

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Meeting of August 7, 2012

Minutes

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

Roger Kuebel called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Buker Multipurpose Room. The Committee and audience rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT:

Bill Dery, Roger Kuebel (chair), Barbara Lawrence, Ann Minois, Larry Swartz, Bill Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning

ABSENT:

Sean Condon, Kym Donnellan, Sheila MacDonald

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Faculty Children

R. Kuebel asked audience members whether they attended out of interest in a particular agenda item; upon learning that most were interested in the district policy regarding education in this district of children of faculty members, the Committee resequenced the agenda to consider that matter first.

Dr. Harvey reported on the number of such children enrolled in district schools (a total of 12: 1 high school, 3 middle school, 8 elementary school) and recapped the district's past policy allowing this, and the 2011 Committee vote to grandfather already-enrolled students but discontinue the policy going forward. He said the teachers' union has asked the Committee to restore the earlier policy. He noted potential logistical issues for faculty families who have a child well established in HWRSDA and a younger child they had planned to enroll here later, who under the revised policy would have to attend school elsewhere. He said one faculty member has informed him of such a situation.

Discussion that followed touched on financial issues that drove the policy change, and Committee members' desire for a background briefing by a Committee member and former member who participated in the contract talks in which the district and teachers union negotiated about the policy change. B. Dery asked for information about whether enrollment of faculty children might push any class sizes over limits, and require the hiring of an additional teacher.

Cutler teacher Carey Greene said a committee of teachers surveyed district faculty in spring 2012 to ask how many are interested in

sending their children to HWRSD schools. She offered to share the survey data, which lists the number of children by year, and suggested a representative of this committee participate in a future meeting at which the Committee will discuss the issue further.

Retired Cutler teacher Chris Clemenzi requested quick resolution to minimize stress on children transitioning into or between schools. R. Kuebel said the Committee would try to resolve the issue at its meeting the following week.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Harvey reported that:

- The district has been awarded a Green Communities grant of \$81,521 for energy efficiency upgrades.
- Chris Heath has signed a contract to become principal of Winthrop Elementary, and is to begin work on Aug. 20.
- Applications are being screened for the director of athletics position; a search committee is being assembled to interview candidates the week after this meeting, with the goal of recommending finalists the week of Aug. 20 for Dr. Harvey and the high school principal to interview.
- The state School Building Authority (MSBA) has assigned the district contractors for the Cutler roof project; contracts with the design firm and a project management firm are to be finalized by the end of August.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Communications of Capital Funding

R. Kuebel discussed a citizen's suggestion that groups chartered by the Committee, such as parent advisory committees, participate in open meeting law training. The Committee asked administrators to assemble a list of such groups, and discussed whether each such group should report regularly to the Committee.

B. Dery gave a status report on preparation of a funding proposal for capital projects. (A handout that was shared with the audience is appended to these minutes.) The Committee discussed what material to prepare for a Town Meeting presentation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finalize Working Groups

R. Kuebel asked the Committee to formally approve its prior informal decision that B. Lawrence will serve in FY13 on the Legislative Working Group, not the Communications Working Group as originally assigned.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT BARBARA LAWRENCE BE APPOINTED TO THE LEGISLATIVE WORKING GROUP. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-2.

Discussion followed about what form the Finance Working Group should take for the coming year. R. Kuebel briefed the Committee on two options permitted by the Attorney General. One is to have a finance subcommittee of 4 or fewer members (so full attendance would be below the number that constitutes a quorum of the School Committee), but to invite the entire School Committee to attend meetings; all Committee members could deliberate but only working group members could vote. In this scenario, meetings would be posted in advance for both the Finance Working Group and the School Committee, to take place concurrently. The other option is to eliminate the working group and have the full Committee consider financial matters. After discussing pros and cons, the Committee reached a consensus to eliminate the Finance Working Group.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO DISBAND ITS FINANCE WORKING GROUP. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-2.

L. Swartz later requested research into whether local by laws require this Committee to have a financial subcommittee.

New Law re Education of
Suspended Students

A. Minois announced and Dr. Harvey explained a recently passed new state law about educational services to students who are expelled or put on leave from district schools because they brought a weapon or controlled substance onto school property, assaulted a staff member, or are charged with a felony. He said the new law obligates districts to provide such students with educational services at the district's expense; costs could be charged to the state "circuit breaker" fund if sufficient funds are available. Dr. Harvey said the legislation also sets out stiff procedural restrictions on short-term suspensions.

NEW BUSINESS:
School Committee Retreat

Dr. Harvey outlined various options for a Committee "retreat" and the projected cost. The Committee scheduled a retreat for 8 a.m. to noon on Sat., Aug. 18, with Dr. Harvey and a facilitator, at Endicott College's Wylie Conference Center in Beverly.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
June 15, 2012

Members agreed to amend the draft minutes of June 15, 2012 to correct the spelling of B. Dery's name, and to record that A. Minois attended the meeting.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 15, 2012 MEETING AS AMENDED. ANN MINOIS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-2.

June 18, 2012

R. Kuebel requested that a grid chart listing the members appointed each Committee working group for FY13 be added to the draft minutes.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 18, 2012 MEETING WITH THE GRID SHOWING WHICH MEMBERS WERE ON WHICH WORKING GROUPS TO BE INCLUDED. BARBARA LAWRENCE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-2.

July 26, 2012

R. Kuebel drew members' attention to handwritten information, and his signature, on a page of the draft minutes of July 26, 2012; he and Dr. Harvey explained that documentation of a vote taken at that meeting was required by the MSBA prior to this meeting, so as chair, R. Kuebel made some edits to the minutes to correct some matters of fact and signed them to indicate he did so, before the record of the vote was submitted to the MSBA. B. Lawrence requested correction of a sentence on page 2 to eliminate an incorrect statement that she met multiple times with another party; one meeting took place.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE JULY 26, 2012 MEETING AS AMENDED. BARBARA LAWRENCE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-2.

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS NON-UNION PERSONNEL AND NOT TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS NON-UNION PERSONNEL AND NOT TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN:

Sean Condon A	Roger Kuebel Y	Ann Minois Y
Bill Dery Y	Barbara Lawrence Y	Larry Swartz Y
Kym Donnellan A	Sheila MacDonald A	Bill Wilson Y

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-2.

The regular meeting ended at 8:14 p.m.

DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED AT THIS MEETING:

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary