

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Meeting of October 4, 2012

Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER
AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Larry Swartz called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Buker Multi-Purpose Room. The Committee and audience rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Sean Condon, Bill Dery, Sheila MacDonald, Barbara Lawrence, Ann Minois, Larry Swartz (acting chair), and Bill Wilson

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent Peter Gray

ABSENT: Kym Donnellan, Roger Kuebel

CITIZENS' CONCERNS: None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative Executive Summary
Dr. Harvey briefed the Committee about this Collaborative. Its Fall 2012 Executive Summary is appended to these minutes.

Suspension of Evening Activities
Dr. Harvey said district officials anticipated that public health officials might ban evening activities due to the threat of EEE in the area. He notified families by phone and letter (appended). Athletic events have been timed so all athletes will be off the field by 5 p.m.

Proposed Repairs to Center School
Dr. Harvey and Committee members discussed the bonding proposal to be brought before Town Meetings this fall, and proposed Center School repairs that are among the projects that bond would fund. Dr. Harvey said the Evergreen report overstates energy costs at that building, and understates the likely cost of moving the central administrative offices to the high school, which he said would require adding to that school.

CHAIR'S REPORT: Committee vice-chair L. Swartz read a report written by chair R. Kuebel, who was absent from the meeting.

School Committee Retreat
The Committee met on 9/27 at the Wylie Inn in Beverly for a training session about the roles of the School Committee and superintendent, and how the Committee relates to the community. Another session is scheduled for 6 p.m. 10/11 at the Center School.

Excess & Deficiency Account
The district has submitted documents to the state for certification of the Excess & Deficiency balance at \$1.4 million. The Committee will later need to vote about whether to transfer \$750,000 of that to the capital

fund to eliminate a deficit in that fund due to accounting transfers for past HVAC work at Cutler. R. Kuebel and the district's auditors are investigating why the effective useable E&D balance will be \$651,000, not the \$1.2 to \$1.4 million as earlier projected. He said an official vote by the Committee is required to make the transfer, but if the Committee votes not to, the state Department of Revenue would do so. Committee discussion followed.

Information Sessions Prior to
Vote on Bonding

Over the two weeks prior to this meeting, Committee members made presentations to the Wenham Finance Committee and the League of Women Voters.

Upcoming Meetings

Training about the state Open Meeting Law will take place during the 10/18 meeting; chairs of other groups have been invited. Morning meetings to discuss financial matters are scheduled for 10/5 and 10/12.

CONSENT AGENDA:

9/6/2012 Minutes
9/20/2012 Minutes
9/28/2012 Minutes

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION 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. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Minutes of several meetings of the Policy Working Group, and of a meeting of four Committee members with a construction firm regarding proposed Cutler School roofing work, have been submitted and are available for public review.

B. Dery explained the nature of roof monitors mentioned in the later minutes and said their removal does not appear to be cost-effective.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nomination of Representative to
Northshore Education
Consortium Board of Directors

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE NOMINATE DR. HARVEY AS REPRESENTATIVE TO NORTHSORE EDUCATION CONSORTIUM'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

Policy on Student Records

Proposed changes to the existing policy would identify each principal as the custodian of records for a given school building, and make clear that records are confidential. The Committee discussed options for off-site back-up of records. This was the first reading of the proposed policy changes; no vote took place. (The document showing the existing text and proposed changes is appended to these minutes.)

Policy on Emergency Response

This proposed new policy would direct the administration to have plans in place for response to emergencies. (The proposed policy is appended to these minutes.)

2012 MCAS Results

Dr. Bowler gave a PowerPoint presentation on statewide changes to MCAS goals and terminology, and analysis of the data this district recently received reporting students' scores on MCAS tests taken at the end of the 2011-12 academic year. She displayed slides of grade-by-grade results. Dr. Harvey explained how the data is analyzed. (The PowerPoint slides are appended to these minutes.)

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Final Bond Communications

A "walk-about" to inform voters about repair needs at Winthrop School drew a smaller audience than anticipated. Committee members discussed whether to schedule another, perhaps on the morning of Hamilton Town Meeting. They discussed other ways to communicate with residents before Town Meetings.

Update on Virtual Department of Public Works (VDPW)

Dr. Harvey updated the Committee about planning for a VPDW. The planning committee has circulated a statement of purpose, organizational chart and timeline (which are appended to these minutes). A director, to be hired in spring of 2013, would be supervised by a board consisting of the superintendent and the manager or administrator of each of the two Towns. He said the Collins Institute, a U. Mass. public works group that helps communities design programs, assisted the planning committee. This would be the first joint public works department in Massachusetts. State grants may be available to pay for implementation of some features.

ADJOURNMENT:

BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (7-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS USED AT THIS MEETING:

Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative Executive Summary Fall 2012 (2 pages)
10/2/2012 letter from Dr. Harvey to families re ban on organized outdoor activities due to EEE threat (2 pages)
9/27/2012 letter from Dr. Harvey to parents and guardians re MCAS results (2 pages)
9/25/2012 minutes, prepared by Coast Harbor Construction, of meeting with School Committee re proposed work on Cutler School roof (2 pages) and agenda of that meeting (1 page)
Proposed revision to existing Student Records Policy (1 page)
Proposed Emergency Response Policy (1 page)

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary