

Approved 2.13.19

**The Hamilton Wenham Regional
School Committee Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 24, 2018 7:00pm
Buker School Administration Offices - Dr. Michael Harvey's Office**

Present:

Jeanise Bertrand
Kerry Gertz
Joshua Liebow, Chair
Stacey Metternick
Gene Lee
David Polito
Michelle Bailey

Also Present:

Michael Harvey, Superintendent
Jeff Sands, Assistant to the Superintendent

1) Call to Order

Joshua Liebow calls the executive session meeting for discussion of collective bargaining of the teachers union to order at 7:11pm.

**Michelle Bailey: Yes; Stacey Metternick: Yes; Jeanise Bertrand: Yes, David Polito: Yes;
Kerry Gertz: Yes; Gene Lee: Yes; Joshua Liebow, Yes**

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

2) Adjourn into Executive Session to discuss strategy relative to collective bargaining with Hamilton-Wenham Regional Education Association (Executive Session Reason #2) and return to open session

Michael Harvey: Provides overview of tonight's discussion including data from other school districts in the area for comparative analysis (Manchester/Essex, Ipswich, Lynnfield, Newburyport, Masconomet). Hamilton/Wenham is 4th in the 6 district comparison. This is after 2.5% increase. Discussion regarding turnover, exit interviews, and possible areas for improvement.

Jeff Sands: States that Hamilton/Wenham did not have an HR function until 2.5 years ago and as a result exit interviews do not take place.

Michael Harvey: Explains the teacher count by district and shifts based on experience level of teachers.

Stacey Metternick inquires about retention rate of teachers granted professional status.

Jeff Sands points out that the majority of teacher losses in the district occur with professional status teachers lost to other districts.

Stacey Metternick inquires whether it is easier to retain elementary grade level teachers compared to the middle school and high school teachers.

Discussion regarding retention rates, salary, experience level and salary requirements associated with that experience, etc.

Jeff Sands: Most districts adopt a similar strategy as Hamilton/Wenham: hire at the level of Masters 3.

Stacey Metternick asks about the strategy of adopting such policy, and whether it hurts the students

Discussion regarding hiring strategies and salary negotiations versus quality of educations.

Michelle Bailey asks about the inclusion of certain districts and the lack of Beverly and Danvers data in the comparison.

Jeff Sands: This data was compiled from a historical data collection process, and there could be any amount of districts on here. The ones illustrated are the ones we have compared to in the past.

Kerry: is this not where we generally lose our teachers to

Josh Liebow states that the 2.5% increase isn't enough in comparison to other school districts. We are off quite a bit in terms of salary as well as healthcare benefits. Final point is that anything committee decides will keep Hamilton/Wenham low on the list.

Further discussion regarding retention rate, salary, recruitment, and reasons for teachers leaving the district.

Michelle Bailey asks if the MTA is joining for the meeting. Michael Harvey clarifies that they do not come to our meetings

Jeff Sands asks committee to consider the overall strategy: Hamilton/Wenham is bringing in lower status, and as they plan for retirement, college savings, and other expenses, and as they gain status they can go 5 miles down the road and make \$9,000 more per year.

Discussion regarding healthcare insurance changes, and how that difference of \$9,000 can be increased to a difference of \$14,000 per year considering the healthcare insurance costs. Further discussion regarding percentage of staff who take health insurance (about 55%) and strategies for increasing that enrollment rate.

Gene Lee inquires about the additional asks from the teachers' union.

Michael Harvey provides a summary of the larger asks:

- **Masters + 15 column**
 - Teachers have asked for the salary table to include a column of 15 credits past a master's degree;
 - Jeff talks about degrees correlating with salaries. The salary table is provided to committee members for a better understanding of this particular ask, and how teachers' salaries increase over the years;
 - Jeff Sands points out that if the district did introduce that column, these qualified individuals could get the extra step in salary increase along with the movement and increase in the Masters +15 column;
 - Josh Liebow brings up that the overall 2.5% increase in salaries is more equivalent to a 3.4% increase when considering the degree changes and individual movement throughout the table;
- **Masters 90 column**
 - Currently Hamilton Wenham salary table ends at Masters 75;
 - This addition would incentivize many to keep going to school
- **Asked for increase from 30 to 35**
 - Teachers reimbursement account for Professional Development
- **Education reimbursement**
 - Evaluate how much we pay per credit (max \$500 per credit). \$250 per credit and \$750 cap is being asked
 - Michelle Bailey recommends reexamining the credits and reimbursement policy compared to other districts;
- **Faculty children enrollment**
 - School committee ended the practice of allowing teachers to enroll their children tuition free. We cannot discriminate and the concern was for the costs associated with those students with special education needs;
 - Michael Harvey states that the union was asked to come up with language that wasn't discriminatory but would protect the school finances from this. Discussion regarding special placement, fringe benefits, Ipswich district policies, etc.
 - Michael Harvey points out that offering tuition free placement is great from the morale standpoint, and Michelle Bailey points out that it may be beneficial for retention rates as well;
 - Teachers' Union brings this issue up consistently in all negotiations.
- **Work conditions:**
 - Better job scheduling specials. At least one teacher who winds up with 2-3 preps. Michael Harvey states that this can be taken care of without the need for revised contract language;
 - Stipend for DECA coordinator;
 - Stipend for middle school special classes;
 - Coordinator for our mentoring program (clarification: district currently pays a mentor stipend, but nothing extra for individual who coordinates the whole program);
 - Reevaluate stipend for individual tasked with calling all substitutes for the day. One teacher currently takes on calling all substitutes for the whole middle and

high school. Further discussion regarding the need to improve substitute teacher pool;

- Language reevaluation around Professional Development strategy;
- Language reevaluation around class size. Union did not ask for specifics. Discussion surrounding class size;
- Eliminate Tuesday 1-hour staff meetings (district is unable to grant this request);
- Language reevaluation around personal days, Fridays, and holidays. Discussion regarding teacher's holidays and language included in contract regarding time off on the day before vacation. School district currently is able to dock pay and charge for the substitute.

Jeff Sands asks the school committee for their direction as administration continues to negotiate.

Josh Liebow states that he would recommend pushing back on the Masters 15 and 90 inclusion, but the COLA is fair at 2.5%

Jeff Sands states that the FY19 budget includes a 2.5% salary increase.

Jeanise Bertrand asks about the salary increase, and strategy. Is there a value in giving 1.5% increase this year and a 3% increase the following year?

Michelle Bailey is interested in seeing the 1.5, 2, 3% salary increase progression and what that would look like, specifically in this year's budget with a 1.5% increases.

Jeff Sands states that 1% equates to approximately \$200,000.

Michelle Bailey states that the committee is going to need further discussion on how to incorporate this into the budget and what impact contracts have.

Michael Harvey clarifies that nothing is done with the contract until April 15th. Jeff Sands and Michael Harvey talk about strategy for having a placeholder.

Discussion regarding accepting Union's conditions, likelihood of allowing step increases, further negotiations, salary increases recommended by administration and school committee's role in final determination, etc.

Discussion regarding the town of Wenham's financial situation and impact on school district. Jeff Sands points out that the district would need to reduce the FY19 proposed budget by $\frac{3}{4}$ million dollars, which is \$322,000 below the costs outlined for level service.

Further discussion regarding Town of Wenham levy and impact on school district as well as possible strategies to reduce budget and continue conversations with Wenham

Gene Lee states that he agrees with Josh Liebow: the 2.5% salary increase is fair, but the Masters +15 and +90 are not reasonable.

Michelle Bailey discusses the school district in comparison with Gloucester. Michelle suggests reducing the increase to 1.5% which would allow for the inclusion of Masters +15 and +90. Discussion amongst committee members regarding this strategy.

Committee members agree to put a value to every ask the Union has made and bring these numbers back (and the effect on salary increase) for further negotiations.

Michelle Bailey asks whom this information will be shared with.

All members agree for Michael Harvey to share this information with **Peter Lombardi**.

Next bargaining session will occur on 02/02/2018.

3) **Vote to adjourn from Executive Session and return to open session.** [Roll Call Vote]

I MOVE TO ADJOURN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:22 PM AND RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.

Michelle Bailey: Yes; Stacey Metternick: Yes; Jeanise Bertrand: Yes, David Polito: Yes; Kerry Gertz: Yes; Gene Lee: Yes; Joshua Liebow, Yes

The motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted Mahala Lettvin