

**JOINT MEETING
HWRSD School Committee
Hamilton & Wenham FINCOM & BOS
Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room
Tuesday, February 5, 2019 7:00 PM**

HWRSD Committee

Michelle Bailey (7:10pm arrival)
Stacey Metternick, Secretary
Gene Lee, Vice Chair
David Polito, Chair
Jeanise Bertrand
Peter Wolczik, Assistant Secretary (7:11pm arrival)

Hamilton FINCOM

Phillip Stearns
Nicholas Tensen
Darcy Dale

Hamilton Board of Selectmen (NO QUORUM)

Shawn Farrell
Jeffrey Hubbard

Wenham FINCOM

David Molitano
Carrie Jelsma
Mike Therrien
Alex Begin
Jim Purdy

Wenham Board of Selectmen

Catherine Harrison
Jack Wilhelm
John Clemenzi

Also Present:

Michael Harvey, Superintendent, HWRSD
Jeffrey Sands, Assistant Superintendent, HWRSD
Joseph Domelowicz, Town Manager, Hamilton
Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator, Wenham
Patricia Moore, Finance Director/Treasurer/Collector, Town of Wenham
Catherine Tinsley & Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretaries

1. Call to Order

David Polito calls the Hamilton-Wenham School District Committee meeting to order at 7:06pm.
Phillip Stearns calls the Hamilton Finance and Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:06pm.
Alex Begin calls the Wenham Finance and Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:06pm.
Catherine Harrison calls the Wenham Board of Selectmen Committee meeting to order at 7:07pm
(explaining that this meeting was previously called to order today at 6:45pm in order to handle one agenda item. They have since broken and are now returning).

2. Hamilton Wenham Regional School District

Dr. Michael Harvey provides a detailed overview of the FY20 District Budget:

- Superintendent's Recommendation
- Level Service - Key Assumptions
- Expense Category Analysis
- District Totals
- 5 Year Impact Analysis
- Budget Calendar

Dr. Harvey states that the Second Public Hearing on the District Budget will be held 02/13/2019, with a vote for adopting the budget after the hearing.

Carrie Jelsma asks about the purpose of a public hearing given that the adoption of the budget is immediately following the public hearing. Ms. Jelsma notes that this disallows the public from affecting change in the budget. Dr. Harvey explains that a Public Meeting was held prior, and that there are regulations in place requiring the School Committee adopt a budget in a public hearing.

Ms. Jelsma appreciates the information presented. She inquires about negotiations with the Teachers' Union, and requests more details to better understand the changes in salaries.

Jeff Sands explains that the salary amount encompasses all salaries for the District, including teachers, administrative staff, maintenance, HR, Business/Office, IT, etc., and outlines factors this year that drove the change:

- COLA increases across all departments;
- District reduced 1 FTE teaching staff, reducing budget by \$58,000;
- Retirement/hiring budget strategy: those teachers retiring are typically at a higher level than those hired in their place. This is considered in budget proposals
- Ms. Jelsma asks if retirees receive benefits such as sick day payout, with Dr. Harvey detailing the contractual agreement which directs the District to pay out 5% of the days.
- Step experience, degree changes/ additional credits, and a variety of other changes also influence the budget.

Discussion regarding Out-of-District Tuitions, need for services, retention in-district, "critical mass" - level of investment measured through comparison to program vs. sending out of district.

Carrie Jelsma asks about a strategy to determine earlier if a student is qualified for special education services. Discussion regarding remediating, long term benefits, long term cost savings, etc.

Discussion regarding programs and services needed, and potential for these services to attract non resident students to HW schools.

Discussion regarding School Resource Office: Jeff Sands states the regional agreement requires the District to include the item in the budget. Joe Domelowicz, Hamilton, is going to be including the item in the Town's budget as well.

Darcy Dale asks if the District has considered grants for the SRO program, or whether they have considered a therapist or other role to fill this position, as a SRO does not *have* to be an armed police officer. Jeff Sands explains that he is familiar with grants, and has been exploring this aspect.

Catherine Harrison asks how the town and district plan on resolving the issue of disagreement re: SRO in budget. Mr. Sands reiterates that he will carry out the functions of his job, remaining

compliant with district, local, and federal regulations, and will therefore be including SRO in the District Budget.

Alex Begin asks for clarification: SRO defined as a District Employee. Jeff Sands corrects this statement - the SRO is *not* a District employee. Jeff Sands and Gene Lee both explain that the regional agreement dictates that the District pay for this SRO service.

Joe Domelowicz thinks this can be resolved without the District having to pay the cost. Jeff Sands disagrees.

David Polito opens up the conversation regarding OPEB funding feedback.

Shawn Farrell says he was pushing for this last year, and asks about details regarding plan for payments. Mr. Sands recommends Mr. Farrell take a look at the video of last meeting where he spoke for over an hour about the detailed funding strategy. Mr. Sands provides an overview of this funding strategy, with the ultimate goal of entirely funding the District's commitment.

David Molatina asks how many times this funding has been delayed, with Mr. Sands asking that the focus of the meeting this evening remain on current issues- specifically that there is currently a recommendation on the table.

Darcy Dale asks about Rockland Trust's fiduciary standard. Discussion re: details of the role Rockland Trust is expected to take on.

Michelle Bailey asks for clarification on whether the Town of Wenham is or is not supporting the OPEB funding decision.

Catherine Harrison states that the committees have not discussed this issue, however, she notes she thinks it is an important decision, but Wenham cannot afford \$250,000.

Carrie Jelsma asks about consideration has been given to any alternatives to a 30-year plan. Michelle Bailey asks what Hamilton's strategy is regarding funding OPEB. Discussion regarding methods, strategies, etc.

3. Review of Wenham FY20 Budget & Need for HWRSD Operating Override

Peter Lombardi presents Town of Wenham FY20 Budget Update:

- FY20 Budget: Expense Totals (expenses are set to increase \$545k)
- Additional Budget Impact due to enrollment shift
- April 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Tax Rate Impact- Levy Limit Budget
- Tax Rate Impact - HWRSD Operating Override
- Total Tax Rate Impact

Discussion regarding budget, override, Wenham's capacity, increase in tax rates based on new levy limit. Michelle Bailey asks about how much town services are increasing, with Mr. Lombardi providing details of the levy limit budget, and explaining the decision to fund town services.

Discussion regarding various projects around Town, and impact on Wenham's budget, override, levy, etc. Jeanise Bertrand asks about the valuation in comparison to the Penguin Hall issue.

4. Review of Hamilton FY20 Budget

Joseph Domelowicz Jr., Hamilton Town Manager presents Town of Hamilton FY20 Proposed Budget Impact & Overview:

- Hamilton FY20 Budget Proposal (including school increase, town increases, and stabilization funds);
- FY20 Proposed Budget Increases
- FY20 Proposed Budget Override
- Town Budget Breakdown (“Education” listed as 58.6%)
- Revenue & Available Funds
- Hamilton Tax Rate Trend
- Tax Rate Breakdown
- Simplified version of Tax Rate Breakdown

5. Discussion Potential HWRSD Debt Exclusion(s)

Hamilton Wenham Regional School District is not pursuing debt exclusions this year. Mahala Lettvin, Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee Recording Secretary, reads minutes from 01/30/2019 meeting minutes,

“The School Committee has authorized district leadership to proceed with negotiation on properties on Longmeadow Way.”

6. Vote to Adjourn

CATHERINE HARRISON MOVES TO ADJOURN THE WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING AT 8:39PM.

PHIL STEARNS MOVES TO ADJOURN THE HAMILTON FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:39PM.

ALEX BEGIN MOVES TO ADJOURN THE WENHAM FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 8:39PM.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ADJOURN AT 8:39 PM.

**MOTION by Gene Lee; SECONDED by Jeanise Bertrand.
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

Respectfully submitted by Mahala Lettvin this 4th day of March, 2019.