



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: 935 5551 0794
Meeting Password: 560108
Wednesday, September 2, 2020
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Present:

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

Also Present:

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

1. Call to Order

7:00 PM

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. This meeting is being recorded by HWCAM and held remotely per the Governor's emergency order.

2. Citizen's 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.

Ms. Bailey explains that the citizen comments are limited to a total of 20 minutes.

Emmy Roebuck, 10 Arbor Street, Wenham: She is a graduate from Hamilton - Wenham, and had the chance to listen to the teachers' statements from Monday evening. She is concerned about the hybrid model of education as it causes a great deal of safety and health concerns. She urges the School Committee to reconsider their vote for hybrid. Ms. Roebuck also reads a statement from an anonymous Hamilton - Wenham graduate.

James Goudie [address unknown]: Mr. Goudie is concerned about the decision for a hybrid model of education, given that the virus will likely reemerge as university students return. He offers his full support to the teachers, and hopes that the School Committee will reconsider their decision to use the hybrid model, and also offer accommodations to the Hamilton - Wenham teaching staff.

Riley Crockett, 5 Birch Road, Wenham: Ms. Crockett offers a statement from herself, Mia Lougee, and Ruby Gladchun. These students are concerned about the health and well-being of the teachers in the district. They urge the School Committee to offer accommodations to the teachers who have requested to work from home due to medical conditions, which were not of their own choosing.

Kristen Crockett, 5 Birch Road, Wenham: Ms. Crockett reads a statement from MRMS students Cecilia Crockett and Gabrielle Dean. These students urge the School Committee and Superintendent to accommodate the needs of Hamilton - Wenham teachers, ensuring their safety and well-being.

Lori Bouchard, 202 Moulton Street, Hamilton: Inquires as to whether the district will be requiring or recommending that students and staff complete COVID testing before the start of school. Notes that she has asked this on numerous prior occasions.

Erica Mitchell [address unknown]: Ms. Mitchell is the parent of both a middle and high school student. She supports the hybrid model of education, and will send her children back to school. However, she voices her concern regarding the minimal face to face time with teachers.

Ronni Flanagan, 14 Daniels Road, Wenham: As an incoming Hamilton - Wenham senior, she believes that the hybrid model is the wrong option. She is also concerned about the treatment teachers are receiving. Before understanding the plan in its entirety, she was pro-hybrid. She now believes a remote model will be more effective and safer for everyone involved. She encourages the School Committee to provide an accurate description for hybrid and remote education models to district families.

Cameron Taylor, 1 Toppan Lane, Wenham: As a 7th grade student at MRMS, Mr. Taylor has a number of safety concerns moving forwards with the hybrid model of education. He hopes that teachers are accommodated and he supports the district's remote learning option.

Jessica Spong [address unknown]: Ms. Spong is a parent to a freshman and 5th grade student. She would like her children to return to a hybrid model of education. She notes her concern that the remote learning model does not offer teaching and class time with Hamilton - Wenham educators.

Jerry Sullo, 15 Walnut Street, Hamilton: Mr. Sullo is a parent to three students in the district. He offers a comment to speak for children with disabilities and children coming from a history of trauma. He has heard little to no comments regarding these students, and speaks about the specific difficulties they face.

Andrea Brown [address unknown]: Ms. Brown has a rising freshman in the district, as well as two graduates. She supports the hybrid model of education as she understands the value of in-person learning. She hopes the district is able to offer accommodations to the Hamilton - Wenham teachers who have requested help.

Joelle and Jere Moroney, 116 Grapevine Road, Wenham: Ms. Moroney has 3 students who have attended Hamilton - Wenham schools. She offers her perspective, explaining the current data, guidance from the Governor, etc. She states that the Hamilton - Wenham community shows a very low number for total reported cases, and as such the hybrid model is a safe option. Further, Ms. Moroney expresses her frustration that changes are being considered two weeks prior to the start of school. She hopes that the community can unite and embrace the hybrid model.

Pamela Stein [address unknown]: Ms. Stein has a student entering 7th grade at MRMS and encourages the School Committee to reconsider their decision for hybrid learning. She details her concerns, which

include access and understanding of technology, as well as taking into account teachers' input and safety. She urges the School Committee to reconsider their decision, and provide accurate and complete information to district families.

Sean Cullen, 13 Maple St, Hamilton: Mr. Cullen is the parent of four students that have been or are students in Hamilton - Wenham. He encourages the district to reconsider the decision to enter into a hybrid education platform. He previously made the decision to send his student back to school under the hybrid model. However, since making his decision, new information and circumstances have emerged, and he urges the School Committee to listen to teachers and reconsider their decision to start school in the hybrid model.

Ms. Bailey notes that those who have offered comments this evening represent just a small fraction of the emails received by the School Committee.

3. New Business

A. Vote to adjourn into executive session

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PURPOSE #3: TO DISCUSS STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING (HWEA), AS THE CHAIR DECLARES THAT HOLDING SUCH DISCUSSION IN OPEN MEETING MAY HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE BARGAINING OR LITIGATING POSITION OF THE PUBLIC BODY; AND TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION THEREAFTER.

MOTION by Michelle Bailey; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

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

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

The School Committee anticipates the executive session meeting to take approximately 1/2 hour.

Executive Session 7:36 PM - 8:29 PM.

Ms. Bailey asks to amend the meeting agenda in order to address Fall Sports as the next order of business. There are no objections to this change.

B. Vote on Fall School Sports (originally D)

[Exhibit](#)

Craig Genuardo, Athletic Director, reviews the fall sports information, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). He reviews the work completed to date, including posting FAQs to the district website, and the numerous meetings throughout Cape Ann League directors and principals.

Mr. Genuardo reviews the options for the fall sports season, including an analysis of the potential budget implications of each option. He appears this evening to hear feedback from the School Committee, and will then be making recommendations to principals tomorrow. He provides an overview of the timeline of events leading up to the start of the season, including when schedules and user fees will be finalized, etc.

Mr. Genualdo states that the HWRHS Athletic Department recommends that the School Committee approve the Fall Sports as presented and as will be recommended tomorrow to principals of the schools. If health conditions change or if the majority of the other districts in the CAL say no, HWRS D should reserve the right to change its mind.

There is a brief discussion about how to change the vote if necessary. Discussion regarding different sports schedules, transportation concerns, sports schedule if schools enter into remote model, etc. Discussion regarding state guidance and the impact on the sports season.

Motion

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION FROM CRAIG GENUALDO FOR RUNNING FALL SPORTS AS PRESENTED, ASSUMING THAT SCHOOLS ARE OPERATING IN THE HYBRID MODEL AS CURRENTLY EXPECTED.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: Clarification that the motion on the floor specifies that fall sports will run when schools operate in the hybrid model. Further discussion regarding the language in the motion.

Motion to Amend

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO REFLECT ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE “ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION FROM CRAIG GENUALDO FOR RUNNING FALL SPORTS AS PRESENTED, ASSUMING THAT SCHOOLS ARE OPERATING IN THE HYBRID MODEL AS CURRENTLY EXPECTED. THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AMEND THIS DECISION AS NEEDED, BASED ON HEALTH PROTOCOLS WE DECIDE ON.”

MOTION by Stacey Metternick.

Discussion: Clarification and rereading of the original motion and the motion to amend.

Motion to Amend:

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

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

Original Motion:

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

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

Mr. Genuardo will proceed with his recommendation to school principals to begin fall sports. Discussion regarding authority in determining when sports events are safe, with Mr. Genuardo explaining that should Hamilton - Wenham see a rise in cases, State guidelines will mandate whether or not sports can continue. However, absent these State restrictions, the School Committee will follow guidance from surrounding communities, the COVID Response Team, and local Boards of Health to make localized decisions about the safety of continuing with athletic programs.

C. HWRSD School Committee selected as HW Hometown Hero (originally B)

[Exhibit](#)

The School Committee has been nominated for the Community House's *Hamilton - Wenham Hometown Heroes Award*. Discussion regarding the nomination process, and whether members feel it is appropriate to accept the nomination. Many members feel uncomfortable with the nomination, with some noting that the focus should be on the teaching staff rather than the School Committee members.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE NOMINATION OF THE *HOMETOWN HERO AWARD* FROM THE COMMUNITY HOUSE.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by David Polito.

Discussion: Members offer their opinions on whether or not to accept this award. Discussion regarding nominations of other groups and individuals; number of nominations; ethical considerations; etc.

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

MOTION FAILS (3:4).

D. Addition of Special Education Position at High School (originally C)

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Banios recommends that the School Committee approve the addition of a Special Education position at the High School, an anticipated \$55- \$60,000 cost.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE ONE-YEAR SPECIAL EDUCATION POSITION AS DESCRIBED BY SUPERINTENDENT MARY BETH BANIOS.

MOTION by Dana Allara;

MOTION WITHDRAWN by Ms. Allara.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE ONE-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION POSITION AS DESCRIBED BY SUPERINTENDENT MARY BETH BANIOS.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Peter Wolczik	YES;
David Polito	YES;
Stacey Metternick	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;

Michelle Horgan YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Michelle Bailey YES.

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

E. Health Metrics from the Board of Health

[Exhibit](#)

Discussion regarding the Boards of Health approved health metrics. Discussion regarding the COVID Response Team, comprised of:

- Mary Beth Banios, Superintendent;
- Tom Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities & Operations/ Chair of the COVID Response Team;
- Mari Beth Ting, Wenham Public Health Nurse
- Christine Lee, Hamilton Public Health Nurse
- Lea Tabenkin, District Nurse Leader, High School Nurse
- John Kotch, President, Hamilton - Wenham Education Association
- Nick Ristaino. Vice President, Hamilton - Wenham Education Association
- Dana Allara, School Committee member

Mr. Geary explains the details of the health metrics, graphics, and other details found in the [exhibit](#). The Hamilton and Wenham Boards of Health are hosting a community chat tomorrow, 09/03/20 at 7:00 PM. Further details and questions about the metrics can be addressed at that time.

F. School Reopening Update

[Exhibit](#)

Mr. Geary provides an update on the school reopening plan, detailed in the [exhibit](#). He reviews HVAC status, including work completed, supplies ordered/supplies received; remaining work to be done; etc. Mr. Geary notes that the bathroom cleanliness remains an area for improvement.

Mr. Geary publicly thanks the custodial staff for their extraordinary work, noting that they agreed to postpone their normal Friday holiday in order to ensure the safety of the schools. Further discussion regarding key card access; touch free faucets; floor markings; signage; touch free sanitizing; and other safety components.

Discussion regarding classroom cleanliness; maintenance department priorities; results of deep cleaning over the summer; and how any issues or complaints should be handled. Ms. Horgan and Ms. Siedzik bring up the reports about dirty and unsanitary facilities. Ms. Siedzik points to some of the included photographs, and asks Mr. Geary to speak to plans for increasing accountability. Brief discussion regarding volunteer opportunities.

G. Staffing Update

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Banios provides an update regarding the district's staffing situation, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). *Signature HR Solutions* has been hired as a consultant to assist with the workload.

Ms. Banios explains that as of now, there have been 32 leave requests, of which 24 have been processed/completed. She reviews the qualifications necessary for ADA accommodations; criteria needed for approved leaves; and the numbers broken down by category (as shown in the [exhibit](#)). The district anticipates 8 staff on leave when schools reopen in the fall. Ms. Banios further notes that decisions are difficult and she, too, was upset to hear from the teachers on Monday evening.

Ms. Siedzik asks if the district may need to close schools at some point due to being understaffed. Ms. Banios indicates that this is a possibility.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESCIND THE 08/14/20 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MOTION TO BEGIN THE 2020/2021 SCHOOL YEAR IN THE HYBRID MODEL.

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.

Discussion: Mr. Polito notes that the changing data warrants the School Committee’s reconsideration. He points out that the intention of the plan as originally voted was to be able to toggle back and forth between education models. Mr. Wolczik agrees. Ms. Siedzik also agrees, adding that teachers’ comments highlighted not only health and safety concerns, but also the pedagogical shortcomings of the hybrid model. She goes on to explain that the hybrid model will create staffing problems, which will present logistical challenges in the near future, and have a lasting detrimental effect on morale. Ms. Siedzik encourages reconsideration, and asks that teachers be more involved in the development of an educational plan moving forward.

Ms. Allara points out that deliberations are focused on what the vote should be, rather than the motion on the floor to rescind the vote.

Ms. Metternick believes that the motion on the floor is incredibly inappropriate, as the School Committee thought long and hard about their decision. She points out that members are not always going to agree with one another. She feels for the teachers, but notes there are a number of additional considerations that went into the decision.

Brief discussion regarding notice of the motion: Ms. Bailey and Ms. Banios were aware of the motion, but did not include it in the agenda for tonight’s meeting, with the understanding that Ms. Siedzik would make the motion at this time.

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

MOTION FAILS (3:4).

Ms. Bailey notes that this discussion has been particularly difficult. She says that the School Committee appreciates all Hamilton- Wenham teaching staff and the district is attempting to provide as many opportunities as possible for alternative positions.

4. Superintendent’s Report

A. Enrollment Report

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Banios presents the enrollment report as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

B. Enrollment Classification Fall 2020

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Banios presents the breakdown of enrollment classification for Fall 2020, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). Discussion regarding families choosing hybrid versus remote models; number of families opting for private or homeschool education; process of approving homeschool education plans; district’s ability to provide families with technology devices; etc. Superintendent Banios explains some of the challenges in finalizing cohorts, stating that families can expect to get cohort assignments by next week. Mr. Polito notes that it is important to communicate the layout of the education models to district families

and teachers. Superintendent Banios responds that teachers are aware of their schedules, and work on finalizing the details of learning structures is ongoing. Further discussion regarding the learning models and communication with families and teachers.

5. Chair's Report

A. Health Forum on Sept. 3 [Exhibit](#)

- Ms. Bailey encourages the community to participate in tomorrow's Health Forum;
- Welcome back and congratulations to Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance & Administration.

6. Committee & Liaison Reports

A. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee

- Have not had a chance to meet;
- The Town of Hamilton is looking for a member for their Capital group - to be discussed at the next meeting.

B. Policy Subcommittee

- Next meeting: Tuesday, 09/08/20;
- Brief discussion regarding approved/posted minutes from the subcommittee.

C. Negotiations Subcommittee

- Next meeting: Friday, 09/04/20 at 4:00 PM.

D. Liaisons Reports

- There was a previous SEPAC meeting Q&A.

7. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants [Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 7
- Voucher No. 1008
- Voucher No. 1007
- Voucher No. 2936
- Voucher No. 2935

B. Minutes

- June 3, 2020 [Exhibit](#)
- June 10, 2020 [Exhibit](#)
- June 17, 2020 [Exhibit](#)
- August 25, 2020 [Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH EXCEPTION OF THE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES OF 06/03/20, 06/10/20, AND 06/17/20; THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

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

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

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES OF 06/03/20, 06/10/20, AND 06/17/20 AS WRITTEN IN THE CONSENT AGENDA; THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.

Discussion: Ms. Bailey notes that the further discussion regarding the hyphenation should be removed. She also notes that the minutes have a reference to a page number that was left blank. Ms. Bailey does not believe either item is important enough to hold the minutes for another meeting.

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

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

Ms. Bailey notes that the next School Committee meeting will be in 2 weeks, and students will be back in school before that. She asks that School Committee members email their requests for agenda items for the next meeting. Mr. Wolczik asks that costs associated with external contractors for the maintenance department be included as an agenda item.

8. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 09/02/2020 MEETING AT 10:51 PM.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Stacey Metternick.

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

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

Respectfully submitted October 5th, 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: 935 5551 0794, password: 560108. 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 Hamilton - Wenham School Committee
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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.