing data (historical actuals and projected forecasts)
  2. Initial discussion of potential changes to apportionment formula, including alternative measures.
    - Some towns factor in property taxes as well as student enrollment.
    - How could studies of households and enrollment be deepened so that numbers of eligible children are more apparent to stake holders? This year there was an unexpected number of registered Kindergarteners, which impacts staffing and facilities.
    - This issue has been discussed for 15 years, without full satisfaction from the SC and the Towns. The Towns and the SC needs to agree on the goal. Ex: in the past, the overarching goal was that we would arrive at the same cost per pupil.
    - Or should the apportionment be cost per household, since quality of education is an asset to homeowners, even if they do not send students to

the public schools? Trends in enrollment and demographics are not stable. Until the demographic data is stable, we need to hold off on establishing a method of apportionment. Citizen participation in census data is unreliable, since some households do not report kids under school age. Live births are only one indicator of potential increasing enrollment. People with young kids move in because of the attractiveness of the school systems. We are not Gloucester—we do not have generation after generation remaining in the community long term. We are a young community. People move back, people move out.

- It sounds like the SC and BOS's agree that a study needs to be conducted. It is important that future studies not, for instance, count Gordon College students as a population impacting the schools. We need to present parameters for the study. We need something that does more than just draw on census data.
  - We need to look at best practices from other districts who face similar problems. The SC has sample Regional Agreements on apportionment formulas. Manchester Essex has just revised their Regional Agreement, which may provide insight for HWRSD.
3. Proposal for shared enrollment study focused on specific enrollment demographics in each town. Concern was expressed that any study is still only a "guesstimate." If there is an agreement that we need a study, what about cost (potentially \$4000)? How about \$1000 from each town and \$2000 from the SC?

**B. Selection of Committee Members**

1. Initial discussion of potential for minimum representation from each town on the committee.
- Town specific seats can lead to politicization of the SC. Town specific seats have been historically difficult to fill. Perhaps each town could form a sub committee which could then come together for collaboration on working through this. Would a joint sub-committee benefit from the presence of FinCom members? Let's try to regather after June 6, so that each Town BOS has time to meet to discuss the scope of work for the study, and then we as SC, Wenham BOS and Hamilton BOS, can hammer out the agreed upon tasks for the sub-committee and the scope of the study. If the separate entities can communicate through the chairs and there is sufficient agreement, we can perhaps move forward without additional meetings of the entire bodies.
  - Should this be a working group which is not obligated to public meeting policies? If the BOS's are appointing groups to report back, they are by definition involving bodies which are subject to public meeting laws.

2. Proposed change in methodology of nominations from District Secretary to Town Clerks

- Should this issue be put under the purview of the proposed study until it can go into the overall Regional agreement process?

C. Process for further evaluation and discussion of options to potential changes to district agreement

D. Formation and direction of the Longmeadow Joint Study Committee (Bill Shields, presented] See Longmeadow Study Committee in the Meeting Packet.

- Recommended population/skill set of the Longmeadow Joint Study Committee: At least one resident from each town, a selectman from each town [or citizens appointed by the BOS's], someone from the Rec Board, someone knowledgeable about municipal finance, someone knowledgeable in legal issues such as eminent domain, a member of the BOS from each Town, a member of the SC.
- Catherine Harrison raised the question of if/how the SC would like to use the property. Response: a Study Committee could research potential use of the land, which the SC could then approve for moving forward in exploring acquisition, or reject. John Clemenzi questioned whether or not BOS members would add sufficient value to the process. Could this study just be part of the District Masterplan?
- Should this Study Group have a Mission Statement? What size? Eight members? If it gets to big, it is unwieldy. Populating the group with the proper skill sets will make a large impact on its efficiency.
- The Study group should be very mindful of the needs of the Towns for using recreational land. The will of the joint Towns (a 2/3 supermajority) should be necessary to move the project forward.
- Target date for forming the Committee, presenting the findings of the Study—Feb 1?
- Sometime in June, have a short joint meeting to appoint Committee members. Prior to this, towns will publicize the opportunity to serve on the Town websites and the SC Spotlight, giving contact information for sending letters of inquiry to each BOS. We would shoot for a 7-9 person Board. The purpose of the group is to report findings and make a recommendation for action.

**IV. Vote to Adjourn**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN AT 8:20 PM.**

**MOTION by Michelle Bailey SECONDED by Stacey Metterinick  
Unanimously approved by 7 members present**

**Hamilton and Wenham Boards of Selectmen also adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy R. Bergner  
Clerk, H-WRSC Meeting