

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

March 21, 2013

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Roger Kuebel opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. in the Buker Multipurpose Room. The Committee and others present rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT:

Sean Condon, Roger Kuebel (chair), Sheila MacDonald, Ann Minois, Larry Swartz, Bill Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

Dr. Michael Harvey, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning; Peter Gray, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration; Alan Taupier, Director of Information Technology

ABSENT:

Bill Dery, Kym Donnellan, Barbara Lawrence

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

Three officers of the high school student government updated the Committee about anti-bullying programs, "digital citizenship" issues related to students' in-school use of wireless devices, and class fundraising.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Harvey noted that the high school one-act play advanced to the state finals and students were performing it at the state drama festival in Boston on the evening of this meeting.

He asked members to review materials related to their upcoming evaluation of him; the materials consisted of the goals he submitted in September and state documents that lay out how educators are to be evaluated. (They are appended to these minutes.) He said he would report at the April 4 meeting on his progress meeting the goals and present documentation.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

R. Kuebel said he would circulate a form to members for use in the Committee's self-evaluation, which they are to complete and return to him; results are to be presented at a future meeting.

He said the district treasurer would be out of the office on medical leave for several weeks, so the assistant treasurer would need to process checks. A. Minois, who currently holds that post, noted that her term would expire before the district treasurer's return to work. The Committee informally accepted S. MacDonald's offer to serve as assistant treasurer until the Committee reorganizes and appoints a new assistant treasurer. The Committee agreed to vote officially on that

appointment at the next meeting, and briefly discussed the necessary training and bonding.

CONSENT AGENDA:

L. Swartz asked that the single item on the consent agenda, the minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2013, be removed from that agenda.

He proposed two amendments to those minutes: the addition of his name to the list of member present at the meeting, and correction of a word in a motion on page 2 of the draft minutes.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 2013 AS AMENDED. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-3.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Facilities

S. MacDonald reported this working group met the night before this meeting and discussed the master plan.

Legislative

A. Minois announced that the annual legislative breakfast is scheduled for 8 a.m. Tues. May 14, and U.S. Rep. John Tierney, state Sen. Bruce Tarr and state Rep. Brad Hill have confirmed they can attend.

Policy

S. MacDonald said this working group is finalizing fiscal and administrative policy documents and is trying to get foundations policies into final form before working group member L. Swartz's term expires.

Communications

R. Kuebel briefed the Committee about public access to bound copies of the FY14 budget, and about preparation of a press release, and a postcard to residents with basic budget facts and information about how to access the full budget. A. Minois suggested placing copies at the Council on Aging buildings, in addition to the locations R. Kuebel mentioned.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Updates regarding status of Audit Management Letter Recommendations and Fiscal Policy Implementation

P. Gray updated the Committee on administrative response to the 14 recommendations the district's auditors made in the Management Letter that accompanied the most recent audit. Members received in print the slides of a PowerPoint presentation prepared for this report (which are appended to these minutes). P. Gray said 9 of the issues have been completely resolved, and the administration would resolve the others by dates ranging from April 30 to June 1, 2013.

Discussion took place about some of the recommendations and procedural changes, including use of software for banking reconciliations, analysis of withholding accounts, segregation of duties

of two clerks in the business office, segregation of duties related to vendors, and computer security passwords.

Finalize Steps for Facilities Master Plan

The Committee reviewed an updated version of a Committee goal statement discussed and revised at a prior meeting; it specifies dates in May and June 2013 to release an RFQ and award a contract for consulting related to development of master plan (as timing milestones f and g). Committee members expressed support for the revision but deferred a vote on the document to the meeting of April 4. (The updated revised goal statement is appended to these minutes.)

Second Reading and Vote on Fiscal Policies

The Committee approved new and revised policies. The Policy Working Group had revised some drafts since the Committee discussed them at a prior meeting. (The draft policies are appended to these minutes.)

Bonded Employees & Officers

On the advice of the district's auditors, the Policy Committee revised the original draft of this policy to increase the bond amount.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE BONDED EMPLOYEES & OFFICERS POLICY AS PRESENTED. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-3.

Fiscal Accounting & Reporting

The Policy Committee's draft called for the superintendent to inform the Committee monthly of any deficits. In discussion, Committee members suggested such information should be relayed as situations occur, rather than on a set schedule.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO STRIKE THE LAST FULL SENTENCE OF THE FISCAL ACCOUNTING & REPORTING POLICY AND REPLACE IT WITH "THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE WILL BE INFORMED OF ANY SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL DEFICITS AND RESOLUTIONS." SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION TO AMEND PASSED 6-0-0-3.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE FISCAL ACCOUNTING & REPORTING POLICY AS AMENDED. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-3.

Student Activity

No action

Purchasing Authority

This policy was already approved, but was brought before the Committee again on the recommendation of the district's auditors, who suggested state law may require the Committee to take more specific

action to approve warrants. The Committee discussed whether small subcommittee for this purpose is required, and how many individuals would have to sign warrants. The Committee decided to learn more about the legal issues before deciding whether to amend this policy.

NEW BUSINESS:

Report from Director of Technology
Regarding Technology Initiatives

A. Taupier provided details about the expenses, technology needs, and strategies he considered in constructing the FY14 IT budget, and discussed these matters with Committee members. (His written report is appended to these minutes.) Topics included these:

- lifecycle replacement of computers
- shifting computers between areas and users year to year
- how iPads may be used in FY14 and beyond
- projection equipment
- smartboards, the likely horizon for the usefulness of that technology, and what other technology may provide similar functions
- software details and expenses
- networking technology
- filtering or blocking websites at the middle and high school, where students now can use personal wireless devices
- contracting for IT services that are not needed frequently enough to justify adding specialists in those areas to the District staff

He gave a status report on redesign of the District website and passed around a 1-page sample of the first draft design prepared by a contractor. He said the technical framework is in place and data can be poured in while graphic design work is completed. R. Kuebel said updating the website is urgent and A. Minois asked A. Taupier if hiring temporary additional staff would help him complete the task sooner.

First Reading of the
Foundations Policies

Members of the Policy Working Group explained the purpose of proposed new policies and amendments of existing policies. The Committee is to vote on them at a future meeting, after a second reading.

Nondiscrimination

This draft policy states that the District will not tolerate discrimination, cites statutory protected classes, and states the complaint procedure. B. Wilson noted the District has a separate harassment policy.

School Councils
School Improvement Plan

These draft policies state the legal requirements for school councils and the improvement plans they generate. L. Swartz noted that the working group opted for separate policies on councils and improvement plans, but the Committee's legal counsel suggests integrating the two.

Safe Schools

This states the District will not tolerate violence.

School District's Legal Status

This is a statement of why we have public schools. A. Minois questioned the need for such a policy if it is in the state constitution.

Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol

The existing district policy refers only to tobacco; the draft revision would expand it to refer to drugs and alcohol too, prohibiting the use or possession of any of these substances on school property or in connection with a school-sponsored activity anywhere.

Review of FY14 School Calendar

Dr. Harvey said winter break in the 2013-14 school year is scheduled to last a full two weeks because holidays fall on Wednesdays of both weeks and administrators decided not to reopen school for just two days at the end of the second week; the draft calendar calls for school to resume on Mon., Jan. 6, 2014.

He and the Committee discussed the FY14 schedule for teacher workshop days and elementary school parent-teacher conferences; the 2013-14 calendar includes two half-days of school for elementary students, with parent-teacher conferences on the afternoons that follow, because scheduling an entire day off for conferences brought the total school days for elementary students below the state-required 180 days.

Michelle Bailey of Remington Rd., Wenham, spoke from the audience to suggest changing the ending time of those half-days to match the routine Wednesday early release times, and shifting a scheduled teacher workshop day to a Friday; she also asked why all the schools don't have the elementary conference days off from school. Dr. Harvey said he was open to ending the half-days at 11:30, and replied that the teacher workshop date was dictated by the speaker's schedule.

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE 2013-2014 SCHOOL CALENDAR AS PRESENTED THIS EVENING ON THE DATE MARCH 21, 2013. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-3.

ADJOURNMENT:

LARRY SWARTZ MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0-3.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

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

Superintendent's Goals for 2012-2013 (3 pages)
MA DESE Model System for Educator Evaluation, Part III
Appendix A, January 2012 (20 pages)
Guidance for Conducting the Evaluation Process, from Part VI:
Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation, January
2012 (7 pages)
Fiscal Year 2012 Management Letter Review, PowerPoint slides dated
March 7, 2013 (8 slides)

Draft Fiscal Policies D-4007-4008, 4018, 4021: Bonded Employees and Officers; Fiscal Accounting and Reporting; Student Activity; Use of Grant Funds: Supplement, Not Supplant (4 pages)
Draft Foundations Policies [unnumbered]: Nondiscrimination; School Councils (2 versions); School Improvement Plan; Safe Schools; School District's Legal Status; Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol (13 pages)
FY14 Technology Requirements (2 pages)
Revised goal statement [with revised timing milestones F and G] (1 page)
HWRSD 2013-14 School Calendar, updated 3/21/13 (2 pages)

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary