

School Committee Meeting (agenda)
In-Person Meeting
Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room
Zoom Access to Full Meeting Also Available
Webings ID: 855 15 15 15

Webinar ID: 857 1747 7499

**Passcode: 451915** 

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

7:00 PM - 9:20 PM

#### **Present:**

Dana Allara, Chairperson
Michelle Bailey
Julia Campbell, Vice Secretary
Jennifer Carr, Secretary (remote participation)
Michelle Horgan
Anna Siedzik, Vice Chairperson
David Polito

#### **Also Present:**

Eric Tracy, HWRHS Superintendent Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration Carin A. Kale, Hamilton Town Clerk Trudy Reid, Wenham Town Clerk Stacy Bucyk, Director of Student Services Kevin Merz, District Treasurer

#### 1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Ms. Allara, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. This meeting is being recorded and broadcast by HWCAM. School Committee member Mrs. Carr is joining the meeting virtually.

#### 2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

#### 3. Citizen's Comments

Exhibit

Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify himself or herself by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. After Citizen's Comments, the chat feature will be turned off. If members want to be recognized, they can use the raise hand feature.

Ms. Allara reminds citizens that their comments need to be limited to 3 (three) minutes, and asks citizens to state their name and address, spelling their last name for the record.

*Mark Provost 162 Asbury St., Hamilton* [in-person comment]: Mr. Provost is a professor of health and well-being and has owned a health business in Hamilton for 25 years. He has appeared before the

committee a number of times in the recent past to ask the School Committee to reconsider enforcing the mask mandate in schools. He reiterates his argument against mask-wearing, pointing to the sources he has previously used in support of this stance. Mr. Provost appears this evening because he has recently learned about the March 2021 *American Rescue Plan* which provides funding to Massachusetts school districts if they comply with the mask mandate and other COVID mitigation strategies. He believes that the schools are getting paid at the expense of the childrens' well-being, and that this money highlights the fraudulent nature of the district.

Mike Hebert, 96 Blueberry Lane, Hamilton [Zoom comment]: Mr. Hebert offers a comment concerning the district's continued enforcement of mask-wearing. He argues that the mask mandate and other strategies, such as keeping the windows open in classrooms, are ineffective and causing harm/distress to students. Mr. Hebert remarks that he moved here with his family in 2016 at a time when the Hamilton - Wenham schools ranked #13. Currently, the schools are ranking somewhere in the 30s, and he believes this is because the schools are not making decisions in the best interest of students. He is concerned specifically about the district's COVID response strategy, and also, more broadly, about the general direction the schools are headed in.

Ms. Allara closes public comments at approximately 7:14 PM. Given that School Committee member Mrs. Carr is participating in tonight's meeting via Zoom, the Zoom link will remain open and accessible to the community. However, the option to participate in the meeting (raise hand/comment/etc.) will be disabled at this time. Community members may also choose to view the meeting through HWCAM's livestream on the HWCAM website or YouTube channel.

## 4. Recognition of John McWane

Mr. Polito reflects on the life and service of John McWane, who passed away December 22, 2021 at the age of 81. Mr. McWane was a fulbright scholar; earned his PhD in physics from MIT; and spent his life committed to education. He served on the Hamilton - Wenham Regional School Committee for 15 years, and was instrumental in building the Miles River Middle School as well as refurbishing Hamilton - Wenham High School about 20 years ago. Mr. Polito reflects on his personal relationship with Mr. McWane, remembering that he attended school with his 3 children and also received his family's support in his 2016 run for School Committee. Mr. Polito knows that Mr. McWane inspired many and will be sorely missed. His legacy will silently live on in the district for generations to come.

## 5. Review of School Committee Protocols

**Exhibit** 

Ms. Siedzik reads protocol #1 as written in the School Committee Protocols detailed in the exhibit.

## 6. Consent Agenda

# A. Warrants

**Exhibit** 

- Voucher No. 15
- Voucher No. 1024
- Voucher No. 1025
- Voucher No. 1026
- Voucher No. 3066
- Voucher No. 3067
- Voucher No. 3068
- Voucher No. 3069

### B. Donations

•	Edfund Grant, Project Frisco, \$7,370	<b>Exhibit</b>
•	Edfund Grant, Robotics Class, \$25,423.66	<b>Exhibit</b>
•	Lueders Environmental, Inc., \$50	<b>Exhibit</b>

# I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN; THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

## MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

David Polito	YES;
Julia Campbell	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Jen Carr	YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

#### 7. New Business

## A. <u>Discussion of SC Election Procedures</u>

Ms. Allara explains that the Regional Agreement's Election Procedure section needs revision in order to align with state and local laws. There is discussion about the Regional Agreement's language and the problems that have arisen in the past due to the confusion it causes. Ms. Bailey requests that a document be developed to accurately reflect the election procedure.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ASSIGN THE NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE WITH THE TASK OF REVIEWING AND REWRITING THE ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS SECTIONS OF THE REGIONAL AGREEMENT, AND TO BRING FORWARD A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE REGIONAL AGREEMENT TO THE UPCOMING APRIL, 2022 TOWN MEETING.

## MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Discussion: Ms. Allara reminds the School Committee that district's counsel, Marc Terry, stated that the Regional Agreement revision may be a very complicated and complex task. There is discussion about the timeline in completing this task; Town warrant deadlines; strategy moving forward; responsibility/purview of the School Committee and Towns in this process; required approval at Town Meeting; etc. Ms. Bailey explains that the School Committee has always managed the edits to the Regional Agreement, and notes that the district and both Towns are currently in agreement about the changes necessary. The Negotiations Subcommittee would complete this revision work in consultation with the Town Clerks and District Counsel, Marc Terry.

Michelle Horgan YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
David Polito YES;
Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

#### B. <u>Discuss and Vote on Peru Field Trip</u>

Exhibit 1

Superintendent Tracy explains that the School Committee previously voted to approve this field trip. He has attached an email, exhibit 2, which notes the approval was contingent on revisiting the travel advisory 30 days before the field trip. Mr. Tracy is simply seeking the committee's overall feedback regarding this trip; he is not requesting another vote.

There is discussion regarding WorldStrides travel requirements (<u>exhibit 1</u>); ratio concerns; district policies; current COVID concerns; district liability; parent consent form; Level 3 Advisory and violence; COVID testing plan to enter/exit travel destinations; trip insurance availability and communication about insurance; additional safety and health considerations; etc.

The School Committee requests to review the parental consent form and asks for WorldStrides to provide a more detailed plan considering current COVID transmission rates and any changes to the travel advisory.

#### C. Student Choice Count Report

**Exhibit** 

Superintendent Tracy reviews the 01/06/2022 memorandum from Bryan Menegoni, *HWRHS Principal*, and Craig Hovey, *MRMS Principal*, as detailed in the <u>exhibit</u>. This is an opportunity for the School Committee to review the program details and ask any clarifying questions before the 2022-2023 School Choice Public Hearing and School Committee vote, scheduled for the 01/20/2022 meeting.

There is discussion about the number of spots available in the district; recommendations from the principals as detailed in the <u>exhibit</u>; specific grades inclusion/exclusion in School Choice Program; historical and current procedure; etc.

#### D. North Shore Education Consortium 2021 Annual Report

**Exhibit** 

Superintendent Tracy notes that the *North Shore Education Consortium 2021 Annual Report* has been made available, and is linked in the agenda <u>exhibit</u>.

#### 8. Finance and Operations

## A. Student Services Budget Presentation

Exhibit

Stacy Bucyk, *Director of Student Services*, presents the Student Services Budget Presentation, as shown in the <u>exhibit</u>. She thanks all the staff involved in Student Services, including Maureen Smith, *Preschool and Elementary Special Education Coordinator*, and Ryan Roth, *Secondary Special Education Coordinator*, for their ongoing dedication to students. Ms. Bucyk reviews the FY23 budget requests as well as ongoing challenges and the district's unmet needs.

There is discussion regarding the budget presented; ESL program structure and position limitations; funding of Social Worker positions; impact of COVID-19 pandemic on district needs; out-of-district enrollment/expenditures; use of Circuit Breaker/ Reserve funds; in-home tutoring; impact of hospitalizations on district/budget; return and benefits of FY19 High School investments; professional development; TA access to professional development; etc.

## B. <u>Tentative Budget Presentation</u>

Exhibit 1
Exhibit 2

Mr. Leone recaps the budget process timeline, noting that tonight is the final budget presentation. He reviews the Superintendent's FY23 Tentative Budget Recommendation as of January 6, 2022, as detailed in <a href="mailto:exhibit 1">exhibit 1</a>. Mr. Leone states that the recommended budget allows the district to maintain level services, make incremental investments (social/emotional needs; reinstate World Language; invest in curriculum

materials; address technology needs), implement a one-year robust maintenance program; and address OPEB liability.

There is discussion regarding details of the FY23 tentative budget; grant funds; Ipad return/replacement; student services 0.6 position; out-of-district cases; number of students requiring specialized services; etc.

There will be a FY23 Budget Public Presentation on 01/19/2022, 6:30 PM at the High School. This public presentation will be an informational session designed to offer clarity before the 01/20/2022 Public Hearing.

## C. Vote to Approve Tentative FY23 Budget

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE TENTATIVE FY23 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BUDGET OF \$41,507,737, THIS AMOUNT INCLUDES GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENSES, AFTER OFFSETS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$40,922,462 AND GENERAL FUND DEBT SERVICE EXPENSES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$585,275; FURTHERMORE THE GROSS OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE DISTRICT, BEFORE OFFSETS, HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED BY THE DESE DEFINED CHART OF ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO THE "SUMMARY BY DESE CATEGORY" CHART INCLUDED IN THIS BUDGET PRESENTATION, AS DETAILED IN THE EXHIBIT.

## MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.

Jen Carr YES;
David Polito YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

Mr. Leone thanks the School Committee for the favorable vote. He reviews the budget timeline going forward:

- 01/13/2022: Mr. Leone will deliver signed and certified budget to each of the Towns;
- 01/13/2022: Quintuple board meeting;
- 01/20/2022: First Public Hearing on FY23 Budget;
- 01/26/2022: Quintuple board chairs only meeting;
- 02/10/2022: Second Public Hearing on FY23 Budget & School Committee vote;
- 04/02/2022: Annual Town Meeting

#### D. Vote OPEB - Acceptance of Chapter 32B, Section 20 (OPEB Fund)

Exhibit

Mr. Leone explains that this is a request for the School Committee to vote to approve (1) establishing the OPEB fund, and (2) ultimately allowing the district to invest this year's money into that account. Kevin Merz, *District Treasurer*, provides a more detailed explanation, pointing to the necessary language to establish the OPEB account, as detailed in the exhibit.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADOPT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT RESOLUTION THAT STATES:

RESOLVED: THAT, THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HEREBY ACCEPTS

RESOLVED: THAT, THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HEREBY ACCEPTS THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 32B, SECTION 20 OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, AS

AMENDED BY CHAPTER 218, SECTION 15 OF THE ACTS OF 2016 (THE "ACT"), AND ESTABLISHES AN OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS LIABILITY TRUST FUND (THE "OPEB FUND"); RESOLVED: THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACT, THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT HEREBY DESIGNATES THE TREASURER OF THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO SERVE AS CUSTODIAN OF THE OPEB FUND (THE "CUSTODIAN"); RESOLVED: THAT THE SUM OF \$100,000 BE APPROPRIATED AS THE INITIAL INVESTMENT INTO THE OPEB FUND;

RESOLVED: THAT THE CUSTODIAN BE DESIGNATED AS TRUSTEE OF THE OPEB FUND; RESOLVED: THAT THE TREASURER OF THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, AS CUSTODIAN OF THE OPEB FUND, BE, AND HEREBY IS, AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER THE INVESTMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE RETIREE BENEFITS TRUST FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON BEHALF OF THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING THE REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AGREEMENTS ON THE PART OF THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT TO BE MADE AND PERFORMED THEREUNDER.

## MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by David Polito.

Michelle Horgan YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
David Polito YES;
Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

#### E. Approval of Sale of BANs (Bond Anticipation Notes);

Exhibit

Kevin Merz, *District Treasurer*, reviews the 12/16/2021 General Obligation BAN, as detailed in the exhibit. Mr. Merz asks the School Committee to vote to approve the note issue, through the vote prepared by bond counsel. Ms. Bailey asks for clarification regarding the associated projects, with Mr. Leone explaining that the BAN is associated with the Winthrop Sprinkler Project and the FY21 Capital Projects.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE SALE OF THE \$1,231,400, 1.50 PERCENT GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES (THE "NOTES") OF THE DISTRICT DATED JANUARY 20, 2022, AND PAYABLE JANUARY 19, 2023, TO PIPER SANDLER & CO. AT PAR AND ACCRUED INTEREST, IF ANY, PLUS A PREMIUM OF \$11,415.08.

#### MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

David Polito YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FURTHER VOTE THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE MARKETING AND SALE OF THE NOTES, THE PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF A NOTICE OF SALE AND PRELIMINARY OFFICIAL STATEMENT DATED DECEMBER 8, 2021, AND A FINAL OFFICIAL STATEMENT DATED DECEMBER 16, 2021, EACH IN SUCH FORM AS MAY BE APPROVED BY THE

DISTRICT TREASURER, BE AND HEREBY ARE RATIFIED, CONFIRMED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED.

## MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Michelle Horgan YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
David Polito YES;
Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THE DISTRICT TREASURER TO ESTABLISH POST ISSUANCE FEDERAL TAX COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES IN SUCH FORM AS THE DISTRICT TREASURE AND BOND COUNSEL DEEM SUFFICIENT, OR IF SUCH PROCEDURES ARE CURRENTLY IN PLACE, TO REVIEW AND UPDATE SAID PROCEDURES, IN ORDER TO MONITOR AND MAINTAIN THE TAX-EXEMPT STATUS OF THE NOTES.

# MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

David Polito YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THAT ANY CERTIFICATES OR DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE NOTES (COLLECTIVELY, THE "DOCUMENTS"), MAY BE EXECUTED IN SEVERAL COUNTERPARTS, EACH OF WHICH SHALL BE REGARDED AS AN ORIGINAL AND ALL OF WHICH SHALL CONSTITUTE ONE AND THE SAME DOCUMENT; DELIVERY OF AN EXECUTED COUNTERPART OF A SIGNATURE PAGE TO A DOCUMENT BY ELECTRONIC MAIL IN A ".PDF" FILE OR BY OTHER ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION SHALL BE AS EFFECTIVE AS DELIVERY OF A MANUALLY EXECUTED COUNTERPART SIGNATURE PAGE TO SUCH DOCUMENT; AND ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES ON ANY OF THE DOCUMENT SHALL BE DEEMED ORIGINAL SIGNATURES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE DOCUMENTS AND ALL MATTERS RELATING THERETO, HAVING THE SAME LEGAL EFFECT AS ORIGINAL SIGNATURES.

## MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Michelle Horgan YES; Anna Siedzik YES; Michelle Bailey YES; Dana Allara YES; Julia Campbell YES; David Polito YES; Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE THAT EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, THE DISTRICT SECRETARY AND THE DISTRICT TREASURER BE AND HEREBY ARE, AUTHORIZED TO TAKE ANY AND ALL SUCH ACTIONS, AND EXECUTE AND DELIVER SUCH CERTIFICATES, RECEIPTS OR OTHER DOCUMENTS AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THEM, OR ANY OF THEM, TO BE NECESSARY OR CONVENIENT TO CARRY INTO EFFECT THE PROVISIONS OF THE FOREGOING VOTES.

## MOTION by Julia Campbell; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

David Polito YES;
Julia Campbell YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Jen Carr YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

Mr. Merz explains that the BAN vote can be done in one (1) single vote; however the School Committee had previously voted to separate out each vote on the document. The School Committee agrees, and is relieved, to allow Mr. Merz to prepare future BAN approval documents with a single motion/vote.

#### 9. Policy

## A. Review Face Coverings Policy

Exhibit 1
Exhibit 2
Exhibit 3

Superintendent Tracy presents the district's current positive COVID cases, as detailed in <a href="exhibit 3">exhibit 3</a>. There is discussion regarding pool testing, including testing procedure; participation criteria, such as vaccination status and previous positive test; DESE guidance surrounding school testing; alternative tests; effectiveness of pool testing; etc. There is some discussion regarding other mitigation efforts and the district's response to increasing cases.

Mr. Polito and Superintendent Tracy thank the school nurses for the extraordinary work they have been doing.

#### 10. Superintendent's Report

- Thank you to school nurses and district staff for their extraordinary work to keep schools operating and students healthy!
  - District distributed 200 rapid tests;
  - Ms. Siedzik thanks Superintendent Tracy for spending New Year's Day driving to obtain those rapid tests.
- Wednesday, 01/19/2022 6:30 PM at the High School: public budget presentation before the Public Hearing Thursday, 01/20/2022;
- The Cutler Principal search process/timeline is almost complete:
  - Anticipates parent and teacher feedback;

• Begin to build a search committee after February vacation.

Superintendent Tracy offers two shout outs: Middle School and High School Band and Music personnel for a great concert; DECA students and the DECA competition.

## 11. Committee Reports

## Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee

The next meeting was moved from 01/12/2022 to 01/19/2022. The subcommittee has been reviewing the FY23 budget and proposed OPEB investment, both of which they fully support.

## Policy/Legislative Subcommittee

The next meeting was moved from 01/10/2022 to next Tuesday, 01/18/2022. The next meeting agenda includes finalizing the Flag Policy, which has been reviewed by district legal counsel, Marc Terry. The subcommittee has also been continuing review of the policy manual, and will have a significant amount of material (section I completed) for School Committee review on 01/20/2022.

## Negotiations Subcommittee

The next meeting is scheduled for 01/19/2022 at 4:00 PM. This meeting will include conversations with the Custodial Union. Future meetings will also include the newly assigned task to review the Regional Agreement elections section.

There is a brief discussion regarding the conflict created on 01/19/2022 with both the *Negotiations subcommittee* and *Capital/Finance subcommittee* meeting at the same time.

#### 12. Chair's Report

- 01/13/2021 7:00: Quintuple Board meeting scheduled via Zoom;
- District received *Demand to Bargain*: Ms. Allara is working with Superintendent Tracy and District's counsel, Marc Terry;
- Ms. Siedzik acknowledges Ms. Allara's extraordinary work over the past week attempting to solve the issues with the district's website.

## 13. Topics for Future Meetings

- 01/22/2022 9:00 AM at Central Offices: School Committee DEI workshop;
- Ms. Bailey requests an agenda item to discuss anticipated staff absenteeism on Good Friday, the day before April vacation;
- Challenges with the district website:
  - Revising meeting posting procedure and identifying an alternative to the website;
  - Writing a letter to legislators/ policy makers assign task to the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* or full School Committee.

# 14. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 01/12/2021 MEETING AT 9:39 PM.

## MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Jen Carr YES; David Polito YES; Julia Campbell YES; Dana Allara YES; Michelle Bailey YES; Anna Siedzik YES; Michelle Horgan YES.

# MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

Respectfully submitted January 27 2022 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.