

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

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: April 6, 2015  
To: School Committee Members  
From: Michael Harvey, Superintendent of Schools  
Re: Thursday, April 9, 2015

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Minutes:

**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 (Purpose #2) AND TO RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

Return from Executive Session:

**CALL TO ORDER:** Bill Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:08 in the Buker Elementary School  
Multi-Purpose Room.

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

**Absent:**, Roger Kuebel,

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance

**CITIZENS' CONCERNS:** No citizen concerns.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

A. Annual Town Meeting- Saturday 4/11/15. Hamilton 9am; Wenham 1:00 p.m.. Democracy is  
not a spectator sport. Come support your local school budget.

B. Transition Election is 4/16/15; There are two candidates, uncontested for school committee. At  
our next meeting there will be new leadership positions will be elected. Discuss handoff of items, for  
example- subcommittee work, goals and objectives for the committee. Also, the conflict of interest  
forms; the date has passed, but if you haven't done it please send them to Dianne Bucco.

This is our last meeting together. I enjoyed serving with you; I'm very proud and passionate about  
everything we did. I appreciate all your hard work.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

### **A. RECOGNITION OF DEPARTING SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Town meeting preparations are in full swing- we sent out a connect ed message. National Honor Society will be offering childcare at the HW rec center. There is a link in the connect ed message for reservations. There is a small charge for it as a fundraiser for NHS.

B. Dr. Harvey accepted an invitation to Shenzhen Experimental School in Shenzhen, China and Donglu middle school over April vacation. Looking to continue this exchange in the future. This will allows us to enhance our Mandarin program and the global experience of our students.

C. The Day on the Hill is scheduled on 4/29/15 and two students from student government to meet with state senator and state representatives.

D. Thank you for your service to the children of Hamilton-Wenham. I've learned a lot from you over the past three years.

Barbara said it was a privilege and honor and a lot of fun. She hopes people will run next year. She commented on the work and success of the policy updates. Well done.

Larry said we are losing three people of such substance; this will create a huge hole for the rest of us.

Bill is confident that those remaining and the leadership team will have great things to come.

Sheila always wanted to stay nonpolitical and focus on what's best for the kids. That's what we're here for. That's what I'm most proud of.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

### **A. MINUTES OF MARCH 19, 2015 (Exhibit A)**

MOTION: Sheila MOVED THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION.

Approved 6-0-1

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESENTATION**

Ellen, the student body Treasurer, stated Dana Valetti, (student body President) is in the hospital again, hoping to be back soon. SC members expressed well wishes to Dana. Presentation reviewed upcoming class events and fundraisers for the rest of this year and next.

Freshman Car wash fundraiser 5/2 or 5/9 tbd; sunglasses sale in May or June.

Sophomore class will sell student designed bumper stickers; next year they will have a masquerade ball and an Orange Leaf fundraiser.

Erin Mason Vice President: Juniors- prom is on 5/8/15; reusable grocery bag fundraiser sale at the end of May; elections for senior officers will also be held in May.

Courtney Milo Secretary: Seniors 4/16 Mr. HWRHS- it's like a beauty pageant for senior men; film fest is on 5/7/15. Students contribute own ideas and films. Prom is 5/29 at Castle Hill; and on June 7th is graduation. We have new delegates to the New England Student Advisory council. This brings together delegates from different schools in the school community and state.

## **B. GRADUATION UPDATE**

Eric and Jeff had met planning graduation on the stadium field under a tent; contracted with a very reputable firm to provide tent, stage, 1540 chairs, etc. We are developing operational and logistics plan (for parking, invitations, etc.). End of year events include running some end of the year workshops for real life skills (financial planning, organizing) pre-exams; Seniors helping Seniors; prom. The following week will be the senior trip (still nailing down details for day trip); scholarship night; senior farewell; candlelight. We will make a new twist on what we do and hold up some traditions. There will be 10 tickets per family for graduation. It will be a great event. Logistics are in place for special seating, parking, shuttling, etc. Senior students and parents have not been involved for logistical reasons to keep it moving along. They are involved in many other events of senior week, like the after prom event and Seniors Helping Seniors. Eric sends every family a letter; every event is on the calendar; we send out a lot of emails, tweets, and blog posts. Some complain it's too much contact.

## **C. FY15 BUDGET FORECAST (Exhibit B)**

Jeff to level set the budget forecast; it's the equivalent of a mini budget process. We go through every account.

Salary Costs- these are actual costs through 3/24 and forecast three months. Includes forecasts including long term substitutes, overtime, etc.

Operating Costs- Forecast assumes Special Education costs for Out-of-District Tuition will exceed the budget by \$509,000. Also assumes \$325,000 will be covered by available circuit breaker funds.

Jeff reviewed the financial table using the 13 DESE categories.

We are forecasting to end FY15 within \$6000 of budget. Some specific highlights are Instructional Materials which is forecasting \$32,754 over budget mostly due to replacing/repairing Smartboards particularly at the high school. Insurance, Retirement, Other was a favorable \$185,817 due to fewer enrollees. Pupil Services is forecast unfavorable to budget by \$39,632 mostly due to Special Education transportation for Out-of-District placement. Lastly, the Tuition for Out-of-District Special Education tuitions is unfavorable to budget for \$183,901. This is increased by eight Out-of-District placements.

Jeff proposed the committee transfer \$185,000 from "Insurance, Retirement, Other" to "Tuition".

The implications of NOT doing it- according to accounting, you are supposed to move the money before you spend it. It's a solid prediction. Typically Jeff will do a forecast every month. He will send a quarterly forecast to the towns.

Snow removal overage was in the six figures. Two million pounds of snow was removed from the high school/middle school. There was an 800 pound icicle removed.

Sheila moved that the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee to approve the FY15 budget transfer \$185,000 from "Insurance, Retirement, Other" to "Tuition" as recommended.

Motion passed 7-0-0

#### **D. SCHOOL CHOICE UPDATE (Exhibit C)**

Principal Tracy explained we started the school choice process earlier this year, around Thanksgiving. We received 86 applications for 9th grade, conducted the lottery, and extended invitations to eight siblings of current students. Two additional students were invited. One has declined, so we sent out a third. We are watching the 154 8th graders; 21 have applied elsewhere; three have decided they will be coming to the high school. We think it will be around 140-145 students with choice in the freshman class. In response to Larry's question, Eric stated it's a very low number of students who have been schooled elsewhere through 8th grade who now come to the high school. The current freshman class is 153.

Larry pointed out we will not add any sections or staff to accommodate choice students. Jeff said the staffing reviews at each school is built around this timeframe with incoming kindergarten class sizes, outgoing graduates, etc.

Larry continued as numbers keep going down, what does that translate to in terms of offerings at the high school? How do we deal with that? Barbara pointed out that the Master Plan has many educational offerings and different kinds of learning and teaching with the reality of a diminishing population. Mike stated if we calculate 154 students in eight sections of Freshman English, that averages 19.25 students per class. What do we need to adequately staff at all grades? Eric said each class brings a different perspective, such as the number of kids in honors or special ed. We don't need to increase. We're looking at other ways to educate such as online learning. We filled 59 seats this year. We want to balance the class size issue. We've discussed on May 1st looking at the school choice application list based on what we know of our current seats available.

Stacey asked with the decline of students, how will it affect electives? Eric stated we haven't reduced any electives; freshman year you don't get as many electives, students are fulfilling their core classes. Students are more inclined to take multiple AP classes rather than electives. If a course doesn't have 15 kids, it's on hold. We've got to add more options and opportunities. Can kids take an intersession course? Community colleges are looking at dual enrollment options. There are 98 school choice students in the high school now; we are losing 24 and adding 10.

Deb discussed the impact on a family's lack of communication whether their child is coming; how can we be more proactive explaining to those 8th grade families the implication? Whether it's a phone call, mailing, etc. It's a suggestion for future choice. There's a new lever 5-6th grade transition- there's a new alternative - but it's another checkpoint where we need to be more proactive. We need to build that into our plan. Principals Hovey and Tracey are watching those numbers all the way down to 6th grade. We'll monitor it closely. Deb will take that as an action item/research project. Larry also mentioned the new tech high school- are more students going? The number is about the same as last year. What can we do to

improve our STEM offerings? Eric said they get back to the school choice applicants all the way through the process. It's a numbers game.

**E. DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN UPDATE (Exhibit D)**

The DCAP is one of the district improvement goals. This was spearheaded by Eric Tracy and Kathy Harris. Mike read the introductory paragraph to the committee.

The table of contents discusses the different accommodations that can be offered to any and all students. These are best practice instructions. Research shows these things work for everyone; this gets to the heart of differentiated instruction.

Barbara pointed out the phrase for struggling learners- some kids are struggling because they are bored out of their minds. A child might need help, not another worksheet. The teacher does not have the support or training to make sure this child has the accommodations that will make him excited to come to school. These are kids who are turned against school when they have enormous potential. We have to be very proactive with this other side of struggling academically. Larry commented a recent ESPN story about Rajon Rondo and his 3rd grade teacher and what she did to accommodate him and keep him engaged. This is not a new law. We did have a DCAP, but it was not published. This new DCAP is on the district website under curriculum, instruction, and assessment tab. All building principals have reviewed with staff. We consulted with other districts' plans, but it is something we wrote inhouse.

The next step is to build a reservoir of things available, resources to keep students motivated.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business

**Adjournment:**

MOTION: Sheila MOVED THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE  
TO ADJOURN

Approved 7-0-0

Adjourned 8:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Gauthier