



School Committee Meeting
Zoom Virtual Meeting
Webinar ID: 995 6696 8559
Passcode: 990508
Wednesday, November 18, 2020
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Present:

Michelle Bailey, Chairperson
Michelle Horgan, Vice Chairperson (6:16 PM arrival)
Dana Allara, Secretary
Anna Siedzik, Vice Secretary
David Polito
Peter Wolczik

Also Present:

Mary Beth Banios, District Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration
Thomas Geary, Director of Maintenance, Facilities & Operations
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary
Craig Genuardo, Athletic Director
Jennifer Clifford, Cutler Elementary Principal
Carolyn Shediak, Winthrop Elementary Principal
Ben Schersten, Buker Elementary Principal

1. Call to Order

6:00 PM

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the meeting to order at 7:02 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 provides an overview of the process of offering citizen comments. She notes that although the district currently has some conflicting policies on the issue, at this point the School Committee will allow any comments regarding any topic aside from criticisms of specific teachers, staff, or students.

No citizen comments at this time (due to confusion in meeting start time, citizens comments occur later in the meeting, see page 4).

Superintendent Banios asks for athletic items to appear next on the agenda (no objections).

3. New Business

A. Winter Sports Fees, Co-ops, and Waivers (Vote) (originally B)

[Exhibit](#)

Athletic Director, Craig Genualdo, appears to explain the requests, which have all been approved by concerned principals and stakeholders, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR WAIVERS FOR BOTH GIRLS AND BOYS HOCKEY TO ALLOW 8TH GRADE STUDENTS TO PLAY.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.

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

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

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE COOP AGREEMENTS FOR HOCKEY WITH MARBLEHEAD; GYMNASTICS WITH MANCHESTER - ESSEX; AND WRESTLING WITH SALEM.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.

Discussion: Ms. Siedzik asks about the potential increased risk given the higher number of COVID-19 cases in surrounding communities (of particular note is wrestling, a close contact sport, in Salem, a city with a higher rate of positive cases). Mr. Genualdo explains that the motion this evening allows the district to participate in coop sports, however, he will monitor the situation closely and adjust as needed.

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

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

Mr. Genualdo explains that the current intention of the Athletic Department is to have the Winter Sports fees mirror the structure of Fall Sports fees. Ms. Siedzik inquires about the status of equalizing sports fees, highlighting the importance of Title IX compliance and gender equity in fee structure. Mr. Genualdo agrees that this is a crucial issue, and hopes that with the passing of the FY22 budget he is able to begin that process in Fall 2021.

Superintendent Banios recommends that the School Committee vote to approve the process.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE PROCESS OF SETTING WINTER SPORTS FEES TO BE BASED ON THE SAME PROCESS THAT WAS USED IN APPROVING THE 2020 FALL SEASON SPORTS FEES.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by David Polito.

Discussion: Mr. Polito believes it is important to be as fluid as possible, and to maintain trust with Mr. Genualdo. Ms. Siedzik states that although she understands the reasons, she is very frustrated about not addressing equity across athletic fees.

Michelle Horgan enters the meeting at 6:16 PM.

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

MOTION PASSES through majority (5:1) roll call vote of six (6) members present.

Mr. Genualdo provides a brief overview of the district's athletic programs, noting that the Athletic Department will follow any new (or changes to current) recommendations from Governor Baker. The Cape Ann League will not begin winter sports prior to 12/14/2020.

Mr. Genualdo explains the Athletic Department's recommendation to change the district's Family Cap policy, as found on page three (3) of the [exhibit](#). There is discussion regarding the most/least expensive sports, as well as the problematic nature of trying to separate sports based on costs to families.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT ATHLETIC DIRECTOR CRAIG GENUALDO'S RECOMMENDATION TO CHANGE THE SPORTS FEE POLICY: AFTER AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT HAS PAID FOR THREE (3) SPORTS AND AFTER A FAMILY HAS PAID FOR FOUR (4) SPORTS, THAT PARTICIPATION IN ALL FOLLOWING SPORTS WILL BE FREE OF CHARGE.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

Discussion: After noting the inaccurate motion, Mr. Polito asks that Ms. Allara make a motion to accept the recommendation as explained by Mr. Genualdo. Ms. Bailey asks for a motion to amend to indicate an individual cap of five (5) sports and a family cap of six (6) sports. There is no motion.

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

MOTION FAILS (4:2).

Mr. Genualdo reiterates the recommendation of the Athletic Department to change the Family Cap policy (as stated below, in the language of the motion).

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATION, AS EXPLAINED BY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, CRAIG GENUALDO:

TO ADJUST THE FAMILY CAP GUIDELINES FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR ONLY (AND IF THE WEDGE SEASON HAPPENS AS PLANNED): THE FOURTH (4TH) SPORT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL BE PAID FOR BY THE DISTRICT, AND THAT THE FIFTH (5TH) AND GREATER SPORT FOR A HOUSEHOLD BE COVERED BY THE DISTRICT. FURTHER, THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS THAT THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE REMAIN FLEXIBLE AND RE-EXAMINE THIS FAMILY CAP ADJUSTMENT AS THE YEAR UNFOLDS.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

David Polito YES;
Peter Wolczik YES;

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

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of six (6) members present.

B. Elementary Reopening Update (originally A)

[Exhibit](#)

Jennifer Clifford, Cutler Elementary Principal; Carolyn Shediak, Winthrop Elementary Principal; and Ben Schersten, Buker Elementary Principal present the Elementary Reopening Update, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

Hybrid Learning Model

- Where are we now - current model;
- Results of survey data;
- Possible next steps

Ms Siedzik asks about teacher check-ins offered throughout asynchronous learning. Ms. Clifford notes that the schedule displayed in tonight's presentation cut off Morning Meetings. She explains that each grade level has two (2) teacher "touch points" per day.

Ms Siedzik asks about Zoom learning for young learners. She suggests keeping High School remote while moving the upper elementary grades to high school building for in-person learning. There is discussion regarding potential solutions and challenges in getting all K-5 students back to in-person learning, including social distancing adjustments that would be necessary for this to happen.

Discussion regarding survey data, with Ms. Siedzik asking to see the raw data. Ms. Horgan asks for reflection on any surprising or unanticipated survey responses, with principals noting that they were happy to hear positive feedback, as they'd essentially only heard negative to that point.

Remote Learning Model

- What is the Academy of Personal Learning (APL);
- A Day in the Life (varies by grade/individual student);
- Results of community survey data;
- Next Steps: K-2, 2-3, and 4-5.

2. Citizen's Comments (offered to remedy the miscommunication on start time)

Leah Tighe, 176 Willow Street, Hamilton: Ms. Tighe asks about the district's plan to address the challenges and complexities surrounding the upcoming holiday season, including family travel, quarantine, and continuing to prioritize student learning. She would like the district to have a plan in place to ensure that children learning from home are still able to access the education they need. Superintendent Banios and Mr. Schersten respond, with Ms. Banios stating she will follow up with a more detailed email to Ms. Tighe.

Kristin Crockett, 5 Birch Road, Wenham: Ms. Crockett is concerned and frustrated with the misinformation circulating on the district website, specifically, the scheduling of the School Committee meetings. The start time for tonight's meeting was listed as 7:00 PM. She will follow up with an email to the School Committee including a screenshot of the misinformation.

4. Finance and Operations

A. Powers and Sullivan FY20 Audit Presentation; Frank Serreti, CPA Partner

[Exhibit](#)

Frank Serreti, *Powers & Sullivan*, who has worked closely with the district since 2001, reviews the FY20 Audit Presentation, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

Ms. Siedzik asks about the percentage change listed in the footnote on page 41. Mr. Serreti explains the options offered in OPEB funding, as well as the challenges based on market fluctuations.

Mr. Polito asks about OPEB liability and the change in total liability. His understanding is that continuing to put off the funding of OPEB is costing the district money. Further discussion regarding OPEB funding schedule, discount rates, liability, projection, etc.

Brief discussion regarding CARES Act funding and compliance with cash policy.

B. Final Budget Development Calendar

[Exhibit](#)

The joint meeting with the Towns' Boards of Selectmen and FINCOMs is currently scheduled for 12/17/2020. The *Capital Planning & Finance Subcommittee* will rescheduled their 12/18/2020 meeting in order to meet before the joint meeting.

Mr. Polito thanks Ms. Lettvin, who is not only an amazing person, but also a truly efficient recording secretary who provided him with minutes from the 04/10/2019 meeting discussing OPEB funding: on 07/01/2018, liability was \$35,395,000, and it has now grown to \$48 million. Brief discussion regarding the need to address this in the future.

5. Chair's Report

None.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Updated State Guidance and Metrics

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Banios reports that on 11/06/2020, the State and DESE issued updated guidance asking for in-person learning whenever feasible, as detailed in the [exhibit](#) (preserved in a [pdf found here](#)). The district is currently awaiting an information session to learn more about these guidelines. In addition, the COVID Response team is keeping a close eye on the newly released metrics and guidance from DESE regarding the interpretation of those metrics found at the [DOE website](#), and preserved in a [pdf found here](#).

Discussion regarding COVID metrics; DESE guidance; community concerns; teaching staff input; emerging data regarding the safety of in-person learning in the schools; etc. Maribeth Ting, Public Health Nurse, comes on to the meeting to explain the 6 foot guidelines, which are especially crucial when students are eating. Close contacts are identified by contacts closer than 6 feet, with or without a mask. Ms. Ting reminds the community that both Hamilton and Wenham are seeing a rapid increase in cases, and urges students and families to avoid social gatherings and wear masks.

7. Committee Reports

A. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee

Ms. Horgan reports that the *Capital Planning/ Financial Subcommittee* met on 11/12/2020. Mr. Geary provided an update regarding the new Gale Study, capital expenses, and forming a Gale Study advisory body. In addition, Mr. Leone provided the FY22 Budget presentation. The next *Capital Planning/ Financial Subcommittee* meeting was initially scheduled for 12/18/2020, but will be rescheduled before the 12/17/2020 joint meeting with Towns.

B. Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Siedzik reports that the next meeting of the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* is scheduled for Monday, 12/14/2020.

C. Negotiations Subcommittee

Ms. Bailey reports that the *Negotiations Subcommittee* will be collaborating with HWEA in developing a calendar for future meetings. More details will be provided in executive session, following open meeting.

8. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants

[Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 12
- Voucher No. 1021
- Voucher No. 2950
- Voucher No. 2951
- Voucher No. 2952

B. Minutes

- August 10, 2020 Executive Session Minutes
- August 6, 2020 Executive Session Minutes
- May 6, 2020 Executive Session Minutes

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

C. Accept Donations

- Technology Addition to Support Live Streaming Grant
- Point of Sale Grant

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, PART (A) THE WARRANTS AS LISTED ABOVE, EXCLUDING (B) MINUTES AND (C) DONATIONS.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

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

MOTION PASSES unanimously by roll call vote of six (6) members present.

Discussion regarding the process of providing, approving, and publicizing the executive session meeting minutes listed.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FROM 05/06/20, 08/06/20, AND 08/10/20; THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Peter Wolczik	YES;
David Polito	YES;

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

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of six (6) members present.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE DONATIONS FROM THE HAMILTON - WENHAM EDFUND: THE TECHNOLOGY ADDITION TO SUPPORT LIVE STREAMING GRANT, AS SHOWN IN THE [EXHIBIT](#), AS WELL AS THE POINT OF SALE GRANT, AS SHOWN IN THE [EXHIBIT](#).

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

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

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of six (6) members present.

Thank you to the EdFund for their incredibly generous donations and ongoing dedication to Hamilton-Wenham students.

9. Topics for Future Meetings

- Learning Management System
 - Ms. Bailey notes that she, Ms. Horgan, and Mr. Wolczik are in communication about this item. Mr. Wolczik notes he was unable to respond to Ms. Bailey and Ms. Horgan's email response which requested research on his part;
- District mascot;
- OPEB update/report;
- Ensuring that the district calendar is accurate and continuously up to date.

The next School Committee meeting will take place in the form of a public hearing, scheduled for 12/09/2020 at 7:00 PM. Ms. Siedzik requests that the 12/09/2020 meeting be reflected in district calendars. She also notes that she has sent a number of emails to the Chairs and Superintendent regarding the structure/agenda of this meeting.

10. Executive Session

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:18 PM FOR PURPOSE #2, TO CONDUCT STRATEGY SESSIONS IN PREPARATION FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH HWEA, AND NOT TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION.

MOTION by Michelle Bailey.

Anna Siedzik YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Dana Allara YES;
Peter Wolczik YES;
David Polito YES;

Michelle Bailey YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of six (6) members present.

11. Vote to Adjourn

The meeting is adjourned through motion to adjourn into executive session, as noted above.

Open meeting ends at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted January 4, 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](https://zoom.us) 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: 995 6696 8559; passcode: 990508. 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](https://www.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.