

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee**

**April 4, 2013**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Roger Kuebel opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m. in the Buker Multipurpose Room. The Committee and others present rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PRESENT:**

Sean Condon, Bill Dery, Kym Donnellan, Roger Kuebel (chair), Barbara Lawrence, Sheila MacDonald, Ann Minois, Larry Swartz, Bill Wilson

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning

**ABSENT:**

No one

**CITIZENS' CONCERNS:**

R. Kuebel invited public comment; there was none.

He welcomed the new student representative to the School Committee, high school student Brian Riordan, who will serve for the remainder of this school year.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Dr. Harvey thanked three departing Committee members for their service, and presented gifts to them. It was the final meeting for members K. Donnellan, A. Minois and L. Swartz.

He noted that the high school Theatre Workshop's one-act production has advanced to the regional championships, and spoke about the Buker first grade project making maple syrup.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

R. Kuebel briefed the Committee on plans for presentation of the district budget at the two Town Meetings.

He said Hamilton officials have scheduled another meeting about whether to pursue purchase of the Pirie property off Bay Rd.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

At K. Donnellan's request, the field trip request for the Theatre Workshop trip to Rhode Island was removed from the consent agenda. (The field trip request documents are appended to these minutes.)

L. Swartz requested correction of a heading in the minutes of the March 21, 2013 meeting.

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**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

K. Donnellan said that in the past, the individual who proposed a field trip attended a Committee meeting to present the proposal and answer questions. She asked what the current process is. Dr. Harvey said he was unaware of past procedure. Committee members discussed past practice and informally agreed that if a field trip request requires immediate Committee approval the proposing staff member should be present to answer questions, but that in other cases the Committee could review written proposals, and if necessary, ask the proposer to attend a later Committee meeting to provide additional information.

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE FIELD TRIP REQUEST FOR THE THEATRE WORKSHOP TO WOONSOCKET, RI. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Legislative

A. Minois reported a date change for the Day on the Hill lobbying event, which is now scheduled for May 23. She invited the student representative to join Committee members for this event.

Communications

K. Donnellan said that this year, Dr. Harvey preferred to handle some tasks previously performed by this working group. She said she has heard some criticism of the group's level of involvement this year, and suggested future discussion of how the group can be assimilated into Dr. Harvey's administration of the district.

Facilities

B. Dery said the Facilities Working Group did not meet since the prior Committee meeting, but the Building Committee met and approved contracts with VLW Engineering for design specs for upgrades of Buker School's air handling, boiler, and fire suppression system; it also awarded a contract for insulation work at Buker, to be performed during the April school break. He said the Building Committee expects to put Winthrop School roof repairs out to bid on schedule so it can award a contract by the end of the school year.

Committee members asked about reports of budgeted versus actual spending, and how contract commitments to date compare to the forecast; who oversees contracts and documentation; and whether the Building Committee or the School Committee should authorize

contracts. B. Dery said P. Gray moves contracts forward and Dr. Harvey signs the papers.

Action item:

- Ask auditors whether the School Committee should authorize contracts.

Policy

K. Donnellan said some staff are concerned about whether personnel policies have been changed. B. Lawrence said the Policy Working Group has not yet revised existing policies or proposed new ones but will in the future; R. Kuebel noted that revisions and new policies cannot violate contracts.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Second Reading and Vote of Foundations Policies

L. Swartz updated the Committee about revisions to some policy drafts since the first reading at a prior meeting. (The draft policies are appended to these minutes.)

*Nondiscrimination Policy*

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY AS PRESENTED. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1-0.**

*School Councils Policy*

The prior draft was revised to adjust some language, and to delete a duty that is the superintendent's, not school councils', both on the advice of counsel. Committee members made several changes to capitalization of words.

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SCHOOL COUNCILS POLICY. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

*School Improvement Plan Policy*

The Committee deleted the final bulleted item and several legal references from the draft policy, which S. Condon pointed out were inadvertently copied in from a different policy.

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN POLICY AS PRESENTED. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1-0.**

*Safe Schools Policy*

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SAFE SCHOOLS POLICY AS PRESENTED. KYM**

**DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

*School District's Legal Status Policy*

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LEGAL STATUS POLICY AS PRESENTED. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

*Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol Policy*

Language was added to clarify that the policy applies to school activities regardless of the location, and Committee members made an unrelated clerical correction.

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE TOBACCO, DRUGS & ALCOHOL POLICY AS PRESENTED. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

*Discussion & Vote of Facilities Master Plan RFQ*

Committee members reviewed a draft RFQ for consulting work to assist with creation of a Facilities and Educational Program Master Plan and discussed whether to revise it to make it more specific. (The draft RFQ is appended to these minutes.) Members of the subcommittee that prepared it, and some other Committee members, said the RFQ language should be broad so bidders' responses could vary substantially to indicate the particular approaches different consultants might take. L. Swartz said problem-oriented requests for quotes do not meet regulations, and the Committee should define what it is requesting so vendors could offer services and prices on a clearly defined playing field. Helen Allard of Woodland Mead, Hamilton, a member of the subcommittee that drafted the RFQ, spoke from the audience and encouraged the Committee to retain the broad language of the draft RFQ. L. Swartz also questioned whether an RFQ is the proper document to issue in this instance, and briefed the Committee on the nature of an RFQ versus an RFR.

Extensive discussion touched on the matters above, and also on whether the Committee might vote to approve the RFQ contingent on counsel's review and recommendation, and/or to defer a decision to the chair and superintendent. The Committee also discussed whether members whose Committee terms expire after this meeting should vote on this, or the reorganized Committee including newly-elected members should do so at a future meeting.

The Committee also discussed the subcommittee's addition of "and Educational Program" to the name of the targeted master plan, and discussed the interrelationship of a district master plan and a district strategic plan, and how specific a master plan would be in its recommendations regarding educational programming. This discussion

touched on staffing; future enrollment; space needs and configuration, and the role of the Committee and the superintendent in determining facility needs. Member discussed whether to specify in the RFQ the sum the district wishes to spend on consulting fees.

They revised a passage on page 5 of the draft.

**SHEILA MACDONALD MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE RFQ AS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TONIGHT (INCLUDING AMENDMENTS ON PAGE 5 PROVIDED DURING DISCUSSION TO CHANGE "EVALUATION" TO "SELECTION"), UPON COUNSEL HAVING REVIEWED IT AND SIGNED OFF ON IT WITH RESPECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH 30B REGULATIONS. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-1-0-0.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Review Mid-Year Cycle Evaluation of Superintendent

Dr. Harvey informed the Committee of achievement of /progress toward goals he set at the beginning of this school year. (His written Mid-Cycle Progress Report is appended to these minutes.) In conversation with Committee members he provided additional information about evaluation of teachers and administrators under the new state-mandated evaluation system instituted this year.

Vote to Appoint Sheila MacDonald as Acting Assistant Treasurer

**LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF SHEILA MACDONALD AS THE ACTING ASSISTANT TREASURER FOR THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT EFFECTIVE APRIL 12, 2013. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

Review School Committee Evaluation

R. Kuebel noted that a composite of Committee members' responses to a Committee self-evaluation survey was provided to the Committee prior to this meeting. (It is appended to these minutes.) Noting that the Committee gave low ratings to past training and orientation of new members, B. Wilson suggested consideration of how to improve this when new members join the Committee shortly.

Use of Grant Funds Policy: Supplement, not Supplant

S. MacDonald explained proposed revisions to this existing policy to delete references to positions this district does not have; additional language may be added about parent involvement. This was the first reading; the Committee is to vote on the proposed revision at a future meeting. (The draft revision is appended to these minutes.)

Bonding for Cutler Roof Project

Dr. Harvey said bond counsel recommends the Committee approve bonding to fund the district's share of the cost of the Cutler School

roofing project; the Massachusetts School Building Authority is to pay the balance. He and members discussed project accounting, and spending to date on this project. No vote took place. (The draft motion and certification document is appended to these minutes.)

Discussion of School Committee  
Members Endorsing Candidates for a  
Public Office

A. Minois expressed concern about endorsement of candidates in local elections by members of this Committee and said it could create a "toxic atmosphere" on the Committee for the chair to endorse three of the four candidates, if the candidate he did not endorse is elected and they serve together on the Committee for the coming year. She suggested the reorganized Committee consider whether to institute a code of conduct that would address this.

B. Dery said he sees nothing wrong with members expressing their opinions so long as they make clear they are not speaking for the Committee.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**KYM DONNELLAN MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

**DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS  
USED AT THIS MEETING:**

Field Trip Request dated March 25, 2013 for Theatre Workshop trip to Woonsocket, Rhode Island April 16-19, 2013 (10 pages)  
Draft Foundations Policies: Nondiscrimination; School Councils; School Improvement Plan; Safe Schools; School District's Legal Status; Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol (10 pages)  
Use of Grant Funds: Supplement, not Supplant Policy with draft revisions tracked (1 page)  
Draft motion and certification statement for bonding of Cutler School roof project costs, and related memo from Edwards Wildman dated March 25, 2013 (2 pages)  
Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Progress Report dated April 4, 2013 (4 pages)  
School Committee Self-Evaluation results composite (2 pages)  
RFQ for Facilities and Educational Program Master Plan (23 pages)

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary