



HAMILTON-WENHAM

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

School Committee Joint Meeting with Towns of Hamilton & Wenham Board of Selectmen and Finance Committees

Zoom Virtual Meeting [Link](#)

Webinar ID: 955 8003 0031

Passcode: 066680

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Present:

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

Hamilton Board of Selectmen

Shawn M. Farrell, Chair
William Olson, Vice-Chair
Darcy Dale
Jamie Knudsen, Clerk
Rosemary Kenney

Hamilton FINCOM

John Pruellage, Chair
Christina Schenk Hargrove, Vice-Chair
Nicholas Tensen (absent)
David Wanger
Valerie McCormack

Wenham Board of Selectmen

Gary Cheeseman, Chairman

Wenham FINCOM

Jim Purdy, Chair
Alex Begin
Susan Mehlin
David Molitano
Carrie Jelsma

Also Present:

Mary Beth Banios, District Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration
Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary

Tom Younger, Wenham Interim Town Administrator
Joseph J. Domelowicz Jr., Hamilton Town Manager
Yeimi Colon, Wenham Finance Director & Town Accountant
Jackie Bresnahan, Wenham Director of Administrative Services
Marisa Batista, Hamilton Finance Director/Town Accountant

1. Call to Order

7:00 PM

Ms. Bailey reviews the ground rules for the meeting to allow for a brief and effective meeting with all entities allowed to voice their opinions.

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the *Hamilton - Wenham Regional School Committee* meeting to order at 7:03 PM. All seven (7) School Committee members are present. This meeting is being recorded by HWCAM and held remotely per the Governor's emergency order.

With a quorum present, Mr. Purdy calls the *Wenham Finance Advisory Committee* meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Those present: Jim Purdy, Alex Begin, Susan Mehlin, David Molitano, Carrie Jelsma.

With a quorum present, Mr. Farrell calls the *Hamilton Board of Selectmen* meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Those present: Shawn Farrell, Darcy Dale, Jamie Knudsen, Bill Olson, Rosemary Kennedy.

With a quorum present, Mr. Pruellage calls the *Hamilton Finance Advisory Committee* meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Those present: John Pruellage, Christina Schenk Hargrove, David Wanger, Valerie McCormick (Nicholas Tensen is not present).

2. New Business

A. FY22 Budget Discussion

HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ms. Banios and Mr. Leone review the Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District's tentative FY22 budget presentation, as previously presented at the 02/03/21 school committee meeting ([exhibit](#)).

WENHAM FINCOM

Ms. Bresnahan, *Wenham Director of Administrative Services* and Ms. Colon, *Wenham Finance Director & Town Accountant* provide an overview of the FY22 Budget for Weham, including budget drivers; enrollment changes; capital/infrastructure investments; COVID-19 impact; insurance costs; free cash; override; etc.

HAMILTON FINCOM

Mr. Domelowicz, *Hamilton Town Manager*, reviews the Town of Hamilton's FY22 budget including projections for growth; district budget impact; etc. Mr. Domelowicz requests that the district reduce their overall budget by 1% (\$400,000), as the towns do not have the capacity to support a larger increase.

Ms. Bresnahan notes that the towns met this past Monday, and Wenham agrees with Mr. Domelowicz's statements above.

There is discussion regarding the increase to taxes; budget increases; percentage growth over the years; town revenue; town assessment; COLA; E&D funds (3% will trigger funds back to the towns); budget priorities; etc. Ms. Kennedy inquires as to the district's accounting for the large increase of funding from last year and E&D funding. Ms. Kennedy asks about Dr. Kukuenger's program to reduce out of district

placement. Mr. Polito notes that these programs take some time to realize benefits. Ms. Banios directs Ms. Kennedy to the presentation from Student Services, which includes more specific data.

There is continued discussion regarding increasing tax rates; potential budget reductions; override avoidance; priorities; programs available in schools; etc.

There is discussion regarding school enrollment numbers and the impact on state aid and the district's budget. Ms. Banios explains that remote and hybrid students are all considered current students. However, she goes on to explain that the enrollment numbers for 2020 showed a significant increase in families choosing to homeschool or pursue private school alternatives. The district is hoping that the state will calculate Chapter 70 aid based on 2019 enrollment, which would more accurately reflect the student body.

There is discussion regarding athletic fees; school accreditation; enrollment; Student Opportunity Act funding; town's requested budget reduction; etc.

Ms. Bailey notes that the school committee will meet next week, 02/17/21, and will vote in the final budget on 03/10/21. Hamilton boards are scheduled to meet 02/20/21. A future joint meeting will be scheduled if necessary, after the individual board meetings.

3. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN ADJOURN THE 02/10/21 MEETING AT 8:44 PM.

MOTION by Bill Olson; SECONDED by Darcy Dale.

Darcy Dale	YES;
Rosemary Kennedy	YES;
Jamie Knudsen	YES;
Bill Olson	YES;
Shawn M. Farrell	YES.

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

THE HAMILTON FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE DOES NOT ADJOURN; THERE IS CURRENTLY NO QUORUM.

I MOVE THAT THE WENHAM FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 02/10/21 MEETING AT 8:44 PM.

MOTION by Jim Purdy; SECONDED by Susan Mehlin.

Jim Purdy	YES;
Susan Mehlin	YES;
Alex Begin	YES;
Carrie Jelsma	YES;
David Molitano	YES.

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

The School Committee reconvenes their open session meeting, that was recessed to attend this meeting.

Respectfully submitted February 15, 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: 955 8003 0031; Passcode: 066680. 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.