

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Nov. 25, 2013

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Roger Kuebel opened the School Committee meeting at 7:03 p.m. in the Buker Multipurpose Room. The Committee and others present rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jeanise Bertrand, Sean Condon, Bill Dery, Deb Evans, Roger Kuebel (chair), Barbara Lawrence, Sheila MacDonald, Bill Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning; Jeff Sands, Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance

ABSENT:

Larry Swartz

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

Executive Session Minutes Sept. 6, 2013
Minutes, Oct. 17, 2013
Minutes, Oct. 24, 2013
Minutes, Nov. 14, 2013

R. Kuebel requested removal of the minutes of Oct. 17 from the consent agenda, because some sections and sentences were incomplete; the Committee asked the minutes secretary to update and resubmit those minutes.

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. DEB EVANS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0-1.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of FY14 budget surplus

R. Kuebel recapped information about a projected FY13 budget surplus of \$934,000, and the Committee's options for use of those funds. Discussion that followed touched on related topics including the potential impact on property tax rates were the Committee to vote at this meeting to return funds to the Towns; the administration's degree of confidence in the surplus projection; components of the projected surplus; possible unbudgeted expenses during the remainder of FY14; the facilities master plan now in process; anticipated FY15 cost increases; and the Committee's prior commitment to return to the Towns surplus funds that exceed 3% of budget.

R. Kuebel reported that Hamilton's town administrator has stated that if the Committee voted at this meeting to return some or all of the surplus funds to the Towns, in December Hamilton selectmen would likely set a lower property tax rate than would otherwise be the case. Wenham

town officials present at the meeting said Wenham already has submitted paperwork to the state for certification of its property tax rate, and that rather than redo the paperwork, town officials would prefer to apply any returned surplus funds to the FY15 town budget. Discussion touched on the sum the district would have to return to each Town for the tax rates to remain flat; the schedule and details of state certification of rates; the Excess and Deficiency account and how and when the district can use those funds; and whether a Committee decision is urgent, or could take place in the spring. Dr. Harvey and J. Sands recommended deferral of a decision until later in the fiscal year.

Several Wenham officials asked the Committee to return surplus money to the Towns upon identifying such a surplus, and leave it to Town officials to resolve the timing and details of what to do with the funds.

Committee members expressed their points of view about whether to return funds to the Towns at this time. R. Kuebel informally polled the Committee; two members (R. Kuebel and B. Wilson) indicated they wished to vote at this meeting to do so. Several Committee members emphasized they are open to returning funds but prefer to make a decision about it at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT:

BILL DERY MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0-1.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED AT THIS MEETING:

None

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary