

Meeting of October 18, 2012

Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER:** Larry Swartz called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. at the Buker Multi-Purpose Room.
- PRESENT:** Sean Condon, Bill Dery, Sheila MacDonald, Barbara Lawrence, Ann Minois, Larry Swartz (acting chair), and Bill Wilson
- ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent Peter Gray
- ABSENT:** Kym Donnellan, Roger Kuebel
- CITIZENS' CONCERNS:** None.
- REVISION OF AGENDA:** At L. Swartz's suggestion, Committee members agreed to reorder the agenda so the Committee's attorney's presentation would take place earlier in the meeting.
- SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Harvey welcomed three members of the audience, who are visiting Hamilton for three weeks to learn about American government; they are scheduled to spend three days in the district in the week following this meeting. He noted meetings and events he has recently attended in the district and acknowledged the gift from Friends of the Arts of \$3,300 for middle school music stands and storage carts. He said negotiations with the teacher's association regarding the new state evaluation system are nearing resolution; he and Dr. Bowler were to meet with union representatives the week after this meeting. He distributed a calendar of the budget development process (which is appended to these minutes).
- College Readiness Letter (ACT) Dr. Harvey briefed the Committee on the differences between the ACTs and SATs, and about HWRHS students' participation and scores on the ACT in 2011-12. (The official letter reporting this is appended to these minutes.)
- Statistics for SAT, National Merit Scholars, AP Dr. Harvey mentioned highlights of statistical reports on SAT and AP tests and announced that 1 HWRHS student is a National Merit semi-finalist this year, and 3 received National Merit commendations. Committee members noted that AP scores and participation were high but the number of National Merit commendations was much lower than last years. They requested further analysis at a future meeting. (Material the Committee received about these test results is appended to these minutes and was to be posted on the district website.)

October 1st Enrollment

Discussion focused on the gap between this year's high school enrollment of 694 and the school's capacity of 720, and whether earlier action by administrators might have resulted in enrollment of more choice students than the 111 who are enrolled at the high school this year. Further discussion is to take place at a November meeting when the Committee will consider whether to participate in the school choice program in 2013-14. (The Oct. 1 enrollment report is appended to these minutes.)

Anti-Bullying Survey

Dr. Harvey said families were informed in advance by letter of the surveys taking place this week at the high school and middle school, and next week at the elementary schools, about bullying. A staff workshop is scheduled for Nov. 9 about anti-bullying curriculum and all district staff are to be trained, to comply with state anti-bullying legislation.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Committee vice-chair L. Swartz relayed updates provided by chair R. Kuebel, who was absent from the meeting.

Although the district submitted financial documentation to the state Department of Education well before the deadline, state officials say it is unlikely they will certify the district's Excess & Deficiency account until January. L. Swartz noted this would make it difficult for the district to follow through on its commitment to return to the Towns any E&D balance in excess of 3% of budget, but noted also that it appears that E&D will be at less than 3% so this may be a moot point.

L. Swartz thanked the Towns on R. Kuebel's behalf for allowing the Committee to meet officially, but in the format of a retreat, the week prior to his meeting; a public report on the retreat is forthcoming. Thanks also were expressed to Hamilton voters for supporting the district's proposed capital projects at the recent Town Meeting.

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT
PRESENTATION:**

The president, treasurer and secretary of the high school student government, Matt Chigas, Meg Lidrbach and Maggie Abbott, reported on a powderpuff football fundraiser for the National Honor Society; spirit week; freshman elections; and an initiative to increase student awareness of and participation in local politics.

**OPEN MEETING LAW
PRESENTATION/TRAINING**

The Committee's attorney Naomi Stonberg and her colleague Judy Levenson made presentations on the state Open Meeting Law and ethics requirements, respectively. (N. Stonberg's PowerPoint slides and materials J. Levinson distributed are appended to these minutes.) Members of other public bodies in the district also were present for this training. Topics N. Stonberg addressed included limits on members' discussion of policy issues outside of posted meetings, and written communication about issues; executive session topics and minutes; the posting of agendas and the option of adding to an agenda topics that the chair did not anticipate 48 hours before a meeting; exemptions from

some aspects of the Open Meeting Law; the complaint procedure; and members' responsibility regarding training and a subsequent test. Committee members discussed with her a recent complaint about a member of the Committee speaking from the audience about Committee business at a public meeting that was not posted as a meeting of the Committee, and asked questions about points including the types of communication permitted among members outside the setting of a posted meeting, and adding and voting on topics that were not listed on the posted pre-meeting agenda. J. Levenson noted that new exemptions have been issued for some aspects of state ethics laws and that the material she distributed includes notes on those exemptions she considered most relevant to this district. She noted regulations cover issues including gift giving to teachers, districts' acceptance of private funds, and committee members' advocacy for their own children. She said the law regards each regional school committee member as a municipal employee of all of that district's member towns. She outlined the process for obtaining an opinion in advance about an issue that may arise in the future. Committee member inquired about whether a member of this Committee may serve also on a Town board, as two members do; after discussion J. Levenson suggested the selectmen of their Town of residence should designate them as special members, and said she would provide further counsel upon receiving additional information.

CONSENT AGENDA:

At L. Swartz's request, the minutes of Oct. 4, 2012 were removed from the consent agenda.

October 12, 2012 minutes

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. BARBARA LAWRENCE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

October 4, 2012 minutes

L. Swartz proposed an editing change at the top of page 2 of the Oct. 4 draft minutes to delete reference to the district auditors from a passage about a prior projection of the 2012-13 Excess & Deficiency account; he said the dollar value of that projection is correctly reported in the minutes, but the auditors did not make that projection. The Committee agreed to this revision by general consent.

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE AMENDED MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 4, 2012 AS EDITED. ANN MINOIS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy

B. Lawrence said the policy manual review is complete and this working group plans to survey 5 other districts in the first half of November to see whether HWRSD should augment its policies, and/or revise some to make them more accessible.

Legislative

A. Minois said preliminary discussion has taken place about Massachusetts Association of School Committees resolutions and the working group will deliberate about positions at its next meeting on 10/31. She has asked Rep. Brad Hill to arrange for the near future a Massachusetts School Building Association briefing of the Committee about school remodeling versus replacement.

Facilities

B. Dery reported this working group has asked R. Shruhan to investigate the cost of organizing and digitalizing past facilities plans.

He stated also that \$52,500 the Committee previously approved for upgrades to the Ferrini Dramatic Center air handling system cannot come out of the FY12 budget because the RFP for this project was not issued before the end of FY12, so the project is in limbo. After discussion, L. Swartz asked Dr. Harvey and P. Gray to investigate options and report to the Committee. B. Lawrence noted that other substantial projects did move forward over the summer.

The Committee decided to hold a final informational session for the public about proposed capital improvements that would be funded by a bond issue slated for a vote on Election Day. The session is scheduled for Thurs. Nov. 1 at 6 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review of School Committee Retreat

Dr. Harvey stated that at its recent retreat, the Committee narrowed an initial list of goals and projects to just 5, including technology and facility needs, financial needs and the budget season, and the composition, structure and function of the Committee. Another Committee retreat meeting is scheduled for Nov. 1.

Facilities Planning Objective

BILL DERY MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW SCHOOL COMMITTEE BEGIN THE PROCESSES OF DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN BOTH SHORT AND LONG RANGE, AND FURTHER DEVELOP AND INTEGRATE THAT PLAN WITH A COMPLETE SYSTEM ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES. THIS IS TO BE CONSIDERED BY PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO SEVERAL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS, AMONG WHICH ARE NOT LIMITED TO

1. GETTING INPUT FROM PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS TO COST FOR EXECUTION

2. APPROCHING THE HAMILTON & WENHAM CMC WITH A REQUEST FOR THIS ACTION REQUIRING THEM TO RECRUIT PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH THE INTEGRATED APPROACH DESCRIBED ABOVE

3. ANY COMBINATION THEREOF. FURTHER THAT IN A SUBSEQUENT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING ON OR ABOUT THE 22ND OF NOVEMBER THE BODY WILL DELIBERATE THE MOST FEASIBLE APPROACH AND VOTE TO SELECT SUCH A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

He said the Facilities Working Group discussed this objective earlier on the day of this meeting.

At L. Swartz's suggestion, the date in the motion was changed to Nov. 29, because Nov. 22 is Thanksgiving.

In response to members' questions, B. Dery explained the nature of a systems analysis, and made a case for the necessity of such analysis and plan. Brief discussion took place about who would undertake the project and whether district administrators have the necessary time and expertise. L. Swartz noted that the motion establishes a broad general authority to look into this matter but poses no evident risk.

SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

Vote on Delegate to MASC Conference

B. Lawrence, the only member planning to attend the Massachusetts Association of School Committees annual convention on Cape Cod in November, stated that professional commitments would make it difficult for her to act as the Committee's delegate at the Friday afternoon session at which delegates vote on MASC resolutions. Other members said they are unavailable. L. Swartz encouraged all to check their schedules and noted the Committee could revisit this vote later.

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPOINT BARBARA LAWRENCE AS ITS VOTING DELEGATE AT THE MASC/MASS CONFERENCE ON

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2012. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-1-0. (Barbara Lawrence voted no.)

OLD BUSINESS

The Committee voted on two policy revisions that were detailed and discussed at a prior meeting.

Emergency Response Policy

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY AS PRESENTED. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

Student Records Policy

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE STUDENTS RECORDS POLICY AS PRESENTED. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

DISCUSSION:

Committee members expressed interest in participation and periodic reports from the student representative to the Committee, and told him that when meetings run long it is acceptable for him to leave before the end of the meeting if his schoolwork requires this. They also expressed interest in regular updates by Committee liaisons to the individual schools.

STATEMENT OF GUEST:

A member of the delegation from Pakistan thanked the Committee for the opportunity to sit in on the meeting, and thanked the Committee for conducting such a democratic meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED AT THIS MEETING:

ACT College Readiness Letter dated 8/22/2012 (2 pages)
SAT / AP / National Merit statistics (2 pages)
School Choice 10/1/2012 enrollment and district enrollment by building and grade (2 pages)
Undated letter to families from Dr. Harvey re anti-bullying presentations and survey (2 pages)
Emergency Response Policy (1 page)
Student Records Policy (1 page)

Budget development process calendar (? pages)

Informational packet re state ethics regulations (? pages)

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary