

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District  
Office of the Superintendent  
Wenham, Massachusetts 01984**

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: December 15, 2014  
To: School Committee Members  
From: Michael Harvey, Superintendent of Schools  
Re: Thursday, December 18, 2014

**CALL TO ORDER:** Bill Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:05 in the Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room.

**Present:** Bill Wilson, Larry Swartz, Barbara Lawrence, William Dery, Sheila MacDonald, Deb Evans, Stacey Metternick, Jeanise Bertrand

**Absent:** Roger Kuebel

**Others Present:** Michael Harvey, Celeste Bowler, and Jeffrey Sands

Sheila MacDonald moved that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss Office Personnel Agreement and then to return to executive session. Approved 8-0-0.

**7:20 PM: The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee returned to open session.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** all rose for the Pledge of Allegiance

**CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Charlie Pepler (Meyer Rd, Hamilton) expressed concerns about the upcoming School Committee discussion on the HWRHS graduation related to the venue at Gordon College. He felt changes should not be made at this late hour; without parent and student involvement in the discussion; related to a political purpose; and he has a desire to continue to maintain a positive relationship with Gordon College.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

Most of Bill's items are on tonight's agenda. There are important dates coming up: 1/15/15 FinCom Meeting; 2/15/14 the budget needs to be adopted. Bill has also received emails related to the discussion on moving the HWRHS graduation venue from Gordon College.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

A. Review

- The Winthrop School window project was awarded to Lambrian Construction of Westwood, MA for \$1,052,000; this was under budget and allows for soft overruns. There is very clear language for time completion and allows a penalty clause.
- Mike met with Mike Lombardo to discuss putting something together for Hamilton related to future projects for the town and district enrollment.
- Congratulations to the high school history department for another National History Day last Thursday. Thank you also to the members of the school committee who acted as judges.
- Mike attended the elementary and middle school holiday concerts.

## B. Announcements

- Next Tuesday, 12/23/14 is a normal dismissal day for winter recess until January 5, 2015.
- The next school committee meeting will be 1/8/15 and then 1/22/15 due to the first Thursday in January being a holiday.

## CONSENT AGENDA

No members requested to remove any items from the consent agenda.

- A. MINUTES OF DECEMBER 4, 2014 (Exhibit A)
- B. FIELD TRIP-MODEL UN MIT (Exhibit B)
- C. EDFUND GRANT-WINTHROP HOKKI STOOLS (Exhibit C)

Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee approve all of the remaining items on the consent agenda; passed unanimously: 8-0-0

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. AUDIT--Nothing to report
- B. COMMUNICATIONS-- Stacey announced the next School Committee Spotlight newsletter will be published tomorrow. It is available on the School Committee website. Emails can be addressed to the communications committee at [sc\\_communications@hwschools.net](mailto:sc_communications@hwschools.net)
- C. FACILITIES-- Larry again encouraged the community to join the facilities group because they have lost their chairperson. They have discussed expanding the group to cover operations more generally. The new Director of Facilities, Jason Waldron has started.
- D. NEGOTIATIONS-- There are three open contracts being worked on (Office Personnel; Teachers; and Custodians) and subcommittee is meeting regularly.
- E. POLICY-- Barbara reported many items being voted on tonight's agenda
- F. WARRANT-- Sheila stated the bills are accurate; there has not been a mistake in 2.5 years; Deb Capozzi is to be applauded for her work.
- G. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE-- no report
- H. OTHER-- Master Planning has a regular meeting scheduled. Barbara spent a day at the high school where they are really thinking about everything in the report - especially the furniture (from the 1960s) and how it cannot be put together for collaborative projects. Larry inquired about the Master Plan not coming back to the school committee for acceptance yet. The report has been received, and what are the next steps for School Committee authorizing next steps? There is a School Committee goal, so we will put it on the agenda. Sheila encouraged everyone to read through the lengthy report. Bill Dery suggested the committee vote to accept the report and hear a report from the committee (not SMSA who already met and presented in a public hearing.) Deb Evans suggested changing the order of the agenda to move New Business before Old Business. No one opposed. Bill suggested moving item B in front of A.

## NEW BUSINESS

- A. VOTE ON THE OFFICE PERSONNEL AGREEMENT- The proposed contract includes a 2% COLA increase and professional development funding.  
Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the office personnel agreement as presented; passed unanimously: 8-0-0

B. DISCUSSION OF THE HWRSD GRADUATION LOCATION-- Eric Tracey joined the committee at the table to present students' concerns related to holding graduation at Gordon College Chapel. The concerns include both the location as a church and the President Lyndsey letter to Obama. It is important to take it slow and understand all facets of the discussion. There are standards we are held to regarding discrimination and harassment. There was a discussion of conducting a student survey rather than anecdotal evidence. It doesn't many how many students are involved; if one student is made to feel unwelcome, we have a duty to act. The US Supreme Court declined to hear arguments on Doe vs. Elmbrook (WI) School District which does not directly affect our district. Graduation has been held in the high school previously. The burden is on the School Committee, but they need to know the magnitude of the decision. The next steps will be to include the further discussion as an agenda item 1/22/15; make legal inquiries; find out specifics on changing the venue; Dr. Harvey reaching out to President Lyndsey. Additionally, possible further public discussion as an agenda item on 2/5/15 with a community discussion beginning at 6:30 pm.

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET PRESENTATION (Exhibit J and J2)

The FY16 Budget is a level services budget with priority overlay. This translates into a spending increase in our Gross Operating Expenses of \$773,550 or 2.7% increase over the FY15 Budget. The key assumptions include increased salary costs (COLA, contractual Step and Degree changes, etc.) There are no new positions. Assumptions in Operating Costs include no new services or programs; exceptions to the level funding include a 4% decrease in Health care via Harvard Pilgrim; Out of District tuition rates and transportation costs including SPED. The priority overlays provide the targeted funding necessary to better position the District to achieve its goals and objectives as provided for in the Strategic Blueprint, 2013-2018, including directed investments in people, programs, and technology. The number 1 priority is to fully implement a Middle School Team Model. This investment is a 0.5% increase over the FY15 Budget, or \$149,000. On January 8, 2015 MRMS Principal Craig Hovey will present the new schedule for teams to the school committee. Jeff Sands presented a high-level overview of gross operating expenses using DESE categories with a net operating budget increase of \$896,740 or 3.27% increase. The FY16 Timeline includes continued budget discussions at each meeting in January; a public hearing on 1/22/15; a school committee vote on 2/12/15.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

A. CONTRIBUTION TO MARS LEGAL FUND FOR TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT SUIT-- Jeff stated there was no issue in the budget related to the \$500.00, the money will come from the legal fund. Larry stated there is a strong basis for approving the contribution; Bill reported Brad Hill agrees it would be money well spent; Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to contribute \$500 (Five-Hundred Dollars) from the Legal Fund to MARS with regard to the 9C cuts. ; passed unanimously: 8-0-0 The check will be mailed tomorrow.

B. POLICIES 2<sup>ND</sup> READING

1. CURRICULUM ADOPTION POLICY (Exhibit D)--Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the Curriculum Adoption Policy as presented; passed unanimously: 8-0-0

Bill Derry left the school Committee meeting at 9:30 pm.

2. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT POLICY (Exhibit E)--Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the Curriculum Development Policy as presented; passed unanimously: 7-0-0

3. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS POLICY (Exhibit F)--Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the English Language Learners Policy as presented; passed unanimously: 7-0-0

4. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS POLICY (Exhibit G)-- Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the Graduation Requirements Policy as presented; This is a new policy verbatim from the high school handbook; new is the credit for Foreign Study. The policy makes allowances and allows more options related to the Regional Exit Portfolio. Passed unanimously: 7-0-0

5. PROMOTION & RETENTION OF STUDENTS POLICY (Exhibit H)-- Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the Promotion and Retention Policy as presented. No vote taken. There was concern that the policy as written by the MASC does not explicitly include parental involvement and rights in the decision. The final decision on promotion or retention lies with the building principal. The committee decided to come back after further review to make a decision on the policy.

6. WELLNESS (REVISION)(Exhibit I)--Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee vote to accept the Revised Wellness Policy as presented; passed unanimously: 7-0-0

***Adjournment***

Sheila MacDonald moved that the HW Regional School Committee move to adjourn; approved 7-0-0 at 9:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Janice Gauthier