



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

Quintuple Board Meeting ([agenda](#))

Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District
Town of Hamilton Board of Selectmen
Town of Hamilton Finance Committee
Town of Wenham Board of Selectmen
Town of Wenham Finance Committee

Thursday, January 13, 2022

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Zoom Virtual Meeting ([link](#))

Meeting ID: 886 1530 9289

Passcode: 765259

Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District

Dana Allara
Michelle Bailey
Jennifer Carr
Michelle Horgan
Anna Siedzik
David Polito
Julia Campbell

Town of Wenham Board of Selectmen

Gary Cheeseman
Catherine Harrison
Dianne Bucco

Town of Hamilton Board of Selectmen

Shawn M. Farrell
Darcy Dale
Jamie Knudsen
Rosemary Kennedy (late arrival)

Town of Hamilton Finance Committee

John Pruellage
Christina Schenk-Hargrove
Nicholas Tensen
David Wanger
John McGrath

Town of Wenham Finance Committee

Jim Purdy
Susan Mehlin
Scott Schonberger
David Molitano (late arrival)

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, HWRSD Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration

Joseph J. Domelowicz Jr., Hamilton Town Manager

Alex Magee, Hamilton Finance Director/Town Accountant

Yeimi Colon, Wenham Finance Director & Town Accountant (there but was not introduced initially)

Ryan Ferrara, Wenham Town Administrator

Carin Kale, Hamilton Town Clerk

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Ms. Allara calls the Hamilton - Wenham Regional School Committee meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Those present: Michelle Bailey, Anna Siedzik, David Polito, Jen Carr, Julia Campbell, Michelle Horgan, Dana Allara.

With a quorum present, Ms. Harrison calls the Wenham Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Those present: Gary Cheeseman, Diane Bucco, Catherine Harrison.

With a quorum present, Mr. Knudsen calls the Hamilton Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Those present: Darcy Dale, Shawn Farrell, Jamie Knudsen.

With a quorum present, Ms. Schenk-Hargrove calls the Hamilton Finance Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Those present: Nicholas Tensen, David Wanger, John Pruellage, John McGrath, Christina Schenk-Hargrove

With a quorum present, Mr. Purdy calls the Wenham Finance Advisory Committee meeting to order. Those present: Jim Purdy, Susan Mehlin, and Scott Schonberger. Mr. Purdy notes that David Reid will not be attending tonight's meeting, and David Molatino may join the meeting later.

Others present in the meeting include Eric Tracy, *HWRSD Superintendent*, Joseph J. Domelowicz Jr., *Hamilton Town Manager*, Alex Magee, *Hamilton Finance Director/Town Accountant*, and Vincent Leone, *HWRSD Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration*.

2. New Business

Ms. Allara provides a brief introduction to tonight's meeting and asks that the Towns provide information they feel is most important for the School Committee/District to know.

A. Town of Hamilton FY23 Budget Highlights

Mr. Domelowicz and Mr. Magee review the slideshow [presentation](#), *Town of Hamilton FY2023 Preliminary Budget Highlights*. They review the FY23 budget drivers; historical budget information; FY2023 revenue costs; and program cuts made due to budget concerns. Mr. Magee reviews the Town of Hamilton requests to the District, which include:

- HWRSD to find a way to trim \$1,000,000 from expenses returning that portion of E&D to the Towns;
- Allow for a savings for the residents of both communities;
- Allow the Towns to return to pre-pandemic staffing levels;

- Allow the town to avoid digging deeply into reserves to fund capital/operations;
- Avoid a prop 2 1/2 override.

Rosemary Kenney joins the meeting at approximately 7:20 PM.

B. Town of Wenham FY23 Budget Highlights

Mr. Purdy, *Wenham Finance Committee*, provides an overview of the Town of Wenham FY2023 budget (no visual/slideshow presentation):

- Continuing deliberations on operations;
- Experiencing a “functional deficit” of \$500,000 for the past month;
- Capital Budget will be reviewed in the coming weeks;
- Expense increases 2.5% -4%:
 - OPEB: unfunded liability of \$4.5 million, attempting to pay more this year;
 - General Insurance/Health Insurance;
 - Unfunded mandate of reserve officer training by the state;
- Free cash will hopefully be certified next week and Wenham anticipates using a portion to fund operations. Set aside \$250,000 in Reserve Account;

Mr. Purdy explains that this year’s School District Budget is favorable, however he notes that Wenham will need to begin planning for the district’s FY24 6% budget increase and associated impact on town’s finances.

The warrants for Wenham are due by 02/22/2022. Mr. Purdy believes the tentative FY23 budget will be available on or about 02/19/2022.

C. FY23 Budget Discussion

Mr. Polito states that the district cannot continue to cut programs to fund town needs. He encourages a discussion about increasing town revenue in order to avoid the short-term fixes of cutting the district budget. These problems will only continue to come back in future years.

Mr. Purdy and Mr. Domelowicz respond to Mr. Polito’s comments, both noting the ongoing challenges the towns face. Mr. Domelowicz states that although the schools are valuable, there are other aspects in the community that require attention/funding.

There is discussion clarifying Hamilton’s union negotiations; Wenham’s functional deficit; Reserve Officer Training costs (Ms. Colon indicates \$100,000+); etc.

There is a lengthy discussion about the Town’s request for the district to cut an additional \$1 million from the budget. Mr. Magee and Mr. Domelowicz explain that their request does not specify that the district cut from the OPEB investment, however, if the district can make reductions alongside the towns, they can avoid an override. There is discussion about Town needs; how \$1 million reduction was determined; historical budgets and percentage increase over the years; etc. Mr. McGrath speaks about the district’s consumption of the town budget, and explains that the request does not specify where the district should make programs/service cuts.

There is discussion about reducing the district budget, with Mr. Leone explaining that such a request would require cutting staff. There is some discussion about the district's amount invested in OPEB for FY23. Ms. Siedzik says that although this is a larger investment, this would be the district's first time funding OPEB.

Mr. Leone notes that the district did reduce their budget by \$300,000, per request of the towns at the last meeting. This \$1 million request is in addition to those reductions already made.

There is ongoing discussion about the reduction; maintaining level services; district FY23 contractual obligations and negotiations; town revenue; needs of towns and the district; strategy moving forward; OPEB investment and future savings; out-of-district enrollment and costs; etc.

Superintendent Tracy thanks everyone for attending tonight's meeting and highlights the importance of shared values between the district and towns. He reiterates that the district's FY23 budget increase is the lowest overall increase in recent years.

There is a brief discussion revisiting challenges in town revenue sources.

3. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE TOWN OF WENHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 01/13/2021 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:29 PM.

MOTION by Scott Schonberger; SECONDED by David Molitano.

Jim Purdy	YES;
David Molitano	YES;
Scott Schonberger	YES;
Susan Mehlin	YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of four (4) members present.

I MOVE THAT TOWN OF WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN ADJOURN THE 01/13/2021 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:30 PM.

MOTION by Dianne Bucco; SECONDED by Gary Cheeseman.

Dianne Bucco	YES;
Gary Cheeseman	YES;
Catherine Harrison	YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE TOWN OF HAMILTON FINANCE COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 01/13/2021 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:30 PM.

MOTION by John Pruellage; SECONDED by Nicholas Tensen.

John Pruellage	YES;
Nicholas Tensen	YES;
David Wanger	YES;
John McGrath	YES;
Christina Schenk-Hargrove	YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of five (5) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE TOWN OF HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN ADJOURN THE 01/13/2021 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:30PM.

MOTION by Darcy Dale; SECONDED by Shawn Farrell.

Shawn M. Farrell YES:
Rosemary Kennedy YES;
Darcy Dale YES:
Jamie Knudsen YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of four (4) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 01/13/2021 JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:31 PM.

MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

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

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

The meeting and recording end at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted January 31 2022 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.
