

**HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 11, 2016  
7:15 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Larry Swartz called the meeting to order at 7:20 pm in the Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

Present: Jeanise Bertrand, Deborah Evans, Hannah Fraley, Dennis Hurley, Larry Swartz, Emily Madden, Stacey Metternick

Also present: Michael Harvey, Jeff Sands  
Nancy Bergner, (Secretary)

**I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

All rose for the pledge of allegiance.

**A. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Susan Cooke of Puritan Rd., Wenham

Is bringing a series of aggressive incidents at Buker School to the attention of the School Committee. Michael Harvey has received documentation of her concerns; she and other parents are seeking further response from the School District to address these problems.

**II. CHAIR'S REPORT**

Deb Evans, Jeff Sands, Mike Harvey and Larry Swartz met with the Fin Coms and Boards of Selectmen on Tuesday. Further information will follow during the meeting, per the Agenda.

**III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*School Committee Nomination Papers Due February 22, 2016*

Are you looking to get involved in ensuring the children of Hamilton and Wenham will continue to have a great education? Then running for a seat on the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee might be right for you! Nomination Papers to run for the HWRSD School Committee need to be returned to the Superintendent's Office at 5 School St in Wenham by 4:00 PM on Monday February 22nd, 2016. Papers can be picked up during normal business hours at the Superintendent's Office. Completed papers need to be verified by the appropriate Town Clerk and have the signatures of at least 40 registered voters from either Hamilton or Wenham. There will be three seats with three-year terms and one seat for a one-year term up for election on April 14, 2016.

*MS/HS Professional Development Day*

During Wednesday Afternoon's Professional Development Time, teachers from Miles River Middle School and Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School participated in a "Professional Practice Poster Session." Teachers from each school created a poster describing a specific aspect of their classroom practice and displayed it on the walls of the MS/HS Library. Teachers then conducted a "gallery walk" where they viewed their colleagues' posters and had the opportunity to ask questions. The posters fostered great con-

versations among colleagues about their teaching practice. It was also great to see how teachers from different grade levels and disciplines were able to find a lot of common ground to talk about. Thanks to Johanna Wilson for organizing the event.

*Don't Miss "Most Likely to Succeed" at HWRHS on March 28th!*

Over the past four years, we've spent a great deal of time exploring the question, "What is the future of education in Hamilton and Wenham?" On March 28th at 7:00 PM at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School, we will host a screening of the film, "Most Likely to Succeed," which presents one vision of what schools could become in the future. After the film, we will hold a discussion session around the themes presented and what they mean for education in the HWRSD. To watch the trailer for this film, click here. Tickets are free, but registration is required. To sign up for tickets, please click the link below.

[//eventbrite.com/tickets-external?eid=20570591192&ref=etckct](http://eventbrite.com/tickets-external?eid=20570591192&ref=etckct)

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*Upcoming League of Women Voters Events*

The League of Women Voters of Hamilton and Wenham have a full slate of activities involving the schools this spring:

On Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 7:00 pm, the LWV will present a "Civics Bee" at HWRHS. The Civics Bee is a trivia competition on the things every citizen should know—the rights and duties of citizenship, how local and state and federal government functions, elections, and the US Constitution. The competition will be held between teams of four members. Each team needs to include at least one adult and one student. There will be prizes for winning teams and the event is free. Contact Mary Jane Brown ([hwcivicsbee@gmail.com](mailto:hwcivicsbee@gmail.com)) for more info.

On Wednesday, March 23rd, the LWV will host its annual "Candidates' Night" at the Buker School. Candidates for local offices, including candidates for Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee will be invited to present to the public.

On Thursday, April 28th the LWV will host former Boston Police Commissioner, Ed Davis, at the HWRHS Auditorium. Commissioner Davis' presentation is entitled, "How One Person Can Make a Difference." The time for this event is still to be decided.

For more information regarding these and other LWV Events, please visit <http://hw.ma.lwvnet.org>

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Turf Field Group**

Hamilton Recreation Director Sean Timmons presented.

*Discussion:*

Support for having all athletic activities at the school was expressed, as well as the hope that funding for this project would be private, and not from the School District budget. Timmons will be presenting a plan to the Hamilton Town Meeting for the establishment of a non-profit organization to raise funds for this project. If the Town Meeting approves funding, the School Commit-

**Exhibit C**

tee will be prepared for a formal vote on proceeding with design and implementation of the project, possibly by July 1. There was discussion on whether or not the sequencing of this decision would be better facilitated by SC commissioning Jeff Sands to move on behalf of the School District in this matter. Phil Tocci suggests that the SC moves to authorize design analysis on school property, subject to the legal insurance, and procurement requirements/regulations the school subscribes to. Such a motion would allow the Turf Project to move forward.

**MOTION: I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ENDORSES AND SUPPORTS THE TURF FIELD PROPOSAL AS PRESENTED BY THE HAMILTON - WENHAM RECREATION DEPARTMENT.**

**Motion by STACEY METTERNICK; seconded by JEANISE BERTRAND.  
UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**B. FY17 Budget Discussion** Jeff Sands presented.

**Exhibit A**

Jeff Sands presented.

**1. 5 Year Capital Plan**

Discussion:

Regarding the extent this plan for capital expenditures take into account the possible trade-offs needed in light of projected operating expenses, it was agreed that the SC would first address the FY17 Budget before discussing relationship between capital and operating expenses. Operating expenses are fully examined in the 3 Year Budget Forecast (see below).

**MOTION: THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE AN FY17 TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BUDGET OF \$31,279,282. THIS AMOUNT INCLUDES GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENSES (AFTER OFFSETS) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,150,032 AND GENERAL FUND DEBT SERVICE EXPENSES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,129,250. 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 2/11/2016.**

**Motion by STACEY METTERNICK; seconded by JEANISE BERTRAND**

Discussion.

This budget process is fairly rigid, as a result of strong fiscal management and controls, as attested by our auditors.

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**2. 3 Year Budget Forecast** Jeff Sands presented.

Discussion:

Scheduled/expected retirements, along with projected staffing needs were carefully addressed to insure that the needs of every student can be met within the projected budget. Needs which come up should be addressed within the constraints of the approved budget.

Concern expressed about the relationship between capital investment and amount of FTEs. Administration affirmed that the student to teacher ratio reflected in this budget is in line with the best research about supporting student achievement. We have been able to maintain the same strong student to teacher ratio today which we had four years ago. This has been done through careful attention to enrollment, FTEs and allocation of staff over departments. We attempt to re-purpose funds in order to address emerging needs.

Since all data projects declining enrollment, management becomes somewhat complicated. Research currently indicates that the decline will be centered in the high school. If there is a 4.9% decline in enrollment, the 4.8% decline in FTEs is appropriate. Forecasting these issues is an art, as opposed to a science. The budget which must be approved this spring is addressing the student needs of August and beyond.

On April 2, the two towns will vote

**C. Adopt FY17 Budget**

**MOTION: THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTES TO ASSESS THE TOWNS OF HAMILTON AND WENHAM A COMBINED TOTAL OF \$26,268,391 AS THE AMOUNT NECESSARY TO OPERATE AND MAINTAIN THE DISTRICT, AS WELL AS PAY DEBT SERVICE, FOR FY17. THE DISTRICT'S ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT SHALL DETERMINE THE AMOUNT APPORTIONED TO EACH TOWN AND THE DISTRICT'S TREASURER SHALL CERTIFY SUCH AMOUNTS TO THE RESPECTIVE TREASURERS OF EACH TOWN WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THIS DATE.**

**Motion by STACEY METTERNICK; seconded by JEANISE BERTRAND**

Discussion: Certification process conducted by the District Treasurer will help to ensure that all figures are checked and double checked.

**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED**

**D. Regional Agreement Amendment—Re: Assessment Calculation Exhibit B**

Larry Swartz presented.

The percentage of students from each community determines the percentage of assessments to each town. This issue becomes a perennial problem the towns must wrestle through from year to year. From a planning perspective, it is encouraging that the current three year enrollment average is nearly identical (within 15/100 of a percent) to present actual enrollments in the elementary schools. It therefore may be advisable to expand the forecasting window from 3 years to 6 years, as noted in Exhibit B.

Why are we trying to change this so far in advance, and why 6 years? 6 years reflects the K-5 elementary years. The current K-5 elementary school group's ration of town residence is almost identical to the current three year rolling average thereby establishing a point in time when neither town will be negatively impacted by extending the number of years considered in the rolling average to 6. More review time would be desirable.

Key takeaways: Exhibit B does not change the amount the district asks from the towns; it smooths the numbers which will be asked, and facilitates planning for the towns.

Pros and Cons of making the change presented in Exhibit B now, on the eve of both town meetings, as opposed to delaying the decision by 6 months or a year. The current numbers, in Exhibit B (showing a leveling out in which neither town is negatively impacted) may make it easier for both towns to adopt this plan for Assessment Calculation, not only in terms of investment in the schools, but in other shared services and facilities. Extending the forecast allows the towns more time to plan.

The Planning Committee is bringing this information for the SC consideration, education and guidance. The Regional Agreement has been in existence since the late sixties, with very few amendments in the intervening years. The timing of the spring town meetings is driving the ap-

parent urgency of voting on this amendment tonight. A vote for this amendment from the SC tonight would put the amendment on both town warrants for their meetings, where the issues would continue to be explored at a community level.

If we do not vote on it tonight, do we wish to schedule a special SC meeting for the next 10 days, at which time we will be able to make a more informed decision. The SC is willing to meet on **Monday Feb. 22 at 5 PM**. Data may be shared electronically, although *must not be discussed* electronically, between now and Feb. 22.

#### **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Communications:** presented by Deb Evans
- B. Planning and Administration:** presented by Deb Evans.  
Enrollment data and apportionment assessments were researched and discussed.
- C. Policy and Education Programming:** Dennis Hurley presented
  - I.** Discussed the independent school and examined the policies of other communities as well as DESE information on independent schools.
- D. Student Rep:** No updates at this time.
- E. Other School Liaison updates:** No updates at this time.

#### **VII. VOTE TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION: I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL  
COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN.**

**Motion by STACEY METTERNICK; seconded by JEANISE BERTRAND  
UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AT 9:50 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy R. Bergner  
Secretary, H-WRSC Meeting