



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

School Committee Meeting
Zoom Virtual Meeting
Zoom Webinar ID: 839 6407 0706
Meeting Password: 379098
Wednesday, June 17, 2020
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Present:

David Polito, Chairperson
Gene Lee, Assistant Secretary
Michelle Bailey, Vice Chairperson
Michelle Horgan, Secretary
Peter Wolczik
Stacey Metternick
Tai Pryjma

Also Present:

Julie Kukenberger, Interim Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary
Hamilton Town Manager, Hamilton Board of Selectmen (identified below)

1. Call to Order

6:00 PM

David Polito, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 6:03 PM. He notes that the Hamilton Board of Selectmen will be joining the meeting at 6:30 PM.

2. Citizens' Comments

None.

3. New Business

A. FY21 Budget Reductions

[Exhibit I](#) / [Exhibit II](#)

Mr. Polito points out that the Negotiations Subcommittee meeting scheduled for this afternoon at 4:00 PM was cancelled.

Dr. Kukenberger and Mr. Leone review the slides found in the FY21 Budget Reductions [presentation](#). Mr. Leone provides a budget reduction overview, including a summary of the cost savings resulting from COVID-19 induced remote learning. Dr. Kukenberger reviews some of the potential costs associated with reopening schools. Review of the budget reduction considerations, with detailed discussion surrounding “teacher in charge”; teaching staff reductions, teaching assistant positions, Pre-K classroom enrollment, demographics, therapeutic supports, and TA needs; additional district positions and potential cost savings. Mr. Leone recommends applying the additional FY20 funds of \$540,000 towards prepayment of FY21 out-of-district private school tuition.

Dr. Kukenberger reviews the guiding questions considered when developing suggestions for the reductions in the FY20 Budget. Further details provided regarding the reductions and the impact on the district.

The Hamilton Board of Selectmen join the School Committee meeting at 6:54 PM.

Continued discussion regarding potential cost savings and impact of budget reductions including reduction of the 7th Pre-K Teaching Assistant; district food services; technical/custodial skills and use of contracted services; opportunity for improved communications with unions; etc. Mr. Leone reviews the proposed FY21 Capital Budget; FY21 Net Assessment; Debt Service Assessment; etc.

Ms. Bailey thanks the Hamilton Board of Selectmen for the invitation to join their meeting.

B. Warrant Discussion

Joe Domelowicz, *Hamilton Town Manager*
Members of the Hamilton Board of Selectmen
Darcy Dale;
William Olson;
Shawn Farrell;
Rosemary Kennedy;
Jeff Hubbard

Mr. Domelowicz, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, asks the School Committee to return money to the Town when the state aid/Chapter 70 money comes into the District. Discussion regarding Chapter 70 funding, budget structure and allocations, E&D account, availability of funds, etc. Dr. Kukenberger highlights that the reductions are not sustainable, and that special care should be given when considering the percentage increases year after year. Further discussion regarding percentage increase metric to analyze district's budget and alternatives/ issues in "returning funds". Discussion regarding budget cuts and developing a budget in future years.

Discussion regarding mechanism Town uses in approving the District Budget; E&D policy; Town's request/ agreement moving forward; District COLA; anticipated future Capital Budget; etc.

Ms. Kennedy states that she has analyzed towns and cities all over the commonwealth and noticed all those schools decreased their initial asks to the towns. She notes there has been no reflection from this School Committee to consider the enormous tax increase/burden to residents.

Discussion regarding district's unanticipated needs for the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Kukenberger explains that returning to school in the fall, whatever that may look like, will be remarkably different due to the prolonged trauma from sustained social isolation.

Discussion regarding collaboration and communication between the district and the town, including potential resource sharing, regional agreement, cultural clashes, etc.

Mr. Polito confirms with the Board of Selectmen that the Town of Hamilton plans to move forward with two warrant articles. Discussion regarding possible scenarios resulting from Town Meeting - the School Committee explains any no vote will fail the entire budget.

Regarding the Town's initial inquiry about returning funds, the Town will see a return of the funds through subsequent fiscal year budgets. Discussion regarding details and impact suffered from operating on a 1/12 budget.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO AUTHORIZE THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION TO UTILIZE ANY REMAINING FY20 FUND BALANCE TO PREPAY FY21 OUT-OF-DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION TUITIONS.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: This motion evidences some of the district's creative solutions to budget constraints. Further discussion regarding prepayment of tuition - there is no discount offered.

Stacey Metternick	YES;
Tai Pryjma	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Gene Lee	YES;
David Polito	YES.

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

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADOPT THE FY21 TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BUDGET OF \$35,720,110. THIS AMOUNT INCLUDES GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENSES (AFTER OFFSETS) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$35,306,858 AND GENERAL FUND DEBT SERVICE EXPENSES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$413,253. FURTHERMORE, THE GROSS OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE DISTRICT (BEFORE OFFSETS) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37,023,572 HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO THE DESE DEFINED CHART OF ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO THE "SUMMARY BY DESE CATEGORY" CHART INCLUDED IN THIS BUDGET PRESENTATION DATED 06/17/2020.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: Ms. Bailey seeks clarification on this vote: the School Committee vote for reductions will be organized by DESE category. Discussion regarding budget reductions and the structure of the vote this evening. Mr. Wolczik would like to exclude the Teaching Assistant and the 2 Maintenance Technician positions from the overall budget reductions.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO INCREASE THE FY21 BUDGET AMOUNT BY \$153,783.

MOTION by Peter Wolczik; NO SECOND; MOTION FAILS.

Discussion: Mr. Wolczik reiterates his concern regarding these budget cuts: both will cause ripple effects and the district is likely to suffer from increased costs in the future. Discussion regarding use of E&D funds in the general operating budget including accessing funds, state and federal aid anticipated, etc.

ORIGINAL MOTION:

Gene Lee	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Tai Pryjma	YES;

Michelle Bailey	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
David Polito	YES
Peter Wolczik	NO;

MOTION PASSES through majority roll call vote (6:1) of 7 members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ASSESS THE TOWNS OF HAMILTON AND WENHAM A COMBINED TOTAL OF \$32,088,532 AS THE AMOUNT NECESSARY TO OPERATE AND MAINTAIN THE DISTRICT, AS WELL AS PAY DEBT SERVICE, FOR FY21. 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 2 DAYS OF THIS DATE.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: Mr. Wolczik states that although he disagrees with other motions, he supports this.

Peter Wolczik	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Gene Lee	YES;
Tai Pryjma	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
David Polito	YES.

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

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ELIMINATE THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS: (1) DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT; (2) ELEMENTARY LITERACY ADMINISTRATOR; (3) ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS ADMINISTRATOR; (4) 2 MAINTENANCE POSITIONS; (5) HUMAN RESOURCE, BENEFITS, AND PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: Ms. Bailey notes the important roles staff held in the district, and notes that they will be missed. Discussion regarding the difficulty in eliminating these positions. Ms. Horgan notes that the tax rate increase is an issue, but what is happening to our schools is absolutely devastating.

Stacey Metternick	YES;
Peter Wolczik	NO;
Tai Pryjma	YES;
Gene Lee	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
David Polito	YES.

MOTION PASSES through majority roll call vote (6:1) of 7 members present.

MOTION FOR THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN TO UNTABLE THE DISCUSSION ON MOTION FOR ARTICLE 2-2.

MOTION by Shawn Farrell; SECONDED by Bill Olson.

Shawn Farrell	YES;
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Darcy Dale	YES;
Rosemary Kennedy	YES;
Jeff Hubbard	YES;
William Olson	YES;

MOTION PASSES.

MOTION FOR A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN FOR ARTICLE 2-2.

MOTION by Bill Olson; SECONDED by Shawn Farrell.

Shawn Farrell	YES;
William Olson	YES;
Darcy Dale	YES;
Rosemary Kennedy	YES;
Jeff Hubbard	YES;

MOTION PASSES.

MOTION FOR A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN FOR ARTICLE 2-3.

MOTION by Bill Olson; SECONDED by Shawn Farrell.

Discussion: Mr. Olson states that this is the beginning of the conversation. He thanks the School Committee and current leadership for their work.

William Olson	YES;
Shawn Farrell	YES;
Darcy Dale	NO;
Rosemary Kennedy	NO;
Jeff Hubbard	YES;

MOTION PASSES.

MOTION FOR A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN FOR ARTICLE 2-4.

MOTION by Shawn Farrell; SECONDED by Darcy Dale.

William Olson	YES;
Shawn Farrell	YES;
Darcy Dale	YES;
Rosemary Kennedy	YES;
Jeff Hubbard	YES;

MOTION PASSES.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:00 PM.

MOTION by Darcy Dale; SECONDED by Shawn Farrell.

Thank you to Dr. Kukenberger and Mr. Lee for your service to the towns. We look forward to working together with the district in the future.

William Olson	YES;
Shawn Farrell	YES;
Darcy Dale	YES;
Rosemary Kennedy	YES;

Jeff Hubbard YES;
MOTION PASSES.

Hamilton Board of Selectmen and Hamilton Town Manager exit the meeting at 9:06 PM.

C. Hamilton Town Meeting One-Page Documents [Exhibit](#)
Discussion regarding the one-page document to be distributed to those attending Hamilton Town Meeting as shown in the [attachment](#).

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE HAMILTON TOWN MEETING ONE PAGE DOCUMENT PREPARED BY DAVID POLITO.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.

Gene Lee	YES;
Tai Pryjma	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
David Polito	YES.

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

4. Superintendent's Report

Thank you Hamilton - Wenham

[Exhibit](#)

Dr. Kukenberger offers her gratitude and a brief summary of reflection over the past year. Mr. Polito thanks Dr. Kukenberger for her service to the District.

5. Chair's Report

Thank you to School Committee member Gene Lee for his service to the district. Mr. Lee says he will continue to advocate for the schools.

Also, thank you to Tai Pryjma, who began his service on the School Committee at a particularly challenging time.

6. Committee Reports (Continued)

A. Capital/Financial Subcommittee

B. Policy Subcommittee

C. Negotiations Subcommittee

- Ms. Horgan reports that the Negotiations Subcommittee will meet with the Teachers Union on 06/24/2020 at 4:00 PM.

→Ms. Horgan asks if the School Committee has decided what to do with citizen comments offered during Zoom. The School Committee decides to have recording secretary, Mahala Lettvin, save those comments and attach them to the meeting minutes.

7. Consent Agenda

(None).

8. Other

A. Topics for Future Meetings **Next Meeting: 07/01/2020, 6:00 PM.**

- Welcome Superintendent, Mary Beth Banios;
- Town election results;
- Reorganization of School Committee;
- Dorothy Presser, MASC, to provide School Committee training.

Mr. Leone will contact Ms. Horgan when the document has been printed and is ready for distribution. Ms. Horgan will deliver to Town Hall.

9. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 06/17/2020 MEETING AT 9:41 PM.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.

Stacey Metternick	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Tai Pryjma	YES;
Gene Lee	YES;
David Polito	YES.

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

Respectfully submitted August 7th, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.

Addendum 1 - Citizen Comments through Zoom chat:

From Michelle Bailey... to All Panelists:

I just sent the BOS their invites again. They should be here at 6:30.

From Cameron to All Panelists:

Have all of these cuts already been decided?

From Jennifer Jukano... to All Panelists:

Are there ways to partner more with the education departments of nearby colleges that wouldn't cost anything? I know you have many student teachers, but just seems like there could be an opportunity to engage with college students for literacy practice with the younger grades.

From Joe Domelowicz,... to All Panelists:

The Hamilton BOS should be joining as we speak...

Sorry we were late

From William Olson to All Panelists:

7:02 PM

joe, both Rosemary are jeff are logged NOT logged in as panelists? they are just participants so there cameras and mikes are off

From Vincent Leone to All Panelists:

7:02 PM

I can promote them

From Michelle Bailey... to All Panelists:

7:02 PM

Thanks Vinny.

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From Vincent Leone to All Panelists:

7:03 PM

should be all set. Please let me know if not

From Cameron to All panelists and attendees:

7:08 PM

Have all of these cuts already been decided?

From Danielle Petruc... to All Panelists:

7:15 PM

I wanted to make sure the School Committee understands that Health Education is social/emotional education. With the emphasis that students will need to focus on social/emotional learning when they return, it seems counter-productive to eliminate a high quality wellness teacher. I am projected to move back into the middle school health position, but then the high school loses a high quality health teacher and curriculum advancements.

From concerned citiz... to All panelists and attendees:

7:15 PM

#y word, make a decision tonight! stop dragging this on, let the affected staff move on with their lives.

From David Polito to All Panelists:

7:18 PM

Michelle do you mind taking over for a couple minutes

From Michelle Bailey... to All Panelists:

7:18 PM

Fine

From Danielle Petruc... to All Panelists:

7:21 PM

If we are now projected to received level funding from the state. Do all of these reductions need to happen? Is it possible to rescind the May 27 vote? It should not be the teacher's job to make up for needed funding.

From Jennifer Jukano... to All panelists and attendees:

7:21 PM

Why won't the unions negotiate? Even if they are saying no, that is still a negotiation. They could strike, I guess and then that's another step in the negotiation, but it feels like we're being held hostage for such a significant part of the budget and having to cut things that are necessary and they just assume that parents will pay more in taxes. Freezing the COLA for the year does not say that we don't value our teachers. Or if they are saying they won't negotiate because other unions, like the police and fire aren't reducing their COLA, then why can't all of them have a freeze for one year. Just an idea.

From 123446800-v5n;t... to All Panelists:

7:22 PM

That is too bad to hear regarding negotiations. As an educator in a neighboring town I would give that up in a heart beat. No question. Need to think long term. I really hope you don't give up on that.

From Allison Spies to All Panelists:

7:25 PM

No! That should go back to the schools!!!

From Cooks to All Panelists:

7:27 PM

I completely agree with you, Jennifer. It does not seem reasonable to have a COLA for any town employees with what is happening now.

From Vincent Leone to All Panelists:

7:46 PM

Shawn to answer your first question...\$880K

From Shawn Farrell, ... to All panelists and attendees:

7:46 PM

Thanks

From Cooks to All Panelists:

7:48 PM

I am not a fan of tax increases but how can we increase revenue in Hamilton/Wenham from other sources besides property tax.

From concerned citiz... to All panelists and attendees:

7:52 PM

that was super dramatic

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From Allison Spies to All Panelists:

7:52 PM

Are you kidding me that you're going to laugh at that? You find child trauma funny?!

From David Polito to All Panelists:

7:53 PM

Vinny Mute Bill

From Anne Page to All Panelists:

7:59 PM

.

From concerned citiz... to All panelists and attendees:

7:59 PM

no need for that vulgarity

From Frustrated Citi... to All Panelists:

8:00 PM

It's a shame when elected officials see a child's right to a free and appropriate public education as a burden

From Anna Siedzik to All Panelists:

When traumatic events lead to unsupported special education and social-emotional needs, it is no longer about what kids would "like." The District becomes legally and morally obligated to support them. Trauma in kids is different, and more cruel, than to other populations. If we don't try to maintain a modicum of minimal support, we'll pay more in the long run, and our kids will suffer. Of all years, this is the worst time to gut the schools.

From Cooks to All Panelists:

Thank you for your comments, Shawn. We have to bring in other revenue sources, so we can maintain excellent schools and keep people in this town.

Shared services - yes, yes, yes!

From concerned citiz... to All panelists and attendees:

stay on topic

From Anna Siedzik to All panelists and attendees:

8:18 PM

When traumatic events lead to unsupported special education and social-emotional needs, it is no longer about what kids would "like." The District becomes legally and morally obligated to support them. Trauma in kids is different, and more cruel, than to other populations. If we don't try to maintain a modicum of minimal support, we'll pay more in the long run, and our kids will suffer. Of all years, this is the worst time to gut the schools.

From Michelle Bailey... to All Panelists:

8:18 PM

What the SC next step

From 123446800-v5n;t... to All Panelists:

8:18 PM

YES!!! Thank you Bill!

From Joe Domelowicz,... to All Panelists:

Vinny can you please give the BOS a chance to vote at the end of the SC discussion and vote?

From Vincent Leone to All Panelists:

of course

From Joe Domelowicz,... to All Panelists:

THANK YOU

From Joe Maher to All Panelists:

8:21 PM

yes you are right and short term savings would have dramatic long term financial implications if we had to send more kids out of district

From kristen borges to All Panelists:

8:22 PM

How much money is this?

From Julie Kukenberg... to All Panelists:

Thank you, Bill.

From Lisa Coult to All Panelists:

love the humor when 23 people just lost their jobs

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From Julie Ku... to Lisa Cou..., [All Panelists](#):

I am so sorry Lisa.

From Kirsten Losee to All Panelists:

9:18 PM

you are welcome to use the color printer in HS room 102

From Lorrie Ann Mang... to All Panelists:

9:24 PM

Gene and Julie, thank you. Both did a great job.

From Danielle Petruc... to All Panelists:

9:24 PM

Thank you, Julie. You have been instrumental in one very challenging year. I had a student today email me expressing how you and I have helped her find her voice. I think that speaks for your leadership.

From Julie Ku... to Danielle..., [All Panelists](#):

9:29 PM

Thank you for sharing that Danielle. I am wondering if I can guess who it is? I know next year will be challenging, remember that it is not forever. This is crisis response. Keep being an awesome role model for our kids, particularly our girls. Peace and love.

From Me to All Panelists:

9:36 PM

i can do it

Just as an FYI, I have a complete copy of the chat from the last meeting and tonight's meeting (06/10 and 06/17). I will make a note on the meeting minutes from other zooms that the chat is incomplete or not included - unless anyone has a copy of those chats they can provide. Thank you all for clarification!

From Mary Beth Banio... to All Panelists:

9:38 PM

Hi All, I'm still on-line. It may be helpful to do the calendar work plan at a later meeting given the existing agenda.

From Maribeth Ting, ... to All Panelists:

9:39 PM

I will truly miss Dr. Julie Kukenberger. Thank you for all your hard work and best wishes to you in your future.

From Mary Beth Banio... to All Panelists:

9:40 PM

Happy to do the calendar on July 1 as well!

From Julie Ku... to Maribeth..., [All Panelists](#):

9:41 PM

Thank you, Maribeth. I have enjoyed being able to work with you. Thank you for all you do to keep our students and staff safe and healthy. Be well.

****Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A § 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting. The School Committee reserves the right to implement additional remote participation procedures and will notify the public of these procedures as soon as practicable. Please [click here](#) to read the Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20.****

***Zoom App Information:** If you plan to participate, download the [Zoom.com](#) application now. The option to download will also be available at the start of the meeting. When opening the Zoom App, select "Join Meeting" in the upper right corner and enter the meeting id: 839 6407 0706; password: 379098. The community should ask questions via the "chat" function within the Zoom application during the Citizen's Comments section. During the Zoom meeting, participants will be given instructions on how to provide their comments. Unfortunately, we must limit the in-person conversations to just the Committee members. However, for the benefit of all, the School Committee meetings will be available on our local cable channel, HWCam, and [HWCam.org](#), for review a few hours after the meeting has ended. Members of the public can access the meeting via [YouTube HWRSD live stream link](#) the next day.

