



HAMILTON-WENHAM

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

5 SCHOOL STREET, WENHAM, MA 01984 · TEL. 978-468-5310

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

In-Person Meeting, [Zoom Link](#) is for Public Comment Only

Meeting ID: 831 2168 0332

Thursday, March 2, 2023

7:00 p.m. - 9:57 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara, Chair

Anna Siedzik, Vice Chair

Amy Kunberger, Secretary

Julia Campbell, Assistant Secretary

Jen Carr

David Frenkel

David Polito (arrived at 7:55)

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration

HWRHS Principal, Bryan Menegoni

Student Representative Eliza Bassom

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chair Allara called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All those in attendance, with the exception of School Committee member Anna Siedzik, rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Allara stated that the meeting is being recorded and live streamed by [HWCAM](#).

3. Citizens' Comments [Exhibit](#)

Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material.

There was no citizen comment. The zoom link was closed at approximately 7:05 p.m.

4. Review of School Committee Protocols [Exhibit](#)

Anna Siedzik read School Committee Protocol #14 as written in the exhibit.

5. Review of School Committee Mission Statement [Exhibit](#)

Julia Campbell read the following section from the School Committee Mission Statement: The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee will lead and inspire a District that is a source of civic pride and municipal engagement to serve the community for generations to come.

6. Student Representative Report *Eliza Bassom*

Student Representative Bassom gave a presentation updating the Committee on student events and activities throughout the district.

Chair Allara introduced the new School Committee recording secretary Bev Zagarri.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants [Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 19
- Voucher No. 1032
- Voucher No. 1033
- Voucher No. 3224
- Voucher No. 3225
- Voucher No. 3226
- Voucher No. 3227
- Voucher No. 3228
- Voucher No. 3229

b. Donations

- Edfund Mini-Grant - Digital Music Production Studio; \$4,380.99 [Exhibit](#)
- The Tides Center (NGLC) Next Generation Learning Challenges - Learning Expedition at Casco Bay; \$3,750 [Exhibit](#)

c. Minutes

- November 3, 2023 [Exhibit](#)

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the consent agenda as written with the exception of the Edfund Mini-Grant and the minutes of November 3, 2022.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED unanimously by vote of six (6) members present (Members Allara, Siedzik, Kunberger, Campbell, Carr and Frenkel).

Anna Siedzik stated that she requested to hold the Edfund Mini Grant from the consent agenda in order to take the opportunity to thank the Edfund for their continued support of the district.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the Edfund Mini Grant as listed in the agenda.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by Anna Siedzik

MOTION PASSED unanimously by vote of six (6) members present (Members Allara, Siedzik, Kunberger, Campbell, Carr and Frenkel).

Chair Allara stated that she held the November 3, 2022 minutes from the consent agenda due to a typographical error on page 3.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the minutes of November 3, 2022 with the substitution of the word “Wenham” for the word “random” in the motion on page 3.

Motion by: Dana Allara

Seconded by: Amy Kunberger

MOTION PASSED unanimously by vote of six (6) members present (Members Allara, Siedzik, Kunberger, Campbell, Carr and Frenkel).

8. New Business

- a. HS Handbook Update [Exhibit](#)

Principal Menegoni discussed two proposed updates to the student handbook as outlined in the [exhibit](#).

Anna Siedzik requested that the Policy Subcommittee review Policy Section J to ensure that the updated language is included. Superintendent Tracy noted that he is anticipating the State will issue an additional update to this language.

- b. Fitness Room Renovation [Exhibit](#)

Principal Menegoni discussed the proposed renovation to the fitness room.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, Principal Menegoni stated the following:

- The damaged flooring is vinyl not asbestos.
- There is no evidence of mold.
- The renovation will provide the trainer with adequate space for their work.
- The equipment currently in the room has been inventoried and is safe for use.
- The total cost of the proposed renovation is \$160,000 (\$40,000 for renovation and \$120,000 for equipment).
- The details for making the space available for use by the Council on Aging are still being finalized.

Superintendent Tracy and the Committee discussed the importance of the school community reaching out to the Council on Aging and providing opportunities for senior community members to use school facilities. It was suggested that an inclusive design of the fitness room for senior citizens could include low impact cardio equipment such as a rowing machine.

Superintendent Tracy stated that the funding for this project would be presented later in the

agenda.

c. Progress Flag

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District fly the Progress Pride Flag on all district flagpoles annually during the month of June.

Motion by: Anna Siedzik

Seconded by: Julia Campbell

Discussion:

Anna Siedzik discussed her rationale for making the motion noting that this is an important visible statement of support of our LGBTQ+ students and families from the highest governing body of the district. She stated that this would be a clear act of government speech and; therefore, it is an appropriate legal mechanism and provides an operational foundation to simply move forward.

Dana Allara discussed her concern regarding the motion. She stated that she very much respects the arguments made by Anna Siedzik and understands the reason for making it annually. She stated that the flags could be flown without the Committee directing the district to do so and she is not in support of using government speech to fly any flag.

Julia Campbell asked who would be in charge of flying the flag without this motion. Dana Allara stated that in her opinion the principal, under the purview of the superintendent, would be in charge.

Jen Carr stated that equity and inclusion has been one of the School Committee's goals from day one. She stated that equity and inclusion has to be seen as coming from the top as well as the layers underneath and that is why she is supportive of this.

MOTION PASSED 6-1 (Members Siedzik, Kunberger, Campbell, Carr, Polito and Frenkel voted yes and Member Allara voted no).

d. Procedures/Dates Superintendent's Evaluation

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that:

- The Committee will vote on the Superintendent's evaluation at the June 8 meeting.
- The due date for submitting evaluations for members and non-returning members will be May 25.
- Members not returning to the Committee after election day will submit an evaluation of the superintendent for his work up through election day (April 6). Non-returning members will be invited to attend the June 8 meeting for the discussion of the evaluation but will not participate in the vote. Newly elected members will not submit a written evaluation of the Superintendent for the FY23 school year.
- David Polito will compile the evaluation.
- A discussion regarding how the evaluation will be compiled will be included on a future School Committee agenda.

e. Special Education OOD Costs Over Time [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy discussed the state-wide 14% OSD increase and stated that as a member of the North Shore Roundtable he attended a meeting in January with local representatives and senators to discuss the increase. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for the end of March. He stated that Governor Healeys' budget has been released and although money specifically for the OSD increase (\$92 million to cover increases across the state) was not included in the budget there was \$24 million put aside into a special account. He stated that he will have additional information on potential funding after the House and Senate budgets are released.

Superintendent Tracy reviewed the district's current special education enrollment and out-of-district costs as outlined in the [exhibit](#).

Julia Campbell thanked Superintendent Tracy for his presentation that shed light on the issue but also underscored the fact that these are our children and we are responsible for providing FAPE (free appropriate public education).

f. Athletic Facilities Improvement Project Vote [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy stated that a minor change had been made to the language of the motion approving the Athletic Facilities Improvement Project. He stated that he confirmed with counsel that there is no need to vote on the change and he is presenting this information this evening for transparency.

The change to the motion was the addition of the following language : *which amount shall be reduced to the extent of any grants or gifts received by the District on account of this project*

In response to a question from the Committee, Superintendent Tracy stated that he believes \$15 million is still adequate funding for the project.

9. Finance & Operations

a. FY23 Q2 Year-End Forecast [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone presented the FY23 Year-End Forecast as of January 31, 2023.

In response to a question from the Committee, Assistant Superintendent Leone stated that asbestos removal can't be done using these funds because the funds must be used by June 30 and asbestos removal cannot be performed while students are in the building.

I move the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Administration to prepay FY24 OOD Tuitions with FY23 funds not to exceed the amounts established by MGL Chapter 40 § 4E & Chapter 71 § 71D.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Jen Carr

MOTION PASSED unanimously by vote of seven (7) members present

I move the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the FY23 Operating Expense Budget Transfers as recommended here in by the Assistant

Superintendent of Finance & Administration and as presented on the previous slide entitled “Transfers Requested Q2”.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Anna Siedzik

MOTION PASSED unanimously by vote of seven (7) members present

- b. Pre-K Tuitions [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the results of the survey he sent out to surrounding districts regarding pre-k programs and tuitions. He stated that the district has not increased pre-k tuition in at least 7 years.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee increase the preschool tuition rates as outlined in the letter.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger

Seconded by: Anna Siedzik

MOTION PASSED unanimously by vote of the six (6) members present (Members Allara, Siedzik, Kunberger, Carr, Polito and Frenkel)

10. Committee Reports

- a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee

No additional update.

- b. Policy Subcommittee
 - i. First Reading Policy Section F [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#),
 - ii. Policy FF [Exhibit](#)

Anna Siedzik discussed the proposed changes to Policy Section F. She stated that after the subcommittee met, Superintendent Tracy received an updated legal opinion for Policy FF ([exhibit](#)). The subcommittee is bringing forward policies FA, FCB, FF and FFA to the Committee this evening for a first reading.

In response to a question regarding Policy FFA Memorial for Deceased Students and Staff, it was stated that shrubs, trees and plantings are discouraged because of ongoing maintenance and replacement.

- c. Negotiations Subcommittee

The new subcommittee met and elected David Polito chair. David Polito stated that the subcommittee is not anticipating negotiations will begin this school year.

11. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy acknowledged the accomplishments of the winter athletic teams and athletes. He stated that he attended the high school performance of *13 Ways to Screw Up Your College Interview*.

12. Chair's Report

There was no chair report.

13. Topics for Future Meetings

Chair Allara stated that topics for future meetings will include discussion regarding the Superintendent evaluation and the approval of Policy Section F.

14. Vote to adjourn into Executive Session

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee adjourn into executive session for Purpose #3 to discuss strategy with respect to litigation an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; not to return to open session.

MOTION by: Dana Allara

SECONDED by: Anna Seidzik

MOTION PASSED unanimously by roll-call vote of the seven (7) Members Allara, Siedzik, Kunberger, Campbell, Carr, Polito and Frenkel.

Respectfully submitted by Bev Zagari, Recording Secretary 03/07/2023