



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: 951 7412 9828
Meeting Password: 541439
Thursday, August 6, 2020
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Present:

Michelle Bailey, Chairperson
Michelle Horgan, Vice Chairperson
Dana Allara, Secretary
Anna Siedzik, Vice Secretary
Peter Wolczik
David Polito

Also Present:

Mary Beth Banios, District Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration
Eric Tracy, HWRHS Principal
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

3:00 PM

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the meeting to order at 3:00 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. Ms. Bailey reminds the Committee to refrain from individual arguments.

2. New Business

A. School Reopening Plans

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Banios presents the district plan for reopening schools, as detailed in the 28 page [exhibit](#). She reviews the opportunities presented for community feedback; the 2020-2021 School Year calendar; preparedness for three models (in-person, blended, and remote); the structure of a cohort model; actions taken; and district's recommendations for each level of education's hybrid learning plan.

During the presentation, Mr. Polito voices his concerns: there is an enormous amount of densely packed information being presented very quickly. He states it is unreasonable to expect the School Committee to understand the data as presented, and even more unreasonable to expect School Committee members to then be able to form reasonable questions about the plan and communicate the plan to the community. Mr. Polito continues, stating that there needs to be time allotted to process the amount of information being presented.

Mr. Wolczik agrees with Mr. Polito, as does Ms. Bailey. Further discussion regarding the amount of work, timeline, and intention of the presentation. There is a discussion about the deadline for submitting reopening plans (08/14/20), and a brief discussion regarding consequences should the district fail to meet that deadline. Ms. Bailey asks that Ms. Banios finish the presentation, but notes that a follow-up meeting will likely need to be scheduled. Ms. Seidzik agrees with Ms. Bailey.

Ms. Banios continues the presentation, detailing the structure of hybrid learning. She concludes with the fact that the level of detail provided in the document presented meets the State mandated requirements.

Discussion regarding State requirements for reopening plan; challenges present in hybrid model; alternative learning platforms; accuracy of data presented; federal funding; ethical considerations of a hybrid model; collaborations with the local Boards of Health; actions taken so far; etc.

Ms. Banios talks about the community responses indicating that a majority of families in the district need and prefer the in-person learning offered in the hybrid model. Discussion regarding actions and plans to ensure safety for students and staff.

Further discussion regarding communication strategy and next steps.. Ms. Seidzik points out that the reopening plan as presented is high stakes with potential loss of jobs, loss of life, and loss of the community's educational values. Ms. Seidzik is passionate about the need to begin the school year remotely.

Ms. Banios reviews the hybrid plan, and the attempts to meet the needs of the community. She notes that federal dollars may not be distributed to districts that are offering remote only. She also notes that sports may not be offered for remote only schools. Further discussion regarding remote versus hybrid education models, and the metrics determining if hybrid, in-person learning is safe.

Discussion regarding the design of education models as presented, with Mr. Tracy appearing to discuss the remote and hybrid models and how to best meet the needs of students.

Discussion regarding the vote this evening, what the plan needs to include, etc. Discussion regarding safety in the schools and providing visuals of what schools and classrooms will look like in response to safety concerns. Ms. Horgan asks if the plan presented has the support of the teaching staff.

The School Committee reaches consensus and asks Ms. Banios to further refine the district reopening plan, providing a more complete remote education model, as well as further detail about developing criteria for opening schools safely. The School Committee asks to hear the details of that plan at the meeting scheduled for Monday, 08/10/2020. The School Committee hopes to be able to vote at that meeting, however, should that vote not occur, there will be a meeting penciled in for Wednesday, 08/12/2020 at 3:00 PM.

Ms. Seidzik notes that the plan presented this evening is in direct contradiction to what the Education Association has voiced. As such, she highlights the importance of hearing teachers' feedback about the reopening plan.

Mr. Wolczik requests that experts are brought in to speak about options in implementing learning systems. Discussion regarding next steps and MOU consideration in Executive Session. Mr. Wolczik reiterates his concern about learning systems. Ms. Banios responds that teaching staff need to be included in any decision making strategies regarding learning systems. Ms. Bailey and Ms. Seidzik request that the discussion focuses on the school reopening plan, and note that Mr. Wolczik's concerns can be addressed at a later time.

B. FY20 Year End Financials

[Exhibit](#)

C. Vote to adjourn into executive session

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 5:25 PM FOR PURPOSE #3: TO DISCUSS STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH THE HAMILTON-WENHAM EDUCATION ASSOCIATION; HOLDING THIS DISCUSSION IN OPEN MEETING WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE DISTRICT'S BARGAINING POWER; AND NOT TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Dana Allara.

Michelle Horgan	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
Peter Wolczik	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;
Michelle Bailey	YES;

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of 5 members present (Mr. Polito has exited the meeting).

The next School Committee meeting is Monday, August 10, 2020 at 3:00 PM. An additional meeting will be held (if needed) on Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted September 10th, 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: 951 7412 9828; password: 541439. 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.