



School Committee Meeting

Zoom Virtual Meeting [Link](#)

Webinar ID: 933 2842 5788

Passcode: 203885

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

6:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Present:

Michelle Bailey, Chairperson
Michelle Horgan, Vice Chairperson
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
Craig Genualdo, Athletic Director
Eric Tracy, HWRHS Principal
Bryan Menegoni, HWRHS Assistant Principal
Craig Hovey, MRMS Principal
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary
Candidates for the School Committee open seat, as noted below
Citizens, as noted below

From the Wenham Board of Selectmen:

John Clemenzi, Vice Chairman (second)
Gary Cheeseman, Chairman
Jack Wilhelm, Vice Chairman (first)

1. Call to Order

6:30 PM

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the meeting to order at 6:32 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.

Rachel Barstow, 5 Moynihan Rd, Hamilton: Ms. Barstow appears this evening to speak on behalf of over 170 parents concerned with the district's recent and sudden shift to remote learning. The Superintendent's email lacked transparency and contradicted previous information that the district had provided. In addition, the group is concerned with the makeup and transparency of the COVID Response team, as well as the health metrics they rely upon.

Pamela Millman-Stein, 135 Lynn St. Peabody: Ms. Millman-Stein is looking forward to the 12/09/2020 meeting for public dialogue. She appears this evening regarding the School Committee's vote on the calendar this evening. Ms. Millman-Stein remains concerned with the district's religious observance policy, in particular with respect to Good Friday, and implores the committee to address issues of equity.

Paul Gamber, 16 Juniper St. Wenham: Mr. Gamber is also involved in the parents' group mentioned by Ms. Barstow. He echoes the concerns regarding the COVID Response team, noting that he believes the team is a decision making committee rather than an advisory committee. Those families who chose to travel over the holiday made up a small percentage of townspeople, however, their decision affected everyone. Mr. Gamber believes that the continuity of instruction is crucial and is concerned that that is not happening.

Alexandra Overton, 167 Main St., Wenham: Ms. Overton is also a member of the parents group with Mr. Gamber and Ms. Barstow. She appears this evening in support of the parents of that group, reiterating the importance of returning children to in-person learning. She implores the district to do everything in their power to make this happen.

Ms. Bailey notes the Superintendent Coffee Hour is scheduled for next Wednesday. She asks Superintendent Banios to wait to respond until the Superintendent's Report later in the agenda.

3. New Business

- A. Jointly appoint a Wenham Resident to the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee with the Wenham Board of Selectmen:

Ms. Bailey welcomes the Wenham Board of Selectmen members who will help the School Committee select a new School Committee member, filling the vacant seat left by Stacey Metternick's resignation.

Jack Wilhelm notes that the Wenham Board of Selectmen meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

The candidates listed below provide their opening statements, and answers to the following interview questions:

- In your opinion, what is the district doing well and what are the challenges? How would you work on the committee to work through those challenges?
- Is there any interest or strength where you could offer the school committee a level of expertise?
- Would you run for full term in April?
- How would you work with local governments, and what knowledge would you gain from local officials and how would you implement that knowledge to build consensus and rectify differences through the budget development process?
- You would be starting just as budget season begins, how would you get up to speed on the governmental budgeting process?
- There's been some concern expressed about the education model. What criteria do you feel should be used in determining the education model the district uses?

JENNIFER CARR

[Exhibit](#)

JULIA CAMPBELL

[Exhibit](#)

LESLIE POTTER

[Exhibit](#)

JEN CAUFIELD

[Exhibit](#)

Members vote on their top two candidate choices:

	Jennifer Carr	Julia Campbell	Leslie Potter	Jen Caufield
Gary Cheeseman	x	x		
John Clemenzi		x	x	
Jack Wilhelm	x		x	
Anna Siedzik	x	x		
Peter Wolczik	x	x		
David Polito		x		x
Michelle Horgan			x	x
Michelle Bailey		x		x
Dana Allara			x	x
Total	4	6	4	4

Members vote for their top candidate choice:

	Jennifer Carr	Julia Campbell
Gary Cheeseman	x	
John Clemenzi		x
Jack Wilhelm	x	
Anna Siedzik	x	
Peter Wolczik	x	
David Polito		x
Michelle Horgan*		x
Michelle Bailey		x
Dana Allara		x
Total	4	5

*Jen Caufield was initial choice, she later changes to Julia Campbell.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN APPOINT JULIA CAMPBELL TO THE INTERIM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

POSITION, TO FILL THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM LEFT OPEN BY THE RESIGNATION OF STACEY METTERNICK.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Peter Wolczik.

Gary Cheeseman YES;
Jack Wilhelm YES;
John Clemenzi YES;
Anna Siedzik YES;
Peter Wolczik YES;
David Polito YES;
Michelle Horgan YES;
Michelle Bailey YES;
Dana Allara YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through roll call vote of three (3) Wenham Board of Selectmen members, and six (6) School Committee members present.

I MOVE THAT THE WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN ADJOURN THE 12/02/2020 MEETING AT 7:51 PM.

MOTION by Gary Cheeseman; SECONDED by Jack Wilhelm.

Jack Wilhelm YES;
John Clemenzi YES;
Gary Cheeseman YES.

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

Julia Campbell, newly elected School Committee member, stays on for the meeting as an observer (not a voting member).

B. Secondary Reopening Update

- Miles River Middle School

[Exhibit](#)

Craig Hovey, MRMS Principal, presents the secondary reopening update for Miles River Middle School, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

Ms. Siedzik asks for further detail surrounding the process of collecting survey data and the subsequent changes to Remote Model B. She notes that the lack of School Committee and community input regarding the changes was upsetting to many MRMS families.

Mr. Hovey reviews next steps and prioritizing MRMS in-person learning whenever possible.

Ms. Horgan asks for further detail about the “crew” mentioned in the presentation. Mr. Hovey explains that every MRMS student is involved in crew, and this serves as an important way to build relationships and allows for teachers to identify issues earlier.

Ms. Siedzik asks about potential solutions to accelerating the process of returning to in-person learning. There is continued discussion surrounding the timeline of returning students to in-person learning, including addressing any obstacles that may slow down the process.

- Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School

[Exhibit](#)

Eric Tracy, HWRHS Principal, and Bryan Menegoni, HWRHS Assistant Principal, present the High School's reopening update, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

There is discussion surrounding the benefits of Zooming students in their classes, and the technology necessary to do so. Mr. Tracy notes that the EdFund recently granted a request for funding for this purpose.

There is discussion regarding the social/emotional health of students, and how the pandemic/pivoting between learning models affects students' well-being.

There is discussion surrounding instructional time and students' in-person time with their teachers, with Ms. Siedzik expresses her concern about the structural inequity involved. Mr. Tracy agrees with her statement.

There is discussion surrounding health and safety concerns with respect to the cafeteria and lunch time.

Ms. Siedzik asks about steps moving forward, including when the School Committee plans to take a vote or otherwise make decisions surrounding district priorities and the changes necessary.

C. [Warrant for SC Nomination Papers](#)

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE WARRANT FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE NOMINATION PAPERS, AS PRESENTED IN THE [EXHIBIT](#) ON THE AGENDA.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

Discussion: School Committee members currently serving as elected members do not need to submit nomination papers, however Ms. Campbell will, as she has not been elected previously.

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

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

D. [Vote on Revised 2021-2022 School Calendar](#)

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Bailey explains the revisions made the 2021-2022 School Calendar, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). The changes include Good Friday being listed as a vacation day rather than a holiday, as well as Juneteenth being listed as a holiday, recognized by staff in the central office.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE APPROVED 2021/2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR AS SHOWN IN THE [EXHIBIT](#) ON THE AGENDA, WITH A NOTE THAT THE INDICATION THAT "SCHOOL IS IN SESSION" FOR GOOD FRIDAY WAS ERRONEOUSLY LEFT IN AND WILL BE REMOVED.

MOTION by Dana Allara;

Discussion: There is discussion surrounding the start of the school year; position of the HWEA; anticipation of snow days; etc. Ms. Siedzik, Ms. Allara, and Mr. Wolczik all express concern about the religious observance policies and specifically Good Friday. There is some discussion surrounding the start

of the school year before/after Labor Day. Ms. Allara points out that the start date is not the reason why the calendar is currently before the School Committee. There is continued discussion about the school year start date and the HWEA position.

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

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

E. Review School Committee Protocols

[Exhibit](#)

The School Committee reviews the protocols found in the [exhibit](#).

Ms. Siedzik points out two areas of the protocols that she would like to see improvement with:

- Ms. Siedzik explains that she sent a total of five (5) emails to Ms. Bailey, Ms. Horgan and Superintendent Banios regarding setting the agenda for the 12/09/2020 public hearing. Her emails remained, for the most part, ignored, and she only recently received a response from Ms. Banios.
- The discussion Ms. Bailey and Mr. Wolczik engaged in before the meeting was called to order was concerning and unprofessional.

Ms. Siedzik argues that the protocols are necessary for guiding behavior and interaction both inside and outside official School Committee meeting times.

There is a discussion surrounding the length of time necessary for a response, including disagreement about what response was necessary, professionalism, and School Committee members honoring the protocols.

There is some tense conversation surrounding the setting of agenda items, with Mr. Polito stating that in his 5 years serving on the committee, he has never witnessed a fellow committee member being asked to conduct further research on a requested agenda item (referring to Mr. Wolczik's requests for LMS agenda item), nor being asked to develop an upcoming meeting agenda (referring to Ms. Siedzik being asked to develop the 12/09/20 agenda).

The tension escalates with disagreement about the handling of recent requests. There is some disagreement about the topic of conversation during the phone call Monday between Ms. Bailey and Ms. Siedzik. There is also disagreement about the response Mr. Wolczik received and whether that response indeed asked him to conduct further research on the topic of the agenda item he has requested. Mr. Wolczik reads the email response he received from Ms. Bailey and Ms. Horgan. There is continued disagreement about the intention and interpretation of that response.

Ms. Horgan notes that the comments have been heard, and states that the Chairs will do better and communicate in a more timely manner.

Ms. Siedzik asks that these issues are addressed in more detail at the next School Committee workshop.

4. ~~Finance and Operations~~

5. ~~Policy~~

6. Chair's Report

- Joint FY22 Budget Meeting: Ms. Bailey announces that the Joint FY22 Budget Meeting is scheduled for 12/17/2020 at 7:00 PM. The agenda can be found [here](#). This meeting needed to be rescheduled due to the scheduling of the Public Hearing, 12/09/20;
- Last meeting there was a discrepancy about the actual start time of the meeting and the start time indicated on the agenda;
- Student Government representative, Ethan Howell will begin attending meetings and providing brief, 3-5 minute updates to the School Committee.

7. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Banios explains the challenging decision to pivot to remote learning came after 2 hours of deliberation from the COVID Response team. Ms. Banios explains that holiday travel and the speed of testing results turn around, combined with the escalating cases, led to the decision being made.

Ms. Allara appreciates hearing from the community, and encourages continued feedback.

Ms. Siedzik understands that the community's concern is that the issues leading to the sudden pivot to remote learning could have easily been predicted and more adequately prepared for. The pivot could have also been communicated in more effective ways. There is continued discussion regarding the district's preparations, communications, and community concerns.

8. Committee Reports

- A. ~~Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee~~
- B. ~~Policy Subcommittee~~
- C. ~~Negotiations Subcommittee~~

9. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants

- Voucher No. 13
- Voucher No. 1018
- Voucher No. 1022
- Voucher No. 1023
- Voucher No. 2953
- Voucher No. 2954
- Voucher No. 2955

[Exhibit](#)

B. Minutes

- September 30, 2020
- October 6, 2020

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, INCLUDING THE WARRANTS AND PRIOR MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED ABOVE; THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER CHANGES.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

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

Dana Allara YES;
Michelle Bailey YES.

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

10. Topics for Future Meetings

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 12/09/2020 at 7:00 PM (Public Hearing).

- Public Hearing (1 hour) community dialogue regarding the District’s learning models;
- Special Meeting (.5 - 1 hour) to discuss feedback about the learning model plans;
- Learning Management System - Ms. Bailey notes that she would like to speak with Mr. Wolczik about what the agenda should reflect, and the length of time necessary;
- General’s Logo agenda item to be scheduled sometime in May, 2021;
- Ms. Siedzik requests the 12/16/20 meeting agenda include discussion/vote about changes necessary to the educational model and district direction
 - There is a lengthy discussion surrounding this request, including disagreement about whether this falls within the purview of the School Committee, as well as discussion about the district’s current action plan;
- Ms. Siedzik requests the 12/16/20 meeting agenda include reorganization of subcommittees.

There is brief discussion regarding public health concerns/mask wearing as well as messaging from the district when there are positive cases in the community.

11. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 12/02/2020 MEETING AT 11:05 PM.

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by Dana Allara.

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

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

Respectfully submitted January 10, 2021 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: 933 2842 5788; passcode: 203885. 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.