

**HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, February 13, 2017 7:00 PM
Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room

Present:

Michelle Bailey
Deb Evans
Gene Lee
Josh Liebow
Stacey Metternick, Chair
David Polito

Also present:

Michael Harvey, Superintendent

I. Call To Order: Stacey Metternick called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm in the Buker School Multi-Purpose Room.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Citizens' Comments

A. There were no citizen comments

IV. Chair's Report

- Update on Wenham CPC meeting of 2/08/2017. CPC seemed to be satisfied with SC's presentation on the Buker Playground and has asked us to return next week for further discussion.
- Georgetown School District sponsoring a Community Information Session will be giving a presentation by Dr. Owens on changes in sleep patterns in children of Tues March 7at Georgetown MS/HS
- Last week there were two days with two hour delays, with positive responses from parents who expressed their support of the two hour delay rather than full Snow Days.
- Treasurer's Contract was reviewed and signed by legal counsel
- Article about Regional Agreement in the Chronicle
- Nomination Papers must be submitted this week, due Friday Feb 16th at 5 PM.
- There is a request to remove times estimates from the Agenda, which will, in future, be honored.

V. Superintendent's Report

Water Testing Update

As I wrote to the HWRSD Community in December, 22 water fixtures in our school buildings tested positive for elevated levels of lead and/or copper. These fixtures were immediately taken out of service and remain shut off. As per state guidelines, we conducted further testing on water from these fixtures after they had been run for one minute. The results of the testing of these 22 fixtures shows only two where the lead/copper levels remain elevated. We're in the process of evaluating the usage and need for each of

these 22 fixtures. This evaluation will help us decide whether a fixture is replaced, or capped and taken out of service.

Congratulations to Boston Globe Scholastic Art Award Winners

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District School Visual Arts Department is proud to announce that our students have received one gold key, five silver keys and five honorable mentions in the 2017 Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards. Established in 1923, the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards are the longest-running, most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in the United States.

At Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School Margaret Brown received a Gold Key and a Silver Key. Brendan Cramphorn and Josh Erhard received silver keys. A silver key was also awarded to a collaborative animation piece by YueYan Zhang, Tyler Flahive and Elizabeth Consolazio. Honorable mentions were received by Jenna Conley, Sydney Jenkins, Helen Pepler, Brendan Cramphorn and Dana Rowe. Congratulations to all winners! To view the winning submissions go to <http://hwfinearts.blogspot.com/>

Donations Sought for Peru Trip

This year the Hamilton-Wenham Foreign Language Department is leading a trip to Peru during April break. About 40 Students from all grade levels will be attending. The students will be visiting Cuzco, Lima, and Machu Picchu. However, a large part of the trip will also be service oriented. Students have already begun collecting, but need your help in filling roughly 86 suitcases with donations. The elementary students have been asked to donate school supplies. Donation boxes are set up in each of the elementary schools, so students can drop items off in the schools donation bin. For students in the middle school and high school, students are asking for gently used clothing donations. Please remember that these will be given to a school located high in the Andes, so warmer layers would be appreciated. Cash donations are also being collected as students are looking to fund the purchase of technology and other necessities for a Peruvian school in need. Middle school and high school donations can be left in the lobbies of each respective school, in the designated bin. In addition to these items, we welcome donations of large duffle bags and suitcases that can be used to transport donations, and can be left in Peru when we leave. Finally the students would like to thank the community for the support it has already shown in their donation efforts!

FOTA Hearts and Flowers Show

The Annual Hearts and Flowers Cabaret which was originally scheduled for tonight has been re-scheduled for Wednesday February 15th at 6:30 at the Danversport Yacht Club. Contact heartsandflowers2017@gmail.com with questions.

VI. New Business

A. OPEB Presentation from Jim Powers, Powers and Sullivan

Discussion:

Question rose about regional involvement with the Trust. Other investment vehicles were identified. The SC does have options to change the trust vehicle in future. Whichever Trustee is appointed is the entity determining how the trust is invested. The SC must approve the Trustee's recommendation within 90 days, or the recommendation automatically goes into effect. SC Treasurer must coordinate with the Towns to determine investments and money set asides for investment.

Question: *Why the changes now?* We are aware of changes ahead in 2018, but caring for retirees is not new. Why now? The state is requiring everyone to fully fund retirees, who are also being covered for healthcare liability. Because the liabilities for government entities is growing, steps should be taken now to address them so that the liabili-

ties don't overcome the entities. Changes to the AHCA will impact liabilities. MA law requires that retirees be covered at 50%. GASBY forces us to move away from "pay as you go" and establish irrevocable funds to finance future liabilities.

Question: *What have each of the towns done in regard to this?* Very little, although the District does own the largest portion of the liability. They do not yet have something in place which the SC could join. If either town accepted the amendment to the law, the SC could then look at joining their plan. The SC could, as well, look at other options in larger pools, which may be more desirable.

Question: *Given that the SC is voting tonight for \$50,000 toward OPEB, can we do this?* Yes, this could not be transferred anywhere unless a trust was established. It would be advisable to set up a trust first, which would allow funds to be transferred.

Question: *is the Municipal Modernization Bill applicable to Regional School Districts?* Yes, it does apply to all Regional School Districts. The SC can do this; it is the law.

Question: *What specifically needs to be done at town meeting to proceed with this?* To establish the trust, appoint the trustee, SC. On March 2, the SC should vote to accept the legislation, agree to the Trustee and approve an OPEB Trust (203C). When the Towns approve the budget on April 1, the money approved for OPEB can go into the Trust vehicle.

Question—*if five years from now the SC wants to discontinue contributions for a period of time, can they?* Yes. Contributions to the Trust are annual appropriations and can be suspended. However, ceasing to make annual contributions defeats the purpose of establishing the fund. Will establishment of a Trust Fund cause an increase in annual audit costs? Not until there is a significantly larger amount in the Trust.

B. Representative Brad Hill

Explanation of Governor's Budget as presented. A problem schools face is that any increase in the budget will go toward healthcare. More people are going on Mass Health than anticipated, because consumers are no longer required to accept options offered by businesses. So there are less discretionary funds available for education (or other entities) than we had anticipated under Romneycare. Hill has hopes that adjustments to the ACA will have a positive impact on state budgets. Hill is asking the SC to consider supporting the bill he filed with Ferguson, which would access funds coming from gaming. The bill is currently a House Docket. Once he has a Bill number, he will forward that information to the SC. Hill is coordinating with other NS superintendents for round table meetings to keep education concerns front and center. Current OPEB obligations are currently funded by tobacco. But we have had to take money from smoking prevention programs in order to fund OPEB, and smoking rates have gone up. Hill cannot provide assurances that the legislature will, in fact, place money where they say they will. Different legislatures make different decisions in these cases.

Question: *If the legislature cannot allocate money in certain places, how is it that we can decide to restrict where money goes?* We have a constitutional restriction on this. If we can say that money can't go to this, why can we not say money can go to that?

Question: *Why has the school choice spending increased so significantly?* These figures of DOR estimations. When the House budget comes out, those figures will go down significantly. The "circuit-breaker" percentage is estimated to be funded fully at 75%.

Comment: We have heard that DESE is considering doing a reset on leveling, putting all schools at Level 1, unless there is an issue with participation rate.

HW is currently assigned a Level 3. SC would like to encourage Hill to continue the discussion, with a view to upgrading HW's level.

Question: *Start times?* Not a dead issue; Manchester is currently entertaining the possibility. Masco has done a study; Georgetown is investigating. This issue does not seem to be imminent for any districts at this time.

Question: Re: the replacement bill. *Are you looking at funding for full day kindergarten and pre-K in hopes that increased funding for Special Ed?* No—full day kindergarten and pre-K are not part of Hill's replacement bill.

C. Bill Shields (of Bay Road) and Jack Lawrence (of Rock Maple) —Longmeadow Property Study Group

If it makes sense, the Longmeadow Study Group [LSG] will seek a citizen's petition.

This may not be the best approach. They are hoping for input from the SC as they contemplate options which may only be available for a short period of time. Eventually the discussion should be put before both towns and the Joint Rec Committee. The Study Group would appreciate guidance from the SC on how.

The property is now available, on the market. This will potentially always be 3 lots, but it could also be 250 units of low income housing. OR, what about the opportunity of the SC acquiring or leasing the property, which would allow for possible future expansion of School rec space into this property? The LSG thinks that the SC should seriously consider their options on this.

Discussion: when the School's considered purchasing part of that property in the past, abutters had strong objections. Eminent Domain does play into the discussion, which could counter the objections of abutters, if, in fact, such objectives still exist.

Does it make sense for the SC to commission a Study to evaluate this? The nature of the property, its proximity to the MS/HS recommends it as possible build ready property. From the standpoint of use as athletic fields, it could be viewed as almost a gift of an opportunity. It may be worth looking into, in light of the Turf Field proposal and its current limits. However, \$9 Million is a serious investment to consider. In order to move forward with Gale at present, we need to accommodate existing no-build zones. Owning these properties would certainly change the limits of what can be done. At present, all three deed owners on these parcels have expressed in writing their interest in selling said properties. Pingree is about to install a turf field, in part because it has now become a standard expectation to conduct Field Hockey on artificial turf. Being competitive in Field Hockey is a strong point of consideration. At present, our Varsity Field Hockey Team must compete at a completely off-site venue. This is also true of Tennis, Baseball, Lacrosse, and Softball.

The SC expressed support for a multi-dimensional study involving both the SC and the towns, since, absent this property, Athletic Field possibilities are very curtailed. The LSG would need to get petitions for each sounds. the LSG asked how the SC would recommend populating such a study group. Response: Citizens at Large from each town, appointed by Selectmen, people from the Joint Rec Committee. The Study could prepare work and recommended actions to be

evaluated at the 2018 Spring Town meetings for both towns. If, however, this issue was considered to be sufficiently compelling, review at Fall Town Meetings could be possible.

Why would the SC NOT support further study? There is no reason we should not vote to support a study initiative.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUPPORT THE STUDY OF PURCHASING THE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL.

MOTION by Josh Liebow; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey

Unanimously approved by the 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

D. FY18 Budget

1. Summary of FY18 Budget Recommendation Exhibit A
2. 3 Year Forecast Exhibit B

E. Adopt FY18 Budget

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVES A FY18 TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BUDGET OF \$32,292,676. THIS AMOUNT INCLUDES GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENSES (AFTER OFFSETS) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$30,199,816 AND GENERAL FUND DEBT SERVICE EXPENSES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,092,860. FURTHERMORE, THE GROSS OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE DISTRICT (BEFORE OFFSETS) HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO THE DESE-DEFINED ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO THE “SUMMARY BY DESE CATEGORY” CHART INCLUDED IN THIS BUDGET PRESENTATION DATED 2/09/2017..

MOTION by Josh Liebow; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey

Discussion: Based upon the OPEB presentation, should we pull the \$40,000 OPEB contribution from the current budget, and move it into Town Meeting? If the amount were larger, it would perhaps be advisable to separate it from the General Budget. For this token amount, it will likely not be a problem in gaining support from the Town Meetings. The Budget, which includes this OPEB contribution, has already been reviewed by entities from both towns, and it is not considered controversial. Do we, in fact, have support from both Finn Comms and Selectmen Boards for this budget, which they have seen? Yes, including the OPEB contribution. Are we as a SC, comfortable with not making any additions to this budget? Out of district spending continues to be a concern; if it keeps growing, regular education will be impacted. The Out of District Spending is beyond our control. Our only option is to continue to evaluate in-sourcing vs. out-sourcing these services. While we have received a list of additional items, it was too late in the budget development to incorporate them at this time. We do, however, have a 5 year plan which addresses many of these issues in a way which can be managed by the towns. It is, of course, a hope that we can move beyond leveled funding into growth funding. It is imperative to work with the towns to address both infrastructure issues and educational advancement. As next year’s budget process begins, Administration looks to the School Committee for guidance on prioritizing issues. 22.15% increase in Special Education from this year’s budget is a given. Next year’s Special Education increase—whatever it may be—demands that other options for delivering Special Education services be thoroughly explored.

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTES TO ASSESS THE TOWNS OF HAMILTON AND

WENHAM A COMBINED TOTAL OF \$26,607,448 AS THE AMOUNT NECESSARY TO OPERATE AND MAINTAIN THE DISTRICT, AS WELL AS PAY DEBT SERVICE, FOR FY18. THE DISTRICT'S ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT SHALL DETERMINE THE AMOUNT AP-PORTIONED TO EACH TOWN, AND THE DISTRICT'S TREASURER SHALL CERTIFY SUCH AMOUNTS TO THE RESPECTIVE TREASUR-ERS OF EACH TOWN WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THIS DATE.

MOTION by Josh Liebow; SECONDED by Deb Evans

Note: the debt has always been enfolded with the operating budget. Concern was expressed at the dangerously slow pace of progress between SC and the Towns on apportionment policies.

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

Per Pupil Expenditure metric, as derived from the state, was explained. Jeff and Mike will be giving presentations to both Town meetings. Stacey and Michelle will reach out to both Town Moderators to make sure that time at the meetings is provided to go over the SC budget.

F. YTD Financial Forecast [tabled until next meeting] Exhibit C

G. Report on District, School Committee & Superintendent Goal Progress Exhibit D

H. Appoint Leslie Davidson to position of Asst. Treasurer

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINT LESLIE DAVIDSON TO THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT TREASURER.

MOTION by Josh Liebow; SECONDED by David Polito

Unanimously approved by the 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

I. Donation from Hockey Booster \$4,000 Exhibit E

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE GENEROUS DONATION OF THE HOCKEY BOOSTERS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,000.00 TO DEFRAY USER FEES.

MOTION by Jeff Liebow; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

J. Donation/Grant from Hamilton Cultural Commission Exhibit E

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE GENEROUS DONATION GRANT OF THE HAMILTON CULTURAL COMMISSION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$736.34 FOR THE FALL HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL.

MOTION by Jeff Liebow; SECONDED by David Polito

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

K. Donation from Friends of Winthrop Exhibit F

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE GENEROUS DONATION OF BY THE FRIENDS OF WINTHROP, OF \$1200.

MOTION by Jeff Liebow; SECONDED by Gene Lee

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

L. Policy Review

1. Memorials for Deceased Students and Staff—2nd Reading

Exhibit G

- a) “The School Committee recognizes that the death of a student or member of the staff is deeply felt by the school community. As places designed primarily to support learning, however, school sites should not serve as permanent memorials for students or staff. Permanent memorials for deceased students or staff shall be limited in form to a living memorial or to perpetual awards or scholarships. A living memorial shall be defined as one supported financially and with action by the community. It will be at the School Committee’s discretion whether a memorial will be discontinued. Any permanent memorials in existence before this policy was adopted can only be removed by a vote of the School Committee.”

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE SECOND READING AS POLICY FOR THE DISTRICT WITH REGARD FOR MEMORIALS FOR DECEASED STUDENTS AND STAFF.

MOTION by Jeff Liebow; SECONDED by Deb Evans

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

2. Policy Revision and Review—2nd Reading

Exhibit H

- a) “In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they can be used consistently as a basis for School Committee action and administrative decision, the Committee will review its policies in accordance with the following approved procedures: Policies will be reviewed on a three-year cycle. In the first year, Policy Sections “A” through “D” will be reviewed. In the second year, Policy Sections “E,” “F,” “G” and “I” will be reviewed. “Section H” will be reviewed in the third year. This procedure will not prevent the Committee from reviewing individual policies out of this sequence when the need arises. The Committee will evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff and will weigh the results. It will rely on the school staff, students, and the community for providing evidence of the effect of the policies it has adopted. The Superintendent is given the continuing commission of calling to the Committee’s attention all policies that are out of date or for other reason appear to need revision.” [SOURCE: MASC]

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE UPDATED POLICY OF POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW.

MOTION by Jeff Liebow; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

VII. Committee Reports

- A. Communications: See recent *Spotlight*. Communications will meet again on March 6 at 5 PM for the pre-Town Meeting Spotlight
- B. Planning: no updates at this time. Revisited past work of the committee.
- C. Policy Review: prepared motions passed above.

- D. Warrant: Meets on 02/14.
- E. Regional Agreement: no updates at this time. A meeting should be set up after Town Meeting.
- F. Student Rep: no report at this time
- G. Other Schools Liaisons: no update at this time

VIII. Topics for Next Meeting

- A. March 2 will be both a workshop and a meeting
 1. Accepting the OPEB law on March 2nd or the 16th.
 2. Capital Plan
 3. YTD financial forecast
 4. Report on District, School Committee & Superintendent Goal Progress
 5. Treasurer and segregation of responsibilities.
 6. Working Group relative to the Turf project will need some direction from the SC (for March 2 or 16 or April 6). Deb will contact Phil Tocci regarding this. It is very important to keep nurturing community collaboration on this project.
 7. Identifying the reports the SC wishes to receive from the Treasurer. (April 6)

IX. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN AT 10:49 PM.

MOTION by Josh Liebow; SECONDED by David Polito

Unanimously approved by 6 members present; none opposed, no abstentions

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy R. Bergner

Clerk, H-WRSC Meeting