

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee**

**Sept. 5, 2013**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER AND  
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Roger Kuebel opened the meeting at 7:08 p.m. in the administrative conference room in the Center Building.

**PRESENT:**

Jeanise Bertrand, Bill Dery, Deb Evans, Roger Kuebel (chair), Barbara Lawrence, Sheila MacDonald, Melissa Even Moore, Bill Wilson

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning; Brian Menegoni, Assistant Principal, HWRHS; Christy Reynolds, Assistant Principal, Miles River Middle School; Brian O'Donoghue, Principal, Buker Elementary; Chris Heath, Principal, Winthrop Elementary

**ABSENT:**

Sean Condon

**CITIZENS' CONCERNS:**

Michelle Bailey of Wenham asked about this year's upcoming financial audit. R. Kuebel said the auditing firm's onsite work would begin the week after this meeting and an audit subcommittee of the Committee would provide input.

Wenham Town Clerk Trudy Reid urged the Committee to propose to voters a revision of the section of the agreement that stipulates election procedures, to bring them into line with election procedures for Hamilton and Wenham town officials. She offered sample text for such a warrant article (which is appended to these minutes), and responded to Committee members' questions.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Dr. Harvey welcomed the 2013-14 student representative to the Committee, high school student Chase Schaub.

Dr. Harvey said the new district website has been launched and the process continues of updating text transferred from the old site.

He updated the Committee about upcoming design work for a project being considered for partial state funding, and reported that state education officials have selected the high school, middle school and Winthrop as pilot schools for a new standardized test that might replace the MCAS; students at those schools will take both the MCAS and the new PARCC exam in 2013-14.

**Professional Status and**

Principals recognized and offered appreciative comments about

25 Year Recognitions

teachers who mark 25 years of service to the district this year, and teachers who have achieved professional status. B. O'Donoghue congratulated Buker Elementary teachers Beth Blanchard and Kathy O'Shea on their 25 years of service, and Buker and Cutler music teacher Kathleen Dailey for achieving professional status. B. Menegoni spoke about HWRHS guidance counselor Hugh Kirkland, who has attained 25 years of service, and congratulated three staff members for achieving professional status: school psychologist Dr. Kathy Pennoyer, math teacher Michelle Polys, and adjustment counselor Sue Howland. C. Heath congratulated three Winthrop staff members for achieving professional status: nurse Jessica Baker, language therapist Molly Silver, and preschool teacher Kristen Thomas. C. Reynolds spoke about Miles River Spanish teacher Jennifer Hugueley and English teacher Terasa Stephens, who achieved professional status.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

R. Kuebel thanked the community for allowing the Committee to hold a private "retreat" meeting in August, and said comprehensive minutes of that meeting will be available soon. He and B. Lawrence briefly discussed recruitment of a community member to serve on the Facilities Committee and R. Kuebel noted the full Committee must make such an appointment.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**  
Minutes of July 11, 2013

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HWRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0-1.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Negotiation

R. Kuebel said this subcommittee met several times during the summer. Issues it is considering are the teachers' contract, which is in the last year of a 3-year contract; an issue regarding the nurses' contract; and some personnel issues regarding non-union teaching assistants and cafeteria staff. The Committee's legal counsel has advised that the full Committee enter executive session when it discusses these matters.

Facilities

This group is to have its second meeting of the fiscal year in the week following this meeting; process issues are on the agenda.

Policy

Policies approved last year are being posted on the website.

Student Representative

Chase Schaub said high school student government meetings start in the week after this meeting, and he would report to the Committee about them when appropriate. The Committee agreed to routinely allow time during committee reports for this to take place.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Recommendation for the HWCAM

HWRHS teacher Kevan Sano has expressed interest in serving on the

Board of Directors

HWCAM board of directors as the district representative. The selectmen of the two towns appoint members to the board, and traditionally the district nominates one of the members; that seat has been unfilled for two years.

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HWRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE RECOMMEND KEVAN SANO FOR THE POSITION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0-1.**

Progress Report on Teacher Evaluation SYSTEM

Dr. Harvey gave a PowerPoint presentation on the new state-mandated teacher evaluation system, adopted by the district per a 25-page agreement negotiated with the teachers' union. (The PowerPoint slide and 25-page agreement are appended to these minutes.) He said he plans to brief the Committee on an educational topic once a month; this was the first of these presentations. He noted that the new system involves a substantial "cultural change" and shift in mindset for teachers and administrators, from evaluating teachers based on what they do in the classroom, to focusing on evidence of students' learning and progress. Dr. Harvey and the Committee briefly discussed related topics including the additional time this will require of principals, possible future incorporation of student and parent survey input, and how much latitude the state gives districts about implementation.

Discussion of Process for MSBA and Buker sprinkler system projects

Dr. Harvey sketched out possible scenarios and timelines for state and local approval and funding of a project to install a sprinkler system at Buker. (His PowerPoint slides are appended to these minutes.) The Committee asked him to arrange a warrant article for fall Town Meetings for the necessary bonding. They recapped the history and estimated cost of the project, and discussed its priority, and whether its purpose is to protect the building or increase student safety. D. Evans noted that the district leases the building from the Town of Wenham, and suggested asking both boards of selectmen whether they would support this project at their Town Meetings.

School Liaison Assignments

At R. Kuebel's suggestion the Committee discussed whether to continue to appoint its members as official liaisons to specific schools, and if so, under what parameters. The Committee informally agreed that this role would be limited to attending a school's public events, and making other visits in the company of the superintendent. Dr. Harvey said the liaison arrangements went well last year. He said he is unaware of other school committees having such a program. Members arranged these 2013-14 assignments: HWRHS, S. MacDonald; Miles River, B. Lawrence; Buker Elementary, J. Bertrand and D. Evans; Cutler Elementary, M. Moore; Winthrop Elementary, B. Lawrence (and S. Condon, who was not present).

Discussion of School Calendar

Dr. Harvey explained the process by which administrators construct the school calendar. The Committee agreed to gather input informally from members of the community, and discuss at a future meeting issues

including whether to start school before Labor Day, the rationale for doing so with a combination of full and partial days followed by a 4-day weekend, and issues regarding ending the school year later in June.

First Reading of Proposed Policies  
*Policy Dissemination*  
*Policy Revision and Review*  
*Conflicts*

B. Lawrence explained three policies proposed by the Policy Working Group. (Draft text is appended to these minutes.) Members expressed varying opinions about whether the superintendent or the Policy Working Group should be responsible for informing the Committee of the need to update, change or create policies.

Discussion of Proposing Amendment  
of Regional Agreement To Reduce  
Number of Committee Members

R. Kuebel said he thinks this Committee is too large. He distributed a chart (which is appended to these minutes) indicating single town districts in Massachusetts typically have smaller boards, and said some regional districts have large boards because of regional agreements that call for representation based on population, election wards, or other elements that are not stipulated in the HWRSD regional agreement. The Committee discussed issues including whether a smaller board could effectively staff the existing subcommittees, whether some subcommittees could be eliminated, various possible impacts of such a reduction on the number of Committee candidates, how committee size affects the nature and pace of discussion and decision making, and by what mechanism the size of the board might be reduced should this proposal move forward and be approved by town voters and the state. Dr. Harvey said this Committee has more subcommittees than most. In an informal poll, three members expressed interest in continuing this discussion promptly, in time to submit a warrant article for fall Town Meetings if the Committee decided to recommend such a change; others expressed reservations about the idea, or discomfort with making a quick decision for the sake of action at this fall's Town Meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT TO  
EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HWRSD  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE  
SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE TO DISCUSS NURSES'  
CONTRACT NEGOTIATION AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS'  
AND CAFETERIA WORKERS' HOURLY RATES AND NOT  
TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION.**

**A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN:**

Jeanise Bertrand Y	Deb Evans Y	Sheila MacDonald Y
Sean Condon A	Roger Kuebel Y	Melissa Even Moore Y
Bill Dery Y	Barbara Lawrence Y	Bill Wilson Y

**THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0-1.**

The public meeting recessed at 9:36 p.m.

**DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS  
USED AT THIS MEETING:**

Draft policies: Policy Dissemination, Policy Revision and Review,  
Conflicts between District Policy and Collective Bargaining  
Agreements of State and Federal Laws (3 pages)

Regional District Agreement (May 2000 amended version) (16 pages)  
Hamilton-Wenham Educator Evaluation Proposal dated May 21, 2013,  
as proposed by the Hamilton-Wenham Education Association and  
subsequently accepted by the District as a contractual document  
(25 pages)  
HWRSD Educator Evaluation System, Summary of Five-Phase Process  
(PowerPoint presentation dated 8/12/2013) (23 slides)  
MSBA Proposed Timeline (for proposed Buker Elementary sprinkler  
project; PowerPoint presentation made by Dr. Harvey at this  
meeting) (5 slides)  
Sample text submitted by Wenham Town Clerk Trudy Reid for  
suggested warrant article to amend Regional School Agreement  
Section 1D to revise election procedures  
Chart of school committee sizes in 243 single town districts (1 page)

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary