

**The Hamilton Wenham Regional School District  
School Committee Meeting  
Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room  
Wednesday, December 18, 2019 7:00 PM**

**Present:**

Peter Wolczik  
Michelle Horgan  
Michelle Bailey, Vice Chairperson  
David Polito, Chairperson  
Stacey Metternick, Secretary  
Gene Lee (late arrival)

**Hamilton Board of Selectmen**

Rosemary Kennedy, Vice Chair  
Darcy Dale  
Shawn Farrell

**High School Student Government**

Thomas Kaine, Student Government Representative/President  
Connor Ryan, Student Government Vice President  
Dominic Brown, Student Government Treasurer  
Caroline Dent, Student Government Secretary  
Nora Sullivan-Horner, Representative School Advisory Councils

**Also Present:**

Julie Kukenberger, Interim Superintendent  
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration

1. **Call to Order** 7:00 PM  
David Polito calls the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

**a) Pledge of Allegiance**

All in attendance rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rosemary Kennedy calls the Hamilton Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Ms. Kennedy notes that the minutes for the BOS meeting will be identical to those of the School Committee for the joint meeting.

2. **Citizens' Comments**

None.

3. **Student Representative's Report**

*Thomas Kaine, President*  
*Connor Ryan, Vice President*  
*Dominic Brown, Treasurer*  
*Caroline Dent, Secretary*  
*Nora Sullivan-Horner, Representative School Advisory Councils*

- Miles River Middle School Transitions
  - Activities & clubs;
  - Extra-curricular activities;
  - Students reflect on crucial components of their Middle School experience.
- Hamilton Wenham Regional High School
  - Activities and clubs;

- Newly developed Writing Center with peer tutors;
    - Extra-curricular activities;
    - Fundraising efforts;
      - Community outreach, fundraising events, etc.
  - Student Advisory Councils
    - Nora Sullivan-Horner explains the student roles in State legislature and policies, noting that there is student voice reflected in votes;
      - Equity, global outreach, post high school readiness, etc.
  - High School Athletics Program
    - Review of sports teams in High School, options for participation, etc.
  - What is Learning at HWRHS?
    - Review of major components found in the High School student experience:
      - Exploration;
      - Failure & growth;
      - Discussion;
      - Challenge.

Questions:

Michelle Bailey: Having recently toured colleges, what do you believe colleges are looking for in students, specifically in regards to the High School experience?

Caroline Dent noticed that the interdisciplinary programs she is interested in were looking for extracurricular activities and other non-traditional educational pursuits. Thomas Kaine adds that he noticed colleges interested in cooperative and collaborative approaches.

Michelle Horgan: Congratulations to Thomas Kaine for his acceptance to Harvard, and extends her best wishes to all those students awaiting acceptance.

#### 4. New Business

- a) Jointly appoint a Hamilton Resident to the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee with the Hamilton Board of Selectmen:

- *Tai Pryjma* [Exhibit](#)
- *Nancy Gerardi* [Exhibit](#)

Michelle Horgan asks candidates to provide an overview of their interests and qualifications for the open School Committee seat. Candidates provide a summary of their background, interest, and skillset, which are also detailed in their letters of interest.

Discussion regarding interview questions, structure of the interview, etc.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE FOUR QUESTIONS (DETAILED ON PAGE 1 OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PACKET) AND ALLOW FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AFTERWARDS, TO BE ASKED OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE CANDIDATES.**

**MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.  
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

*Approved School Committee Questions (Michelle Horgan):*

1. **In your opinion what is the district doing well? What are its challenges and how would you improve them?**

*Nancy Gerardi:* The students who just spoke illustrate what the district is currently doing well. The challenges, as is true with most organizations and groups, are time and money. Implementing programs, curriculum, and activities to create well-rounded students involves time and money, but Ms. Gerardi notes that overcoming those challenges to determine how to best implement them back into the school is important.

*Tai Pryjma:* His son loves school, which Mr. Pryjma attributes to the Hamilton-Wenham teachers creating an individualized learning experience and offering supportive services. The more support the district can offer to the teachers, the more the teachers are able to offer support to students.

**2. The School Committee has started the process of hiring a permanent superintendent, and if appointed, you will be part of that process. What characteristics do you think the school committee should be looking for in a permanent superintendent?**

*Tai Pryjma:* Impressive executive management skills would be a very important characteristic for this person to successfully manage a large system with a complicated funding system. Also, the ideal person to fill this role would need an ability to bring people and groups together.

*Nancy Gerardi:* Has gone through the DESE licensing process for superintendent status. Ms. Gerardi notes the superintendent would need to possess skills for hiring, managing staff, and creating an overall culture of support and high morale.

**3. Is there any particular area of interest or strength where you feel you could offer a level of expertise to the board?**

*Nancy Gerardi:* She is licensed as a School Business Manager, and therefore very comfortable and skilled working with budgets. Her experience as an attorney would offer legal perspectives. She is naturally curious and tends to ask many questions, so she would also bring an inquisitive personality.

*Tai Pryjma:* He is a clinical social worker by training, and his interests and expertise are within the mental health arena. He has worked with DCF for over 20 years and is currently a supervisor. He is comfortable working in complex, often competing, systems. He would bring a social-emotional and mental health perspective to the committee.

**4. Do you plan on running for a full term in April?**

*Tai Pryjma:* Yes, he would like to continue involvement with the school district, as his son is only in the first grade.

*Nancy Gerardi:* No, she applied for the vacant seat with the intention of meeting a temporary need of the district.

*Additional School Committee Questions*

**Stacey Metternick asks Nancy Gerardi why she is not using or pursuing her superintendent license.**

Ms. Gerardi explains that the licensing for the superintendent status came up as an opportunity in the process of pursuing her School Business Manager license.

*Hamilton Board of Selectmen Questions:*

**Darcy Dale: I understand that the district laid off the only full-time school psychiatrist. I also understand that the district is focused on keeping as many IEP students in the district as possible. How do you see this lay-off impacting the initiative to keep students in district?**

*Tai Pryjma:* Any psychiatrist or mental health support staff in the schools are a huge asset, especially given that schools are often the only safe and consistent environment children have. He explains how crucial these services are to keep in the schools, noting that teaching staff would more than likely agree that removing the full-time psychiatrist is problematic.

*Nancy Gerardi:* She does not know the previous administration's motives in removing the psychiatrist, but would assume that the unfortunate cut was made because of financial obstacles.

**Rosemary Kennedy: What resources could we tap into for student social, emotional, and academic needs without requiring more tax payer dollars? With finite resources, what are some out-of-the-box approaches to meet the needs of students?**

*Tai Pryjma:* In a recent conversation and visit to another school, he learned that administration figured out a way to bill insurance for mental health staff in the school. Their approach seems to be working for them and could offer insight to alternative approaches for Hamilton-Wenham to consider.

*Nancy Gerardi:* There are a number of established resources offered by the State of Massachusetts that are already paid for by tax dollars. These resources could be brought to the schools, or the district could find ways to work with those resources already established.

**Shawn Farrell: How will you work with the local governments, what knowledge will you gain from local governments, and how will you implement that knowledge to rectify differences/build consensus through the district budgeting process?**

*Tai Pryjma:* Learning about Town budgets would require sitting in on discussions to learn about Town values and budget challenges. He hopes the Town values would reveal education as a priority.

*Nancy Gerardi:* Both parties would likely leave the table feeling a bit injured, *not harmed*. This requires a give/give scenario. She explains first addressing the budget's legal obligations and contracts, and next engaging in discussion and negotiations with each side making sacrifices.

Michelle Horgan thanks the candidates for coming this evening, and explains the next steps in the process of choosing an interim School Committee member. Candidates may exit the meeting, or move to the audience. Shawn Farrell requests that whomever is chosen this evening visit the Town Clerk as soon as possible, to be sworn in as School Committee members and begin their work.

Discussion regarding procedure of choosing a candidate, votes needed, etc.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

Gene Lee -	Nancy Gerardi
Peter Wolczik -	Tai Pryjma
Michelle Horgan -	Tai Pryjma
Michelle Bailey -	Tai Pryjma
Stacey Metternick -	Tai Pryjma
Rosemary Kennedy -	Tai Pryjma
Darcy Dale -	Nancy Gerardi
Shawn Farrell -	Nancy Gerardi
David Polito -	Tai Pryjma

6 votes for Tai Pryjma; 3 votes for Nancy Gerardi.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AS WELL AS THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN APPOINT MR. TAI PRYJMA AS THE INTERIM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR THE REMAINING BALANCE OF THE 2019/2020 TERM.**

**MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.  
Unanimously approved by 6 School Committee members present;  
Unanimously approved by 3 Hamilton Board of Selectmen members present.**

**I MOVE THAT WE ADJOURN THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING (8:14 PM).**

**MOTION by Rosemary Kennedy; SECONDED by Darcy Dale.  
Unanimously approved by 3 Hamilton Board of Selectmen members present.**

*David Polito calls a 5-minute recess to the School Committee meeting.*

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE ITEM 4D, ADOPT HWRHS COURSE CATALOG, TO ITEM 4B, AND MOVE AGENDA ITEM 5A, CLASS SIZE ANALYSIS, SC POLICY H004, TO AGENDA ITEM 4C, IN ORDER TO RESPECT THE TIME OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS CURRENTLY WAITING TO PRESENT THE MATERIAL.**

**MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.  
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE AGENDA TO MOVE ITEM 4H, SUPERINTENDENT’S SEARCH, TO ITEM 4D, IN ORDER TO RESPECT THE TIME OF MASC REPRESENTATIVE DOROTHY PRESSER, CURRENTLY WAITING TO PRESENT THE MATERIAL.**

**MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.  
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

- b) Adopt HWRHS 2020-2021 Course Catalogue; [SC Policy I9000](#) [Exhibit](#)

(Originally 4D) Bryan Menegoni, High School Assistant Principal, presents an overview of High School courses offered as well as courses not offered. School Committee members ask questions surrounding strategy behind the course catalogue, with Mr. Menegoni explaining the thought processes.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADOPT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL 2020/2021 COURSE CATALOGUE UNDER SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY I9000.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.  
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

- c) Class Size Analysis; [SC Policy H004](#); Presented by Eric Tracy, Principal of Hamilton- Wenham Regional High School [Exhibit](#)

Eric Tracy, Hamilton Wenham Regional High School Principal provides a detailed explanation of the information found in the Class Size Analysis presentation. School Committee members ask questions surrounding class size and strategy, with Mr. Tracy providing further explanation.

- d) Superintendent’s Search

Dorothy Presser, MASC, provides an update to the School Committee regarding the Superintendent Search process. The superintendent search timeline needs to be adjusted due to the inclement weather this past week. Ms. Presser speaks about schedule changes, decisions to be made by the School Committee, etc. Ms. Presser asks the School Committee to approve the revised timeline, or provide suggestions for revisions. Discussion regarding School Committee meeting schedule and alignment with superintendent search timeline, best approaches to move forward, length of meetings, and length of time required to address the Superintendent Search process to-do items/timeline.

Decision: 01/16/2020 Community Meeting at 7:00 pm and 01/22/2020 meeting to choose Screening Committee members.

- e) Boys’ Ice Hockey Sample Program

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE BOYS’ ICE HOCKEY SAMPLE PROGRAM AS SHOWN.**

*Discussion:* This was previously approved.

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.  
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

- f) Donations  
    ■ Boys Basketball Booster Parents [Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION FROM THE BOYS BASKETBALL BOOSTER PARENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,522.00 TO FUND THE .5 PAID ASSISTANT FOR THE BOY’S BASKETBALL PROGRAM.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

■ Friends of Buker

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF BUKER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$150.00 TO SUPPORT THE WINTER GATHERING.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

■ Eastern Bank

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION FROM EASTERN BANK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250.00 TO SUPPORT THE WINTER GATHERING.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

■ EdFund

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION FROM THE HAMILTON WENHAM EDFUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250.00 TO SUPPORT THE WINTER GATHERING.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

■ Friends of Cutler

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF CUTLER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$150.00 TO SUPPORT THE WINTER GATHERING.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

■ Lueders Environmental

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATION FROM LUEDERS ENVIRONMENTAL.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

g) Amend the 2020-2021 HWRSD School Calendar

[Exhibit](#)

Dr. Kukenberger explains the amendment to the calendar: the recommendation is to approve the calendar as shown on pages 50-51, which is revised to shorten the gap between staff returning and students returning, as well as allowing the school year to end a bit earlier while accommodating any snow days. Stacey Metternick brings up that families may have already made plans based on the school year calendar previously approved by the School Committee. Further discussion regarding changes to the calendar, vacation planning, pros and cons with each calendar, etc.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE 2020-2021 HWRSD SCHOOL CALENDAR.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

*Discussion:* Michelle Bailey recommends immediate communication to families regarding any changes to the school year calendar.

**Approved by 5 members; 1 member, Stacey Metternick, opposes.**

h) Approve the 2021-2022 HWRSD School Calendar

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE 2021-2022 HWRSD SCHOOL CALENDAR AS PROPOSED ON PAGE 52 OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PACKET.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

i) Warrant for SC Nomination Papers

[Exhibit](#)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE WARRANTS FOR ELECTIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR OUR NEXT ELECTION.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.**

**Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

## **5. Superintendent's Report**

### **A. 10 Year Capital Improvement Plan and FY21 Capital Budget Recommendations:**

*Presented by Thomas F. Geary III, Director of Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations* [Exhibit](#)

Thomas Geary provides an overview of the 10-year capital improvement plan and the FY21 Capital Budget Recommendations, as detailed in the presentation beginning on page 61, and found in the [Exhibit](#). Total investment is \$958,000, which is broken down by projects. Discussion regarding district priorities, designing an ideal classroom, engaging concerned parties, etc. Mr. Geary will forward a digital copy of this presentation to School Committee. Michelle Horgan will forward the presentation to the town FINCOMS. Gene Lee states that Mr. Geary has attended many, if not all of the Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee meetings (Town capital groups have also been present) and this presentation encompasses discussions at those meetings.

### **B. FY21 Preliminary Budget**

[Exhibit](#)

Dr. Julie Kukenberger and Vincent Leone provide details of the FY21 preliminary budget, as detailed in the [Exhibit](#). Dr. Kukenberger highlights that these are preliminary numbers and are anticipated to change.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE MEETING IN 10 MINUTES (motion made at 10:44 pm).**

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

**Unanimously approved by 5 members present (Stacey Metternick previously exited the meeting).**

Continued discussion regarding budget process, tentative budget proposed, cost savings, etc.

### **C. HWRSD Leadership Team Winter Gathering**

Dr. Kukenberger reports that the Leadership Team Winter Gathering was hosted today at the Miles River Middle School, and was very successful. She hopes that the Leadership Team goes into their winter break knowing how much they are valued.

## **6. ~~Chair's Report~~**

## **7. ~~Committee Reports (continued)~~**

### **a) ~~Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee~~**

- ~~■ SOI 2019 Results~~
- ~~■ SOI 2020 Application~~
- ~~■ Next Meeting Date:~~

[Exhibit](#)

### **b) ~~Policy Subcommittee~~**

■ ~~First Reading of SC Policy C~~ [Exhibit](#)

■ ~~First Reading of SC Policy E~~ [Exhibit](#)

■ ~~Next Meeting Date:~~

e) ~~Negotiations Subcommittee~~

■ ~~Next Meeting Date:~~

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TABLE THE COMMITTEE REPORTS, ITEM NUMBER 8 A, B, AND C IN THE AGENDA (NOTE: COMMITTEE REPORTS ARE ITEM 7A, 7B, AND 7C IN REVISED AND CURRENT AGENDA).**

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

**Unanimously approved by 5 members present.**

## **8. Consent Agenda**

a) Approve Field Trips for Ski Club [Exhibit](#)

b) Approve Field Trip to Peru [Exhibit](#)

c) Warrants [Exhibit](#)

■ Voucher No. 2843

■ Voucher No. 2844

■ Voucher No. 13

■ Voucher No. 1028

■ Voucher No. 1026

■ Voucher No. 12

■ Voucher No. 1027

■ Voucher No. 2845

■ Voucher No. 2846

■ Voucher No. 2841

■ Voucher No. 2842

d) Vote to approve prior meeting minutes:

● January 30, 2019 Executive Session Minutes - Longmeadow [Exhibit](#)

● January 30, 2019 Executive Session Minutes - Harvey Salary [Exhibit](#)

● March 27, 2019 Executive Session Minutes [Exhibit](#)

● July 31, 2019 Executive Session Minutes [Exhibit](#)

Michelle Bailey requests to remove B) *Field Trip to Peru* and Dr. Julie Kukenberger notes changes needed to D) *07/31/19 Executive Session Minutes*.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA EXCLUDING (B) FIELD TRIP TO PERU, AND (D) 07/31/19 EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES; THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.**

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

**Unanimously approved by 5 members present.**

*Field Trip to Peru discussion:* Michelle Bailey notes that there is a level 4 travel warning to one of the cities listed in the request. Ms. Bailey asks that should this request be approved, it be approved with the condition to inform parents of the warning, and with the condition that the School Committee agrees to research the status of the travel warning one (1) month prior to the travel dates.

**MEETING ADJOURNS AT 10:54 PM BASED ON MOTION 10 MINUTES PRIOR AT 10:44 PM.**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TABLE THE REQUEST FOR THE FIELD TRIP TO PERU.**

**MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Gene Lee.  
Unanimously approved by 5 members present.**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE TABLE THE APPROVAL OF THE 7/31/19 EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES PENDING EDITS TO ACCURATELY REFLECT THE APPOINTMENT OF THOMAS GEARY TO THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATIONS, FOR A THREE OR FOUR YEAR CONTRACT, WITH THE OPTION TO EXTEND TO A FIFTH YEAR PENDING POSITIVE EVALUATIONS.**

**MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.  
Unanimously approved by 5 members present.**

**9. — Other**

a) ~~Topics for Next Meeting~~

**10. — Vote to Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned previously. Meeting discussions and the recording of the meeting ends at 11:01pm.

*Respectfully submitted February 9, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.*