

**The Hamilton Wenham Regional School District
School Committee Budget Workshop #2
Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room
Wednesday, January 15, 2020 5:00 PM**

School Committee Members Present:

Gene Lee
Peter Wolczik
Michelle Horgan
David Polito, Chairperson
Stacey Metternick, Secretary (6:00pm arrival)

Also Present:

Julie Kukenberger, Interim Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration
Thomas Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities, and Operations
Jennifer Clifford, Cutler Elementary School Principal
Ben Schersten, Buker Elementary School Principal
Carolyn Shediak, Winthrop Elementary School Principal
Stacy Bucyk Director of Student Services
Maureen Smith, Elementary Special Education Coordinator
Lindsey McGovern, Secondary Special Education Coordinator (MRMS/HS)
Peggy McElinney, Director of Curriculum, Assessment & Instruction
Susan Stibel, Elementary Language Arts Coordinator
Alan Taupier, Director of Technology
Bryan Menegoni, Hamilton Wenham Regional High School Assistant Principal
Craig Hovey, Miles River Middle School Principal
Elizabeth Lovell, Miles River Middle School Assistant Principal
Craig Genuardo, Athletic Director
Catherine Donovan, Director of Food Service
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary

1) Call to Order

5:00 PM

David Polito, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

2) Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) Citizens' Comments

None.

4) FY21 Leadership Team Tentative Budget Proposal Part #2

A. Intro and Budget Overview (15 Minutes) (Slide 1)

Dr. Kukenberger introduces tonight's workshop, beginning with a review of feedback from last night's workshop (Slide 2). Pros included level of detail, information was direct from source, hard work evident, collaboration, clip-art, appreciated addition to budget process. Cons included ensuring a live broadcast, adding the costs associated with unmet needs, adding current/actual FY20 cost/ FY21 operating budget.

- Review norms and workshop protocol (Slide 3)
- Objectives for today (Slide 4)
- FY21 Preliminary Operating Budget Overview (Slide 5)
- FY21 Preliminary Operating Budget Overview - FY20 - Reality (Slide 6)

Dr. Kukenberger introduces Craig Genuardo, *Director of Athletics*.

Athletics (Slide 7)

- HWRHS Athletics: Return on Investment, Celebrating Success, and Fast Facts (Slide 8)
- HWRHS Athletics: FY21 Budget Allows us to (Slide 9)
- HWRHS Athletics: Unmet Needs (Slide 10)
- HWRHS Athletics: Unmet Needs (Slide 11)

Dr. Kukenberger introduces Thomas Geary, *Director of Maintenance, Facilities, and Operations*.

Facilities and Maintenance Department (Slide 12)

- HW Facilities & Maintenance: Fast Facts (Slide 13)
- HW Facilities & Maintenance: FY21 Budget Allows us to (Slide 14)
- HW Facilities & Maintenance: Unmet Needs (Slide 15)

Mr. Geary notes that a number of contracts are scheduled to expire this fiscal year, and as a result the community as well as the School Committee should expect to see a significant increase in many of the services contracted out. Discussion regarding various needs of the school facilities, contractual obligations, increase in cost of services, etc.

Questions and Wonderings (Slide 16)

Ms Horgan inquires about a safety issue concerning the athletic fields. Brief discussion regarding district safety protocols, providing a safe environment for student athletes, etc. Ms. Horgan brings up the sports netting on the athletic field, with a brief discussion regarding sports equipment, expectations of players, etc. following. Discussion regarding athletic field and concerns surrounding ticks and tick-borne illnesses.

Mr. Lee asks how many of the Assistant Coaches throughout the department are funded by booster organizations. Mr. Genuardo says that this number varies year after year, but this year the boosters have funded 6 Assistant Coaches (approved by the School Committee). Of those, Mr., Genuardo notes that there was 1 Full-Time Assistant Coach, and the remaining 5 were .5.

Mr. Lee follows up, asking how many of the athletic teams have associated booster groups. Mr., Genuardo states that each sport has a booster group, however the amount of fundraising and involvement of that group varies quite a bit.

Ms. Horgan asks how many years the boosters have been financially supporting the coaches and assistant coaches. Mr Genuardo explains that this has been going on for quite some time, however to his knowledge, the funding the boosters provide has only become “official” within the last year.

Mr. Lee points out that the information presented for the Facilities & Maintenance Department budget is based solely on the Operating Budget, and clarifies for the sake of the audience, that a capital budget with additional projects and costs is forthcoming. Dr Kukenberger clarifies that Mr. Geary began this position in October, 2019, and was immediately tasked with prioritizing the ten year capital improvement list.

Mr. Geary reads the FY21 Capital Project list aloud. As part of the prioritization of the projects, Mr., Geary notes that he would recommend a school-wide facility study examining demographics, future grade configurations, and a number of other factors for consideration for the district's future. Included in the Capital Project list are furniture and equipment costs, sidewalks in front of MRMS, Athletic Field project, and Network Infrastructure improvements. These capital projects total \$958,000.

Dr. Kukenberger notes that District Administration is working to assemble all budget related documents for availability on the district's website,
<https://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=2129>

Ms. Horgan brings up the issue of contracts coming to an end. Mr, Geary expands on this issue, explaining that the district expects to see, on average, a 3% increase in contractual costs. He notes that construction costs have tripled since 2017. Mr. Geary notes that contract will be bid out for FY21, so although the district anticipates rising costs, there is currently no certainty surrounding the numbers.

Break (Slide 18)

DAVID POLITO CALLS A TEN MINUTE RECESS TO THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING AT 5:41PM.

DAVID POLITO CALLS THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:52PM.

Dr. Kukenberger introduces Alan Taupier, *Director of Information Technology*.

Information Technology Department (Slide 17)

Mr. Taupier explains that he broke down the information for the Information Technology Budget in a different way. He refers to technology as a utility throughout this presentation.

- Information Technology Utility, Lifecycle & Risk (Slide 19)
- Information Technology Utility (Slide 20)
 - 2,280 district managed personal computing devices;
 - 144 learning environments;
- Information Technology Lifecycle (Slide 21)
 - Various thoughts regarding how long a computer functions;
 - 41% of district devices are over 5 years old- with conservative estimates, this is bordering on the end of a computer's useful life;
 - 1 to 1 program;
 - 1,329 district devices are newer than 5 years old;
 - Budget includes funding to purchase replacement laptops, in order to replace Elementary School Apple IPADS with more suitable Chromebook devices (these are cheaper and more efficient for the needs of the elementary schools);
- Information Technology Risk (Slide 22)
 - Phishing - 90% of cyberattacks start with phishing;
 - Ransomware - 8 M.S. ransomware attacks in 2019;
 - DDOS - Distributed Denial of Service;
 - IOP Vulnerability - Unstructured Security Threat;
 - DATA BREACH - Compromise of PII;
 - Catastrophic Failure - failure of critical resources;

- Information Technology Expenditures (Slide 23)
 - Utility 40%
 - Lifecycle 43%
 - Risk 17%

Central Office/Superintendent's Office (Slide 24)

Julie Kukenberger, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration

- Central Office: Return on Investment, Celebrating Success, and Fast Facts (Slide 25)
 - Recruit and hire 12 district and building level employees;
 - Retain highly skilled building and district level leaders;
 - Maintain momentum toward developing strategic blueprint;
- Central Office: Budget allows us to: (Slide 26)
 - MAINTAIN school resource officer and expand support to all schools;
 - ASSESS culture and climate by gathering information from various stakeholders in order to enhance strategic initiatives;
 - STUDY specialized programs in order to assess effectiveness and opportunities for improvement;
 - RETAIN and RECRUIT highly skilled district and building level leaders in order to maintain continuous improvement and positive student outcomes;
- Central Office: Unmet Needs (Slide 27)
 - OPEB;
 - Unemployment Benefits

Questions and Wonderings (Slide 28)

Ms. Horgan asks for further explanation regarding the phone systems of the schools. Mr. Taupier notes that the phone systems are 20 years old; upgrading and/or replacing the systems would fall under the category of capital expenditure. Mr. Geary confirms that the phone systems were included in the FY21 Capital Budget, under the security heading.

Ms. Metternick asks for further explanation regarding the future of OPEB funding. Mr. Leone would not recommend waiting until the district is forced to fund. Discussion regarding strategy of funding OPEB, history of discussions regarding this issue, etc.

Mr. Wolczik seeks clarification that the amount of pages printed annually exceeds 3 million. Discussion regarding printing policies in schools, access to printing, need for printing, etc.

Ms. Horgan highlights the importance of the School Resource Officer, noting that nobody over the age of 40 has attended school while being in fear for their life. Further, she notes that the Juniors this year were in 4th grade at the time of the Sandy Hook incident. Ms. Horgan reiterates her support for the School Resource Officer, explaining his presence as an unfortunate but necessary resource for students. Discussion regarding School Resource Officer, entity responsible for paying salary, access to the SRO, etc.

Mr. Lee expresses his concern regarding the vulnerability of the school-wide systems. He notes that any large institution needs to have continuity of operations and continuity of governance. Mr. Lee asks if the Information Technology budget is designed to pivot and carry on in the event of a catastrophe/close to catastrophe. Mr. Taupier explains that to address this, the budget includes funds for replacing older devices. A brief discussion follows.

Mr. Wolczik asks for further explanation regarding how the Central Office consolidated positions and increased efficiency overall. Mr. Leone explains Human Resources and Payroll were combined into one position, effectively eliminating one FTE position. Dr. Kukenberger adds that the next Central Office meeting will address work cycles, promotions, etc. in more detail. Further, she notes that the Central Office will be fully staffed by 2/21/2020, at which point a deeper exploration into different functionalities will take place.

Break (Slide 29) (No break taken, per unanimous agreement)

Student Services (Slide 30)

Stacy Bucyk, Director of Student Services

Maureen Smith, Elementary Special Education Coordinator

- Student Services: FY20 Return on Investment, Celebrating Success, and Fast Facts (Slide 31)
 - Maintain FY19 program development: positive program impact on the 60+ students district-wide;
 - (HWRHS) Language based program; Therapeutic learning center, intensive learning-academic support program. The addition of language based and intensive learning have shown an estimated cost savings of \$735,000;
- Student Services: FY20 Return on Investment, Celebrating Success, and Fast Facts (Slide 32)
 - (MRMS) Social EMotional behavioral support;
 - (Elementary) expansion of language based programs;
 - (All levels) ongoing development of in-house ABA providers and program specific providers. Hire and maintain highly qualified teaching staff;
- Student Services: FY21 Budget Allows us to (Slide 33 -35)
 - Increase in district staffing;
 - Add .03 FTE Speech/Language Pathologist;
 - Add 1.0 FTE ESL Teacher;
 - Conservative Budgeting
- Student Services: Unmet Needs (Slide 36)
 - Funding for continuous specialized training for staff to meet the needs of ALL students;
 - Space and facilities for program development and expansion;
 - Contingency Funds (unknown/unanticipated costs of service and program needs);
- Student Services: Ongoing Challenges (Slide 37)
 - Consistent services and practices through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support across all settings to address academic and social emotional learning needs to:
 - Promote rigorous programming;
 - Decrease level of service needs;
 - Increase abilities to meet higher level needs in less restrictive environment;
 - Overall Special Education Costs
 - Connected services, OOD tuition, transportation, legal
 - Special Education population has increased 4.2% over the last 5 years

Questions and Wonderings (Slide 38)

Mr. Wolczik appreciates the prioritizing of internal services over external contracts. He asks if this results in cost savings. Ms. Bucyk says it does result in savings in the long run, as well as offering the district control over the quality of interactions. Mr. Wolczik inquires as to whether external contracted services offer the same person every day. Ms. Bucyk responds that it is typically the same person providing services, though home providers tend to vary. Mr. Wolczik reiterates his support of an internal Hamilton-Wenham team member providing services.

Mr. Wolczik asks for further explanation about the need for the full-time Speech Language Pathologist, with Ms. Bucyk explaining that the majority of services would be at the secondary level, with the SLP picking up services across the district, as well as supporting evaluations across the district.

Mr. Wolczik asks what percentage of OOD placements Ms. Bucyk thinks the district could realistically bring back. Ms. Bucyk is not comfortable providing a number, as there may be pending agreements with the parents. She continues that the district is exploring the enhancement of spaces and programs offered in the schools in order to entice students and families to remain in district.

Ms. Metternick asks if there are plans to bring in additional programs to allow for greater cost savings. Ms. Bucyk explains that the district is analyzing how to increase spaces and expand programming. Dr. Kukenberger adds that the topic of adding programs is one that requires having to spend money in order to save money.

Mr. Lee asks if the schools have the physical space in order to develop more programs. Ms. Bucyk states that the Hamilton Wenham facilities are in need of an update, and that there are certainly programs requiring much more individualized spaces. When Cutler school switched to Language-Based programming, the district faced challenges as the program required using classroom space. Dr. Kukenberger adds that ideally the rooms would be designed to accommodate various student needs, however, the district is lucky to have fairly large classroom sizes, and if funds are made available the space could be made to work.

Ms. Metternick asks for further explanation about school choice. Ms. Bucyk explains that school choice students with IEPs offer a small return for the district, though it does not necessarily equate to the costs of providing services.

Discussion regarding services to benefit all students, challenges faced, Chapter 70 funding, etc.

Ms. Metternick asks Ms. Bucyk to identify potential budget reductions. Ms. Bucyk explains that she continuously looks for creative ways to reduce the costs associated, but this budget is unique in that the majority of costs are required by law.

Michelle Horgan exits the meeting at 6:55pm.

B. Next Steps

- **FY21 Preliminary Operating Budget Overview (Fy20- Reality) (Slide 39-40)**

Dr. Kukenberger provides an overview of the district budget over the last couple of years. She explains that the district is committed to working closely with the Capital Financial Subcommittee to identify areas for reduction and cost savings. Dr. Kukenberger reiterates that presenting the budget this way allowed the public to have a clear understanding of the district's vast needs. Further, Dr. Kukenberger discourages further postponing necessary maintenance,

investment, in-house programs, technology, and other projects, encouraging the School Committee to consider this budget as a necessary correction year.

- FY21 Budget Development Timeline (5 minutes)
 - SC Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee Meeting
 - Tuesday January 21, 2020 @7:00pm
 - Tuesday February 4, 2020 @7:00pm
 - Joint FY21 Budget Meeting
 - January 29 2020 @7:00pm
 - Additional meetings TBD
 - Public Hearings @ 6:30pm in Buker Multipurpose Room
 - #1 Wednesday January 22, 2020
 - #2 Wednesday, February 12, 2020
 - Town Meeting/Vote
 - April 4, 2020
 - Pluses and Deltas
- Mr. Polito appreciates hearing from Mr. Taupier and Mr. Genuardo, as their presentations were eye-opening.
 - Ms. Metternick says that she thought this was a refreshing process, and appreciated being able to get answers and hear directly from the Leadership Team. She commends the collaborative work done.
 - Mr. Wolczik thanks everyone for the extra hours of work this took.
 - Ms. Metternick would like to see a slide with actuals over the past years. Brief discussion regarding where this information can be located, and how it is disseminated.

5) Adjournment (7:55pm)

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
ADJOURN AT 7:06 PM.**

**MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Gene Lee
Unanimously approved by 4 members present.**

Respectfully submitted March 18, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.