Approved 4.9.15

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

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 18, 2015

To: School Committee Members

From: Michael Harvey, Superintendent of Schools

Re: Thursday, March 19, 2015

ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION
Bill Wilson moved THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CONDUCT STRATEGY SESSIONS IN PREPARATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL AND TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Return from Executive Session:

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

Present: Bill Wilson, Sheila MacDonald, Deb Evans, Stacey Metternick and Jeanise Bertrand
Absent:, Roger Kuebel, Larry Swartz, and Barbara Lawrence
Others Present: Michael Harvey, Celeste Bowler, and Jeffrey Sands;

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance

Change in agenda order to accommodate guest speaker Rep. Brad Hill and congratulate the Hamilton-Wenham boys' basketball team.

B. BRAD HILL, STATE REPRESENTATIVE – UPDATE ON STATE FINANCING
The Chapter 70 formula is a problem for a community like Hamilton-Wenham because it unfairly distributes money back to communities like ours. It is supposed to be looked at every two years; yet for over 20 years it has not been looked at. We set up a new commission which includes the DESE as well as outside sources seeking advice and testimony on how it should change. People would love to see Special Education and Special Education transportation be part of that foundation budget. Should healthcare costs be incorporated into the foundation budget? Should retirement be part? Emphatic, yes. By June they have to come out with their report. Then hopefully we'll put forward

legislation that will change how money is distributed back to our school districts. What I ask of you is your testimony on what you believe should be changed in the funding formula. Please forward your email from the school committee board or individually to the foundation review commission. Stacey will forward the email link.
Governor Baker proposed his budget with another $1.8B deficit, despite the fact that we will see an increase in revenue of $1B. He increased Chapter 70 over $100M; this increased student cost $20/student means Hamilton-Wenham funding was increased to $3.449M. It's frustrating, but any increase is a good thing. Related to FY15 9C, Governor Patrick cut transportation 25%, bringing Hamilton-Wenham from $412K down to $299K. Governor Baker level funded regional school transportation; did he know it had been cut 25%? I don't know. We've made regional transportation a priority. We're looking at a last supplemental budget FY15; it probably won't be $412K, but hopefully a bit of an increase over $299K.
There are some initiatives I want your support on: come in to the statehouse, testify in front of education committee, or send written testimony. Only a few states have the Special Education Circuit Breaker. SPED is a federally mandated program that should have funding follow it. The formula is 4x the foundation budget; anything over that, the state will pay 75% of. There is bill filed that will lower threshold from 4x to 3x the foundation budget. We want to add Special Education transportation funding to the formula; I put forth two pieces of legislation that would put health care and special education into the foundation formula. I look for your supportive testimony. This is the time to strike if we are going to make any changes to the way we fund education. Jeanise asked when the hearing will be and Brad answered that the committee has just been set up. Usually they only get about 48 hours' notice; he will get information out as soon as possible. Bill stated he was happy to do so.
Brad also congratulated the boy's basketball state championship win in division 4 and thanked coach Hoak for his leadership. What a great season.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
A. BOYS' BASKETBALL -
Coach Hoak introduced the team and displayed the trophy. He said this is an exciting a time; it was special how it brought the community together. The student body has been amazing; he received community feedback from people on trains how well behaved our kids were and how well they represented our school community. This team was unbelievable to coach and the team chemistry was phenomenal. Not only was this the 1st boys' championship, to do it unbeaten- this will never be surpassed. Bill congratulated them and said to be proud of the way you represented yourselves, a team, your school, and your community.

(Back to regular agenda)

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:
Norm Kramer (Forest St Hamilton) On March 5 the committee discussed changing the graduation ceremony from Gordon College chapel to the high school. After lengthy discussion, a majority of the members voted to change the site. I want to acknowledge the hard work the committee performed regarding their decision. Despite high emotions, the

members remained steadfast in their focus on the needs and concerns of students and their role as public officials. The majority of members reached the logical conclusion to move the ceremony. I admire the students who came forward and expressed their concerns. It was a difficult decision and the vast majority of our community supports Gordon College and a 20-year tradition. Again, those students have my admiration and respect.

Don McIntosh (Puritan Rd, Wenham) wanted to address class size policy. My concern isn't related to a specific number; it is to addresses any potential disparity across similar grades across the schools. Example, 1st grade this year. It appears Lynnfield and Framingham are trying to address it. First grade at Buker and first grade at Cutler should be considered for this policy.

Michelle Bailey (Remington Rd. Wenham) I encourage you to think about the class size policy; I was surprised to see it on the agenda because I was told it would not be. The class size policy we have now is not followed. People expect you to meet the numbers. My 8th grade student has 28 students in his math class, which exceeds the policy. Most math classes exceed the policy. People criticize you when you don't reach the maximum; I come to criticize you because you exceed the maximum. To have a policy with no number means you don't know what your expectations are.

Bill responded it is on the agenda. It is a policy under discussion. We will not make any decisions; we will leave it on the agenda as we have some comparisons now.

Mike wanted to get some direction for the policy subcommittee. Wednesday, April 1st, they are meeting. This is discussion only, no action.

Deb asked, in support of not taking action, will we have a school committee meeting for public comment? The policy committee meeting is at night. Will the comments and feedback be provided to the committee? That would be important to understand.

CHAIR'S REPORT

A. OPEN MEETING LAW VIOLATION

Remedy: Acknowledgment of unintentional violation and release of email (Exhibit F)

March 5th meeting was a complex emotional topic and I apologize for not being here. I sent an email; I probably should not have shared that with everyone. We have an open meeting law. I shared a position. I can share agenda items, etc. but not a position. No one complained; no one brought up this violation. Mike and I self-identified the situation and wanted full transparency; Counsel agreed; it didn't affect any vote, so no action is needed. A minor infraction like this just needs acknowledgement and public reading of the email. Mike will send to the committee members a reminder of the open meeting law guidelines. Bill read the email (exhibit F).

Bill commented the committee brought it through the process. I watched the video; I took notes. The motion passed 4-2. No action is required.

Deb stated she supports the decision made by the committee, even though it went differently than her vote. She would appreciate Bill's insight if a future committee deliberates similar issues and situations. What could we have done differently in the process? Bill said recognize what was heard; maybe we missed a step in the end. I was very proud of Remy and his mom and the things they said; maybe some feedback goes back to the initial group if time allowed. I don't fault any of the process. The committee spoke as a body; we support that and move on.

Graduation logistics: 1st meeting was held the next morning by Jeff and Eric. Spec'd out different options indoor/outdoor. Jeff has planned several graduations and has a bank of vendors and teams of people. He's begun to get those pieces of information in; we will review some plans with vendors. It's too early to report to the committee because there is no plan. Any community reports or questions on the plan is premature- there is no plan yet. He has 1540 seats is spec'd out and will have more info in 2-4 weeks. Eric will do that when the time is right. Jeff will provide updates at every meeting. Deb pointed out the Ed-fund Up With People concert was held in the gym; those files still exist. The fire department was actively involved, there is a maximum attendance cannot be exceeded.
FY16 budget was sent to the towns. We will present at both town meetings. School committee members often sit together as a group to show support.
Reminder, please send conflict of interest forms for Wenham to Diane Bucco.
Calendar update: April 2 is a scheduled meeting- it's Holy Thursday. We have a religious observance policy on holding a meeting when many would be attending religious services. We may need to move it. April 9 will be an Executive session at 6pm for purpose of progress on collective bargaining. It was on the 2nd- it will be moved to the 9th. Elections are on 4/16 (no meeting). On April 30 will be new reorganization meeting (only item on agenda), when we'll swear in new members. Our next meeting will be May 7; Bill suggested transitioning important paperwork, hand off emails, and a transition plan. Then we'll get back on schedule. Deb pointed out with a school committee of a compressed number, everyone will have to do more; everyone has to be actively involved with more committees. It's the same amount of work with fewer people. Stacey asked could we condense some of those subcommittees? It would have to be an agenda item. We need the benefit of 6 years of experience that's leaving us.
Also, best wishes for a speedy recovery to Larry who had surgery.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (continued)

B. NATIONAL HISTORY DAY-

Congratulations to the participants at the Northeast Massachusetts District History Day competition. Our 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will move on to the state contest on April 11th. We had 38 winners receiving 1st, 2nd, 3rd or Honorable Mention. Mike will email the complete list out; it is on the high school website. Seven students from MRMS also participated; the 1st and 2nd place finishers will also go on to state competition 4/11/15. The students and projects are listed on Principal Hovey's Blog.
Any who win at the state level will present to school committee at a future meeting.

REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR- Two group projects have been selected to move on to the state science fair at MIT on May 1st and 2nd. Three individual projects had also qualified for the Regional Science Fair, but due to SATs, couldn't go.

C. HWRHS DRAMAFEST

At the semifinal round of the MA Educational Theatre Guild Drama Festival, HWRHS presented "The Water Engine" by David Mamet. While they are not advancing, several cast members won awards. The production will be presented tomorrow night at 7pm. Sheila commented that Chris Shailor does a phenomenal job every year.

D. Read America Week- we are reading in all our elementary schools, having contests, etc. - Mike will read to 5th grade tomorrow.

E. Budget Book- is on the district website; thanks to Jeff for putting it together. Distributed far and wide throughout the town. Deb stated she was approached after several meetings by members of the public expressing gratitude for Jeff's budget presentations. The presentation is equally important to the numbers; the community understands because of Jeff's ability to articulate what the district is doing.

Seats for the two available School Committee positions are uncontested: Hannah Fraley and Dennis Hurley. They have received copies of the budget book.

CONSENT AGENDA:

A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 5, 2015 (Exhibit A)
B. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2015 (Exhibit B)
C. MINUTES OF MARCH 5, 2015 (Exhibit C)
D. FIELD TRIP – CUBA 2016 (Exhibit D)
E. FIELD TRIP – ITALY 2016 (Exhibit E)

Sheila moved that THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS (A, B, C minutes) ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION.
Approved 5-0

Because no policy has been finalized yet, Jeanise asked about the overnight field trip whether adults have to carry the student's medication; we haven't gotten to the policy; student can't walk down hallway at 2 am to chaperone's hotel room if they need an epipen. Within the building it is school policy. Sheila agreed it was a valid point and they need to work on the policy.
Bill asked if people can go on both field trips? They can. Deb asked about security and safety regarding travel to Cuba. Mike said it is through a tour company; schools from Canada go all the time. It was a US restriction on travel to Cuba.
Sheila moved that THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE BOTH FIELD TRIPS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION.
Approved 5-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS
A. AUDIT: Jeff explained we conduct two audits each year- annual and end of year that we file with DESE; Powers and Sullivan reviewed it, and had zero findings. It's almost unheard of. Today we scheduled the beginning of the FY15 audit cycle.
B. FACILITIES- Jeff stated Winthrop construction project is well underway; we selected GC; we're working closely with contractors. Submitted shop drawings, fabrication of the glass curtain has begun, no production schedule yet. It can be 7-8

weeks or could be 16-20 weeks. Next week we should have the construction schedule well within budget.

C. NEGOTIATIONS- Met Wednesday, update on April 9th as a full committee with the executive session.

D. POLICY- We're meeting April 1st.

E. WARRANT- warrants are good.

F. COMMUNICATIONS- We have not put out the newsletter yet; it should go out tomorrow. We will update the class size issue in the newsletter.

G. LEGISLATIVE- Brad gave update; Bill encouraged testimony to be sent. There is a new date 3/31/15 for testimony.

H. STUDENT REP. Dana has been ill; She has a substitute.

I. OTHER-SCHOOL LIAISONS UPDATES no update

NEW BUSINESS:

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT- We had an executive session to discuss the superintendent's contract. When you have something good you want to keep it. Mike is doing a great job. We are looking at a five-year term instead of three. We agreed to a 2% increase for the first year. We made some changes and added clarity on language related to sick days and vacation. Previously it was 20 sick days and 20 vacation; now it will be the same total split 15 sick and 25 vacation. The professional activities will stay the same. The add is the 403B plan. We will kick it off in the first year to contribute $1500; that will escalate through year three and then balance out the remainder of the term. Deb clarified it is a matching contribution and the teachers have a similar agreement in their contract.

Sheila moved THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT AS PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING.

Approved 5-0

OLD BUSINESS:

A. MASTER PLAN UPDATE- Previously, Larry had pointed out the Committee has not officially accepted the plan; Mike asked for a motion to accept that document. It doesn't commit the School Committee to anything; we are just saying we accept this document into the documents of the district. Bill stated protocol about voting. The plan has been on the website for months; it was presented by SMMA. Mike would caution anyone from thinking we are implementing everything in the master plan. Sheila commented that Mike and the leadership team has pulled out parts and it's already being used, discussed and debated. It's very exciting.

Sheila moved that the HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT AS SUBMITTED.

Discussion: It was presented back in May. Stacey pointed out that it's taken us some time to get to this point; there was quite a bit of grammatical clean up needed. Bill stated we are not necessarily taking these drawings and financial implications. Stacey said it's

basically a guideline. Deb said we commissioned it; we paid for it. Let's talk about the product and what we are going to do with it.
Approved: 5-0

Mike explained next steps drafted with master plan steering committee and deciding and implementing the educational program. There is Educational Delivery (models for instruction, tech integration, experiential learning) and Educational Structures (organization of resources, relationships between stakeholder roles, schedules). Decide what the preferred educational delivery and structures are and what will facilities look like to deliver this educational model?

The Leadership Team pulled parts out of the master plan and we are already doing it. From the October 2013 interviews, full-day Kindergarten should be priority; curriculum is coordinated vertically and between schools; technology reliability. Middle school priority is teams. It's a validation that we're really rolling on some of these pieces. There's still a lot to do on our radar.

We also looked at findings from visioning statements. What are the major themes? Supporting nontraditional students; collaboration among staff members; students with social-emotional issues; interdisciplinary learning and facilities that support flexibility; Craig Hovey made a connection re: students that are disengaged. At the middle school technical/vocational program doesn't exist. What opportunities for learning are there? STEM and project-based learning; internships, service, etc. The voice in the MS is muted through the report; it's an integral part of district and we need to pay proper attention. Another item is measuring ways students are making progress.

Celeste we haven't looked at longitudinal data. This is the first class of full-day kindergarten that we will be tracking. We will look at support and interventions needed based on data.

Who does this work? The Master Plan steering committee and the composition of teams for educational delivery and a team for educational structures. Each group will have a very specific charge. Some of the resources we will be reaching out to former students, college admissions, etc.
Some of the next steps include each administrator is going to spend a full day in a different school, at a different grade level so we can advocate and understand programs for other buildings in the district.
The next piece is to develop major themes. Project based learning keeps coming up. What other themes are there. The timeline is at the 4/28 Leadership meeting. Finally, we need to develop priority lists. Where do we start? We need to put our own stamp on this; not just go to Newton North and say we're going to do this program.

Celeste commented that sometimes you don't always see the results of your work, and that meeting really brought it to light seeing full day kindergarten. This morning I spent the day with Craig at MRMS- all the nooks and crannies. Part of the master plan is to look at facilities. I also spent some time with Jen Clifford at Cutler; it was interesting

seeing commonalities, storage, areas that need repair that I don't see when I visit the building.
Deb stated it has seemed in the past we're treading water to preserve what we had; but the shift to looking forward and being able to see decision making influenced by the thinking of the master plan. It's a positive shift, driving decisions. It's how you proactively manage a business, so to proactively manage education this way is really hopeful. Stacey agreed. We were in this lull, and we're talking about 21st c learning; now we're seeing what we've accomplished. Bill mentioned big ideas over level stuff. Celeste said we are in progress.

B. CLASS SIZE POLICY (Exhibit G)
Bill asked is there any direction for subcommittee to set expectations for a future meeting. Mike and others answered people do want numbers- people gave feedback. We want something flexible enough to make changes in the master plan. We want to make sure decisions benefit students first. Mike included current policy voted through FY12; the proposed policy from 1/17 meeting. MASC gave 50 published policy models, but not many schools have class size policies. The last page is a list of comps.
Collective bargaining has a different set of numbers that he did not include which would supercede policy. Mike's recommendation is guidelines- not a hard number. If 24 is the cap and there is now 25 you're going to blow up the budget. Add a teacher, now there's a class of 12 and a class of 13.
Stacey stated this is a recommendation. Bill would use averages. Deb said it's a preferred and optimal size. Deb said we are not in the preferred range for 1999 or in the modification of 2009.
Sheila commented some teachers have offered to take more kids to run the class, or because so many kids want to take AP or honors. It's hard to come in with a hard number. Stacey pointed out the high school student has to select seven electives; core classes are already loaded in Aspen; what's available for freshmen and it's not a huge selection.
Bill referred to the citizen concern related to balance between buildings. Mike responded the grade has a range of 15-22. We try to balance in Kindergarten; we try to balance in a school; but short of telling them you can't go to Buker… When people move out and people move in, we put them in the smallest section, not necessarily the closest school. We try to keep families together. We won't split siblings. The other classes district wide are 19-22. The difference is not that wide. The other piece we have to consider is space. You can have 12 classes at Buker. At Cutler, two classes in every grade and then a third one here and there.

Bill stated people can contact and attend the April 1 subcommittee meeting and send an email to Mike; take recommendations from subcommittee; listen to public comment at April meeting. Come back with 1st reading; second reading would be with new committee members.

Adjournment
Sheila moved THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN.

Approved 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Gauthier