

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Minutes

February 15, 2007

CALLED TO ORDER:

Donald Gallant called a duly posted meeting of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee to order at 8:30 p.m. The meeting was held in the Multipurpose Room of Buker Elementary School.

PRESENT:

Donald Gallant, Lisa Gaquin, Catherine Harrison, Alexa McCloughan, Bill Martin, Jack O'Keefe, and Laurie Wilson.

ABSENT:

Denise Bisailon and Richard Boroff

ALSO PRESENT:

Marinel McGrath, Gene Case

RECOGNITION:

Dr. McGrath stated that on February 8th at the Boston Globe Arts awards held in the Transportation Building in Boston there was an exhibit of art work from Hamilton-Wenham High School students. The Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle did an article with a photo of one of the pieces of artwork.

REPORTS AND CORRESPONDENCE:

Subcommittee Reports:

Communications:

L. Gaquin reported that the subcommittee met to develop the February email newsletter. She also reported that the subcommittee is also working on articles for the budget series in the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle.

Finance:

C. Harrison reported that the subcommittee met with the Hamilton and Wenham finance committees to discuss the school budget and the proposed gap. Ms. Harrison stated that the towns expect to let the schools know their contributions on March 1st.

Negotiations:

D. Gallant reported that the subcommittee is continuing teacher negotiations and that sessions are scheduled for the next two months.

INFORMATION/ COMMUNICATION:

Subcommittee Minutes:

The following minutes were enclosed in School committee packets:

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| 1. Communications | February 1, 2007 |
| 2. Finance | December 4 & 14, 2006; January 12, 2007 |
| 3. Facilities | January 19, 2007 |

Leadership Team Search Update:

Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Administration:

Dr. McGrath recommended that the School Committee appoint Mr. Paul P. Szymanski for the position of Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Administration. He will be able to begin on March 19th. Gene Case, Interim Assistant Superintendent will remain with the district for the next few weeks to ensure a smooth transition. Dr. McGrath thanked the search committee for their help throughout the process.

Appointment – Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Administration:

CATHERINE HARRISON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPOINT PAUL P. SZYMANSKI AS ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR FINANCE AND

ADMINISTRATION EFFECTIVE MARCH 19, 2007 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2010. LAURIE WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

C. Harrison stated that Mr. Szymanski is a breath of fresh air with his depth of knowledge and experience after these past three years of searching. He is a really good fit for our district. D. Gallant echoed her sentiments. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

CATHERINE HARRISON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE BUDGETED SALARY OF ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$115,000) FOR THE FIRST YEAR OF MR. SZYMANSKI'S THREE YEAR CONTRACT AND TO APPROVE THE PRO RATION OF THE APPROVED SALARY EFFECTIVE MARCH 19. SALARY INCREASES DURING THE LIFE OF THE CONTRACT WILL BE BASED UPON PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND VOTED ANNUALLY BY THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE. LAURIE WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

Director of Student Services Search:

Dr. McGrath updated the school committee on the Director of Student Services Search. There are two finalists: Beverly Shea and Allison Brown Collins (interim position). Beverly Shea works for Hudson (MA) Public Schools as the Assistant Director of Pupil Services. Allison Brown Collins is the HWRSD Interim Director of Student Services. The search team conducted both site visits and both candidates met with parents. The week of February 26th the finalist candidates will meet with the faculty, staff, and leadership team. Dr. McGrath reviewed the search timeline and hopes to make a recommendation to the school committee at the March 1st school committee meeting.

Winthrop School and Miles River Middle School Principal Searches:

Dr. McGrath provided an update Winthrop and Miles River Middle School principal searches stating that the searches are progressing according to schedule. She hopes to announce her selections at the March 29th school committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Superintendent's Contract:

D. Gallant stated that the school committees is aware of the strong need for a good leader for our district. It is very important especially during time of fiscal restraints. He stated that the district is very fortunate to have Dr. McGrath as its superintendent. She is known as one of the leading of the superintendents in the state. He recently learned that a few districts were pursuing her to be the superintendent of their districts. He stated the district needed her to maintain her relationships with the town officials that she has developed over the last few years. The school committee also recognizes what a search would cost and what we would need to pay for a new superintendent. They wanted to try to retain Dr. McGrath and they realized that they might not be able to meet what was being offered. D. Gallant recommended that the school committee increase Dr. McGrath's salary approximately 11% in hopes that Dr. McGrath will continue to provide her great leadership to the district. C. HARRISON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE AN ANNUAL SALARY OF ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$170,000) FOR SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS MARINEL D. MCGRATH EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2007. LAURIE WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION. J. O'Keefe thanked D. Gallant for stating the sentiments of the entire school committee so eloquently. C. Harrison stated that Dr. McGrath came in with a vision for the district. She has built a framework and will be able to move forward when that time comes.

She has a very strong work ethic and the vision for the children. D. Bisaillon, who was unable to attend the meeting due to the storm, emailed D. Gallant comments to read which stated that Dr. McGrath is the most accomplished educator that she has ever met. She has vast experience on all levels. Her compassionate nature and her decisiveness are very strong attributes and that the district was very lucky to have her. B. Martin stated that the district could not have a superintendent better than Dr. McGrath. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

Dr. McGrath stated that she had a few difficult weeks but she always wants what is best for everyone. She stated that her work here is far from finished and this is where she belongs at this point in time. She thanked the school committee for their support and confidence in her leadership of the district.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

CATHERINE HARRISON MADE MOTION THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 1, 2007. LAURIE WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

ADJOURNMENT:

CATHERINE HARRISON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN AT 8:59 P.M. LAURIE WILSON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Jacqueline Cooper
School Committee Secretary