



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

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Zoom Virtual Meeting [Link](#)

Webinar ID: 958 8457 4057

Passcode: 351572

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

6:00 PM - 8:10 PM

Present:

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

Also Present:

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

1. Call to Order

6:00 PM

With a quorum present, Ms. Bailey calls the meeting to order at 6:02 PM. This meeting is being held remotely per emergency orders of the Governor, and recorded by HWCAM. Members in attendance are as follows: Julia Campbell, Michelle Bailey, Anna Siedzik, Dana Allara, David Polito, Michelle Horgan, and Peter Wolczik.

2. Public Hearing - FY22 Budget (Originally 3)

[Exhibit](#)

- A. In accordance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the Chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the Chair and be germane to the topic.
- B. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the Chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.

Superintendent Banios and Mr. Leone present an overview of the Tentative FY22 Budget, as detailed in the [exhibit](#).

Stacey Metternick, 3 Dexter Lane, Wenham: Ms. Metternick urges the district to rely on the Superintendent's curriculum background instead of adding budget expenses related to curriculum development. Further, she encourages more open communication and advises against the proposed Family Engagement Liaison.

Natalie Binder, 27 Burley St., Wenham: Ms. Binder has been a mental health provider in the North Shore area for over 15 years. She is concerned about the mental health crisis amongst students and young people and therefore believes that the focus should shift from literacy to the more pressing issues of mental

health/emotional literacy. Ms. Binder encourages the district to offer trauma informed services and otherwise prioritize the mental health needs of students. Further, she does not believe the proposed Family Engagement Liaison would fulfill the trauma informed care component, and would advise against the position.

Holly Schmidt [no address provided]: Agrees with both Ms. Metternick and Ms. Binder's statements. She has always supported the budgets, even in overrides, and this is the first she finds herself becoming involved in any administrative functions of the district. She is concerned about the recent emails from Superintendent Banios which showcase the expenses from public relations. Ms. Schmidt would like the district's priorities to shift to the mental health of students.

Mary Adamik, 324 Merrimack Street, Newburyport: Ms. Adamik is a teacher in the district and clarifies that there is work being done currently to bring a trauma informed approach to the district. She does not want the work already being done to be lost.

Jennifer Carr, 5 Meridian Rd., Wenham: Ms. Carr has supported every override, and actively campaigned to gain support for last year's budget. However, despite this long history of support for the district's needs, she will not support a budget that is disproportionately focused on administration, as is the proposed budget. She would like to see priorities on student mental health.

Tripp Braillard [no address provided]: Mr. Braillard inquires about the previous funding the district received, surplus, and refund to taxpayers. Ms. Bailey explains that the money will be funneling in through installments. Further, Mr. Braillard asks about the new positions added to the budget and the seemingly disproportionate expenses in the central office. Ms. Banios and Mr. Leone explain that these positions have been shifted, and they are not actually new positions. Mr. Braillard urges the district to develop a budget without sending the towns into an override. There is ongoing discussion about the budget development and ongoing collaboration with the towns.

Chi Kim, 73 Berry Circle, Hamilton: Ms. Kim speaks about the return to in-person learning, noting her concern about priorities on curriculum and administration. Believes the community liaison position in the budget is less important and the focus should instead be on testing coordinators or nurses.

Mr. Polito speaks about the curriculum position, clarifying that Dr. Kukenberger had stated Ms. Banios could cover temporarily, but the position would need to be brought back as soon as possible. It is a critical component of the district functioning, and that .8 position helps to fill those needs.

Ms. Allara asks Ms. Banios to reiterate and clarify the instructional coach positions, as Mr. Braillard brought up earlier. Ms. Allara notes that there may be a great deal of confusion in the community. Ms. Banios explains a tiered model and the role of instructional coaches, and further details the district's positions and structure of the proposed budget.

Amy Desimone, 15 Porter St., Wenham: Ms. Desimone asks if the budget is the same as discussed in the joint meetings with the towns. Ms. Bailey explains that the budget was revised, however, that will be presented later this evening. The hearing therefore is on the budget as initially presented.

Public Hearing ends at approximately 6:48 PM.

3. Citizen's Comments (Originally 2)

[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 notes that the School Committee has received a great deal of correspondence, which has been overwhelmingly negative. She explains recent miscommunication and confusion surrounding pool testing. Ms. Bailey explains that the School Committee voted to not move forward with pool testing, and the topic was not included in tonight's agenda as the district is awaiting further guidance. Ms. Bailey would entertain a motion to include this topic on the agenda for the 03/03/2021 School Committee meeting.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADD POOL TESTING TO OUR AGENDA ON 03/03/2021.

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by David Polito.

Discussion: There is a lengthy discussion regarding the purpose of the motion, with Ms. Bailey clarifying that she has asked for a motion to reassure community members that the committee values the importance of the topic and plans to address it when appropriate. Ms. Siedzik explains that she had asked for the topic to be included in tonight's agenda through email, and notes her concern regarding the perceived unilateral power of the chair to develop the agenda.

There is discussion regarding the BOH letter, with Ms. Banios explaining the circumstances that led to her not immediately emailing the School Committee. She further explains that the district has a current standing application with DESE, and the 03/01/2021 deadline is not an obstacle at this point.

There is ongoing discussion regarding the focus of the district and addressing the motion on the floor. There is some tension regarding allowing members to finish speaking. Ms. Allara states that she would like to hear from the leadership team regarding the topic of pool testing. Superintendent Banios further explains the timeline and the planned presentation from the leadership team on 03/03/2021.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO EXPLICITLY INVITE BOH DAVID SMITH OR MARY BETH TING, TO BE PRESENT AT OUR MEETING ON 03/03/21.

MOTION by Anna Siedzik.

Discussion: Ms. Bailey states that the additional language is unnecessary to include in the motion, as the invite will be extended.

MOTION FAILS; not seconded.

I MOVE TO VOTE.

MOTION by Dana Allara.

MOTION FAILS; not seconded; the vote was next step

Original Motion:

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

Michelle Bailey YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously through majority roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

Kirsten Alexander, 231 Larch Row, Wenham: Ms. Alexander was disappointed about the School Committee's 02/03/2021 vote to not pursue pool testing. She urges the School Committee to reconsider this, and also to pursue funding for ongoing testing. She offers her marketing skills to reach out to parents and assist the district in establishing ongoing testing procedures.

Natalie Binder, 27 Burley St., Wenham: Ms. Binder urges the School Committee to not treat the 2021/22 school year with the same needs and priorities necessary in pre-pandemic school years. Further, Ms. Binder expresses her frustration about listening to the School Committee argue for the past 20 minutes, and advises members to prioritize students and be more efficient.

Jennifer McClaughlin, 221 Lake Drive, Hamilton: Ms. McClaughlin appreciated Ms. Adamik's clarification that the district is working to become trauma-informed. She inquires about the student opportunity act and shifting funding in the budget to tier 2 approaches. Superintendent Banios responds, explaining the new model outlined in the budget prioritizes serving the students and intervening when necessary.

There are no additional public comments at this time.

4. New Business

A. Family and Community Engagement Liaison

[Exhibit](#)

There is prolonged discussion regarding district priorities and the addition of this position as it relates to funding allocations and reopening the schools. There is discussion regarding procedural elements of this agenda item.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LIAISON AS PRESENTED IN THE [EXHIBIT](#) ON THE AGENDA.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

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

MOTION PASSES through majority (4:3) roll call vote of seven (7) members present.

B. Reporting on Meeting Between District Leadership Team and H-W Back to School Parent Advocacy Group

[Exhibit 1](#)

[Exhibit 2](#)

[Exhibit 3](#)

Dr. Jennifer Carr is promoted to a panelist at this time. There is lengthy discussion about Dr. Carr's report, operational roadblocks in bringing students back, etc. Many School Committee members voice their appreciation for the meeting, which demonstrated a respectful discourse even in the face of disagreement. There is continued discussion regarding the report from Dr. Jennifer Carr and reopening schools safely. Dr. Carr notes her presentation was given before the CDC guidelines of "six feet or to the greatest possible

extent”, further noting that the district is low risk. There is further discussion regarding opening schools and community feedback about this issue.

C. Conceptual Plan for Full In-Person Student Return [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Banios and Mr. Geary present the district’s conceptual plan for full in-person student return and the timeline, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). There is lengthy discussion regarding the plan including community reception of the plan; potential changes; timeline; obstacles; state guidance; etc.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FORMALLY REQUEST A BARGAIN WITH THE HWEA UNION TO REDUCE THE SIX FOOT SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS IN THE CURRENT MOA.

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by Julia Campbell.

Discussion: Ms. Bailey notes that making motions such as this is frowned upon by the Attorney General. Mr. Polito and Ms. Allara point out that the Negotiations Subcommittee was not advised of this motion beforehand. There is some tension regarding mistrust amongst the School Committee, and continued discussion regarding the purpose and goal of the motion on the table.

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

MOTION FAILS (2:5).

Ms. Campbell asks about the timeline, with Mr. Geary offering a more detailed explanation of school reopening and vaccination schedules.

The School Committee recesses from 9:11 PM - 9:16 PM.

5. Finance and Operations

A. FY21 YE Forecast as of 12/31/2020 [Exhibit](#)

Mr. Leone reviews the FY21 YE Forecast as of 12/31/2020, as detailed in the [exhibit](#), including assumptions and largest budget drivers. There is discussion regarding procedure in potential changes to expenses and other considerations for Mr. Leone’s time and the impending deadlines.

There are no budget transfers recommended for Q3.

B. Changes to FY22 Superintendent’s Tentative Budget Recommendations [Exhibit](#)

Mr. Leone reviews the changes to FY22 Superintendent’s Tentative Budget Recommendations, as detailed in the [exhibit](#). There is extensive conversation regarding the budget including district priorities; positions added to the budget; restructuring of the budget; professional development; instructional coaches; community feedback; etc. School Committee members pose questions and seek clarification for certain aspects of the budget recommendation.

Mr. Wolczik would like the record to reflect that a LMS would cost the district a fraction of the cost currently designated for other programs. There is further discussion regarding the revenue needs; budget allocations; etc. Ms. Siedzik would like the record to reflect that the budget reflects the revenue from

anticipated SOA funds, and the revisions do not actually reflect a budget reduction. There is a lengthy discussion regarding the changes presented and the leadership team's expertise. There is discussion regarding the plan to return to full in-person learning, and how those assumptions are built into the budget presentation.

6. Policy

7. Chair's Report

- Ms. Bailey reminds the community about the upcoming School Committee election. Please consider running or offering support to a candidate. Papers are due back by 03/18/2021;
- The state is basing Chapter 70 funding on the 2020 enrollment numbers. Ms. Bailey encourages community members to call Governor Baker and encourage the state to base Chapter 70 on 2019 enrollment numbers
- The Attorney General has developed FAQs about remote meetings. Ms. Bailey notes that members are allowed to turn their cameras off briefly, as in an in-person meeting would include members occasionally exiting the meeting;
- The district is still in need of substitute teachers.

8. Superintendent's Report

None.

9. Committee Reports

A. Capital Planning/Finance Subcommittee

The *Capital Planning/Finance Subcommittee* will be meeting on Monday, 02/22/2021. The agenda is posted.

B. Policy Subcommittee

The *Policy Subcommittee* will be meeting on 03/04/2021.

C. Negotiations Subcommittee

The *Negotiations Subcommittee* met today, and will be meeting again on Thursday, 02/25/2021.

10. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants

- Voucher No.19
- Voucher No. 1040
- Voucher No. 2975
- Voucher No. 2976
- Voucher No. 2977
- Voucher No. 2978
- Voucher No. 2979

[Exhibit](#)

B. Minutes

- January 20, 2021

[Exhibit](#)

C. Accept Donations

- EdFund Social Justice Grant Donation

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA PART A , WARRANTS, AND PART B, MINUTES, AS PRESENTED ON THE AGENDA; NO FURTHER CHANGES SHALL BE MADE.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

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

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

Ms. Allara would like to thank the EdFund for this gift, and also thank the students who worked on this grant. Ms. Campbell and Ms. Horgan also express their gratitude for the grant, and the work of the students who developed the application.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE GRANT DONATION FROM EDFUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,100 FOR THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT AS PRESENTED IN THE [EXHIBIT](#).

MOTION by Michelle Horgan; SECONDED by Dana Allara.

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

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

11. Topics for Future Meetings

The next meeting will be a workshop on 02/23/2021 where the MASC will present on bias and equity. This meeting will not be available to the public, as no deliberation will take place.

Ms. Siedzik reminds the committee of agenda items she has previously requested:

- (1) DEI audit (originally scheduled for 02/23/21);
- (2) Superintendent Formative Assessment (originally scheduled for 02/23/21);
- (3) School Committee Protocols (originally scheduled for 02/17/21);
- (4) Unconscious Bias training for HWRSD staff.

There is some discussion regarding the scheduling of the above items, as well as the formation of a DEI working group.

There is discussion regarding the MASC training offered and the structure and strategy in having a discussion following. The School Committee will have regular meeting on 02/23/2021 at 7:45 PM, directly following the workshop. The resolution previously voted in this last Fall will be included as an exhibit on the meeting agenda.

Mr. Wolczik asks for continued discussion surrounding the district's lack of a Learning Management System, arguing that the benefits of establishing such a system are crucial for a variety of reasons. There is discussion regarding the timing of this agenda item.

12. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN THE 02/17/2021 MEETING AT 10:37 PM.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Michelle Horgan.

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

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

Respectfully submitted March 12, 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: 958 8457 4057; Passcode: 351572. 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.