



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

School Committee Meeting
Zoom Virtual Meeting [Link](#)
Zoom Webinar ID: 990 0672 9935
Meeting Password: 206833
Wednesday, July 29, 2020
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Present:

Michelle Bailey, Chairperson
Michelle Horgan, Vice Chairperson
Dana Allara, Secretary
Anna Siedzik, Vice Secretary
Peter Wolczik (7:02 PM arrival)
Stacey Metternick (7:02 PM arrival)
David Polito (7:25 PM arrival)

Also Present:

Mary Beth Banios, Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration
Thomas Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities & Operations
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

7:00 PM

Michelle Bailey calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, noting that the meeting is being held remotely, recorded by HWCAM, and that all motions will be voted on through a roll call vote.

2. Citizens 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.

At 7:02 PM, Ms. Bailey turns off the ability for commenting, and enables the Question/Answer function. This will more closely align with in-person meetings and allow citizens the ability to communicate without interrupting the meeting.

Reba Eaton, 10.5 Eddel Ave, Wenham: Ms. Eaton is interested in hearing information about whether there has been a decision regarding school re-opening. There is a brief discussion, with Ms. Bailey clarifying that the School Committee will hear a presentation this evening about different approaches, and a vote will be held on the 08/10/2020 School Committee meeting. Ms. Eaton talks about her family's specific circumstances, and encourages the Committee to share information sooner rather than later to ease anxiety throughout the community. She also asks about how a vaccine may impact a return to school. Ms. Banios responds, stating that her presentation this evening will answer many of Ms. Eaton's questions and clarify additional details.

Elizabeth Train, 786 Bay Road, Hamilton: Ms. Train shares many of Ms. Eaton’s concerns. She believes the district could have enlisted a better approach towards planning. She is also concerned about delivering a more robust teaching environment when schools are inevitably forced to fall back into remote learning. Lastly, she is concerned that the district was unable to develop a schedule and distribute AP resources over the summer.

3. New Business

A. School space feasibility study

[Exhibit](#)

Thomas Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities & Operations reviews the presentation detailed in the [exhibit](#). He reviews the process of school space analysis, including setting up model classrooms, furniture, estimate for occupancy, action taken to date, DESE recommendations, etc. Overall, he explains that the schools appear to have adequate space to accommodate both the 3 and 6 foot social distancing guidelines. Next, Mr. Geary reviews alternative learning environments, including community partners and outdoor learning environments.

Discussion regarding other potential alternative learning environments; using the High School for in-person teaching of lower grade levels; outdoor learning and tent use; methodology in space analysis; storage costs and storage alternatives; furniture costs and decision making; renting tents versus buying tents; staffing changes/concerns that arise in space analysis.

Mr. Geary details the current HVAC system and the scope of work planned. He notes that the district has contracted the engineering firm, Environmental Health and Engineering, Inc., and he is happy to forward any community or Committee questions to the firm.

Brief discussion regarding hand washing stations and hand sanitizing in schools.

B. Draft School reopening plans

[Exhibit](#)

a. In-person, hybrid, remote plans

Ms. Banios reviews the school reopening plans, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). She commends the district’s educators who are incredibly dedicated to exploring the best approach moving forward. Ms. Banios explains the “toggle” task as prescribed by DESE, which has asked districts to develop a strategy to effectively and efficiently move to different educational models as needed. She details her school reopening recommendation for a hybrid model. This model is structured through 2 cohorts of students, with each cohort attending 2 days of in-person learning, and 3 days of remote learning. Ms. Banios reviews further details of the plan, and notes that families wishing to use remote learning will have that option.

Discussion regarding supporting remote students; staffing needs; issues present in last Spring’s remote education; staggered learning schedule; educational alternatives such as homeschooling and learning pods and the effect on the district; safety concerns surrounding teachers and students; discussion and/or agreement from Education Association; cohort model and family preferences; preschool enrollment and structural analysis; COVID-19 testing requirements; school day scheduling; student services; etc.

Ms. Banios reminds the community and School Committee that she will be hosting a chat tomorrow, 07/30/2020 from 7:00 - 8:00 PM.

Discussion regarding moving forward with the information School Committee members compiled from the 784 community responses. Ms. Bailey asks members to email those questions to Ms. Banios, and those questions will be posted online at a later date.

C. Leadership Team and Focus Groups
(School Committee August 6 & 7)

Ms. Banios would like the School Committee to participate in the upcoming Leadership Team and Focus Group meetings. Discussion regarding challenges in attending these meetings. Ms. Banios will reach out to legal counsel and/or the Attorney General regarding their recommendation on this issue.

D. Review and approve position for teacher on assignment [Exhibit](#)

Ms. Banios reviews the Elementary Teacher on Special Assignment position, as detailed in the description included in the [exhibit](#). Ms. Metternick states that she is concerned about the funding of this position. Ms. Banios states that she has a high degree of confidence that funding will cover this position.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE POSITION FOR 2020-2021 ELEMENTARY TEACHER ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Discussion: Ms. Metternick reiterates her concerns about funding for this position. Ms. Banios explains that additional information is forthcoming, but notes that the Governor released COVID response funding, which is now surplus funding. Further, the towns have received funding that must be allocated towards education and the district anticipates funding from a technology grant. Mr. Wolczik asks if it would be possible to bring back a curriculum coordinator that was laid off. In addition, with the \$400,000 surplus, Mr. Wolczik asks if laid-off staff can be re-hired. Discussion regarding the need for this position. Ms. Metternick would like answers about E&D funds and other financial concerns before she can support this.

Peter Wolczik	NO;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
David Polito	YES;
Stacey Metternick	NO;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;

MOTION PASSES via majority roll call vote (5:2) of 7 members present.

Ms. Banios confirms that applications have been received for this position.

E. Adjustments to the 2020-2021 School Calendar

The required school days for the 2020-2021 school year have been reduced from 180 to 170 days. The 10 days will be used for teacher preparedness, to be used before the start of school. Teachers will begin on 08/25/2020, and students will begin on 09/14/2020. Ms. Banios asks if there are any concerns with the calendar, as she hopes that the School Committee can vote on a finalized calendar at their next meeting. The Education Association is in support of the calendar. There are no concerns with the calendar.

F. Adjustment to School Committee Summer Meeting Schedule
Meeting on August 10, delay retreat until September

School Committee members agree to begin the 08/10/2020 meeting at 3:00 PM.

G. Organization of Finance, Capital, and Turf Working Group

Discussion surrounding the structure of the Financial/Capital Planning and Turf Field working groups. Both Ms. Metternick and Ms. Horgan prefer to keep the subcommittee as one group as opposed to splitting into two groups.

Ms. Metternick would like to continue serving on the Capital/ Financial Planning Subcommittee. Ms. Seidzik and Ms. Horgan are interested in serving on the committee. Mr. Polito offers to serve.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FORM THE CAPITAL/FINANCIAL PLANNING AND TURF FIELD SUBCOMMITTEE WITH MEMBERS STACEY METTERNICK, MICHELLE HORGAN, AND ANNA SEIDZIK.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Anna Siedzik	YES;
David Polito	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 6 members present (Mr. Wolczik is temporarily absent).

H. Discussion of zoom meetings vs. live in-person meetings

Discussion regarding the logistical concerns surrounding in-person School Committee meetings, including local laws and guidelines. Discussion regarding the numerous benefits of holding meetings via Zoom, including the increase of public participation.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESUME IN-PERSON MEETINGS BEGINNING ON 08/10/2020.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: Quorum requirements and options for School Committee members to participate remotely should they not feel comfortable attending in person. Further discussion regarding logistical issues and the optics of not meeting in person when school resumes.

Peter Wolczik	NO;
Anna Siedzik	NO;
David Polito:	NO;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Michelle Horgan	NO;
Michelle Bailey	NO;
Dana Allara	NO.

MOTION FAILS (1:6).

4. Superintendent's Report

A. Community Chat - Thursday, July 30, 2020 @ 7:00 PM

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Banios reminds the community of the Community Chat scheduled for tomorrow at 7:00 PM.

5. Chair's Report

A. Turf Field MOU

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Bailey thanks Ms. Metternick for her work on the Turf Field MOU. The MOU is signed and ready to go. Fundraising will begin after the study is completed.

B. Develop FAQ from community surveys

Thank you to School Committee members for reviewing the 784 response from the community survey.

In addition, Ms. Bailey notes:

- The Wenham Museum is circulating a survey regarding remote learning opportunities;

- Board of Health meeting;
- Brad Hill provided an update that Massachusetts passed an interim budget that is level funded from last year;
- The Town of Wenham requested use of Buker School on 09/01/2020 and 11/03/2020 for purposes of voting. Ms. Banios will reach out to the Board of Health regarding the safety implications of building use. Ms. Banios and Mr. Leone will let the Town of Wenham know about whether this is approved.
- Ms. Bailey has been invited to participate in a Facebook roundtable discussion tomorrow. She notes that she will participate and only speak to her own individual knowledge and opinion.

6. Committee Reports (Continued)

A. Capital/Financial Subcommittee

No update.

B. Policy Subcommittee

Dorothy Presser, MASC representative, provided feedback on two policies.

C. Negotiations Subcommittee

No update.

Discussion regarding developing charges for each subcommittee. Originally, this work was scheduled during the School Committee retreat, which has since been rescheduled. Further discussion surrounding the development of the charge and yearly goals of each subcommittee.

7. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants

[Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 1002
- Voucher No. 3
- Voucher No. 2927
- Voucher No. 2916
- Voucher No. 2917

B. Vote to approve prior meeting minutes

- May 6, 2020
- May 27, 2020

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN ABOVE, WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION ON THESE ITEMS.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Anna Siedzik	ABSTAIN;
Peter Wolczik	ABSTAIN;
David Polito	YES;
Stacey Metternick	ABSTAIN;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Dana Allara	YES.

MOTION PASSES through majority roll call vote (4:3) of 7 members present.

8. Other

A. Topics for Future Meetings

Next Meeting is Monday, August 10, 2020 at 3:00 PM.

- Approve school reopening plan;
- School Calendar 2020-2021;
- School Committee Calendar 2020-2021;
- Communication strategies;
- COVID related expenses and status of E&D.

Discussion regarding Ms. Metternick's previous request for a financial update, including the need for this information; timeline of providing such information; Mr. Leone's availability; etc. After a lengthy discussion, Ms. Banios offers to provide a budget update memo, which would then allow for Mr. Leone to come back at a later date with a more detailed presentation of the information requested. Ms. Metternick accepts this proposal.

Ms. Bailey states that given the full agenda, there will be no room for any additional agenda items or off-topic discussion.

9. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 07/29/2020 MEETING AT 10:20 PM.

MOTION by Stacey Metternick; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Peter Wolczik	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Michelle Horgan	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;
Dana Allara	YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 6 members present (David Polito exited the meeting).

Respectfully submitted September 1st, 2020 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.

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 webinar id: 990 0672 9935; password: 206833. 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.