

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee**

**May 2, 2013**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER AND**

Roger Kuebel opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m. in the conference room of the Center Building. He noted that Richard Boroff was recording the meeting, from the audience.

**PRESENT:**

Jeanise Bertrand, Sean Condon, 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

**ABSENT:**

No one

**CITIZENS' CONCERNS:**

Tom Starr of 41 Pleasant St., Wenham, expressed concerns about the procedures used to determine the school assignments of incoming kindergartners whose parents requested full-day kindergarten for their children for 2013-14. He spoke about his daughter's assignment and communication between his family and the district. He asked what criteria drove the assignment decisions; said inadequate information was provided to parents; said the process appears unfair to children who are the first child in their family to attend district schools (because children with an older sibling already in the district were placed in that older sibling's school), and called for more transparency on the district's part. Ruth Bossler of 7 Monument Street., Wenham, expressed similar concerns and said it seems discriminatory to handle school assignments differently for incoming kindergartners who have an older sibling already attending a district elementary school, and for incoming kindergartners who do not. Discussion followed that included the Committee, Dr. Harvey, and a Committee member who was in the audience. R. Kuebel said the Committee would review the district policy (from which T. Starr read, and which is appended to these minutes) and confer with Dr. Harvey. S. MacDonald noted that it is the Committee's routine practice to consider citizens' concerns and respond later.

Action items:

- R. Kuebel and B. Lawrence are to review the district's policy.
- R. Kuebel and Dr. Harvey are to discuss the specifics of this year's full-year kindergarten assignments.
- The administration is to communicate with all families involved.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** None

**CHAIR'S REPORT:** None

**CONSENT AGENDA:**  
Minutes of April 25, 2013

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE, WITH THE CORRECTION OF A NAME SPELLING, ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. BARBARA LAWRENCE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**  
Review Objectives for the Coming Year

R. Kuebel outlined what he said are the Committee's essential tasks and asked each Committee member to briefly state additional tasks he or she believes the Committee should make a priority for the coming year. Their points follow their names below.

R. Kuebel: finish updating policy manual; approve budget; execute phase 2 of capital improvements plan; negotiate teacher's contract; negotiate nurses' contract; proceed with facilities master plan; vet superintendent's strategic plan; review technology plan; evaluate superintendent; conclude response to operational audit; consider whether to reduce size of School Committee; set objectives (educational and financial) rather than specifying tactics; find ways to reward and recognize excellent teachers.

B. Wilson: manage annual audit; hammer out material weaknesses identified by the last audit; improve website.

B. Lawrence: receive report from school choice study committee; make the Communications Working Group more interactive, to solicit public input.

D. Evans: communicate on an ongoing basis with residents who do not have children enrolled in the district.

B. Dery: consider stipends for Committee members; reduce the size of the Committee to 5; have print copies of all materials for Committee meetings mailed to members by the Monday preceding a Thursday meeting; revise the system of discussion so each member in turn can express an opinion about a matter, rather than "back and forth discussion"; eliminate some committees; increase flexibility in order to quickly resolve simple matters; resume prior practice of discussing matters that are not on the agenda for a meeting, by voting to add those

topics to the agenda at the time of the meeting, with the understanding no vote could take place; create a two-month "moving calendar" listing upcoming meetings, reports, and decisions; enforce existing district class size policy, or amend it and enforce the amended version; initiate classes for Committee members about topics such as budget terms and processes; develop a handbook for new members of the Committee; be more involved regarding classes, people, and students, and decide what they get; clarify whether the Committee is to approve subcommittees' recommendations made by subcommittees, or consider those recommendations as input but continue discussion and perhaps make a different decision than the subcommittee recommended; mail printed material inexpensively to the public.

J. Bertrand: educate district residents about how the budget is put together; get the Excess and Deficiency balance certified more promptly by the state.

M. Even Moore: emphasize communication.

S. MacDonald: hold Committee workshops or retreats about important topics such as negotiations.

S. Condon: agree on strategic plan; continue to track legislative issues.

R. Kuebel said for the coming year, as chair he would not move forward discussion of an idea raised by just one member of the Committee. He said a Committee member who wants to make a recommendation should develop it in advance with one or more other Committee members, and put forth a proposal at a meeting by making a motion at a meeting; if that motion is seconded, discussion will proceed.

#### Vote to Develop Subcommittees

R. Kuebel distributed a draft list of Working Group assignments for the coming year (which is appended to these minutes), and indicated his opinion that legislative and communications working groups might be unnecessary in 2013-14. The Committee, and former Committee members who were in the audience, discussed topics including the nature and responsibilities of the existing working groups; how they fit in with responsibilities handled by district administrators and the Building Committee; and how a facilities subcommittee might fit in with a joint department of public works if one is officially constituted. Members had the opportunity to ask to be removed from the proposed slates, or added to them, and to state their reasons. They discussed whether to appoint five members to any working groups (which would make it necessary to post each of that group's meetings as a meeting of the full Committee, because those five people would constitute a quorum of the Committee), and decided not to. R. Kuebel said his proposed working group slates all include individuals whose terms continue beyond 2013-14, to ensure continuity.

The Committee decided to continue to have a Facilities Working Group, rather than a subcommittee that R. Kuebel had proposed that he suggested focus solely on the second phase of the capital campaign (which appears on the appended committee slate list as "Capital 2"). The Committee decided to consider the slate of candidates R. Kuebel had proposed for the Capital 2 committee as candidates for appointment to the Facilities Working Group. B. Dery and S. MacDonald requested their names be removed from consideration; B. Lawrence said she would like to serve.

The committee deferred a decision about whether to appoint a Communications Working Group.

Action item:

- J. Bertrand and D. Evans are to communicate with Dr. Harvey about his plans for communications, and how a Committee working group might assist with or supplement this.

The Committee created a new Warrant Subcommittee, as required by law; to this point Committee members have performed the legally-required tasks, but not as an officially constituted subcommittee. It also created a new Audit Working Group to work closely with the district's auditing firm, which reports directly to the Committee, on the routine annual financial audit.

The Committee deferred a decision about whether to appoint a Legislative Working Group, and agreed to ask former Committee member Ann Minois to serve as a liaison to maintain rapport with state legislators and keep the Committee abreast of legislative developments. M. Even Moore expressed interest in participating in this.

Action item:

- M. Even Moore is to communicate with A. Minois.

**DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE THE FOUR NAMES SUGGESTED UNDER THE NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE, GOING INTO THE NEXT YEAR: ROGER KUEBEL, BILL WILSON, DEB EVANS AND MELISSA EVEN MOORE. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**BILL DERY PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT TO THE MOTION, TO REPLACE DEB EVANS WITH HIMSELF ON THE LIST OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE.** There was no second to the motion.

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

M. Even Moore expressed interest in serving on the Policy Working Group. J. Bertrand withdrew her name.

**BARBARA LAWRENCE MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE AMENDED LIST FOR THE POLICY GROUP: BARBARA LAWRENCE, SHEILA MACDONALD, SEAN CONDON, AND MELISSA EVEN MOORE. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

**SHEILA MACDONALD MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE LIST FOR THE AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE: ROGER KUEBEL, BILL WILSON, DEB EVANS, AND JEANISE BERTRAND. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

**SHEILA MACDONALD MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADOPT THE FACILITIES WORKING GROUP COMMITTEE OF BARBARA LAWRENCE AND SEAN CONDON. MELISSA EVEN MOORE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

M. Even Moore offered to serve on the Warrants Subcommittee.

**SHEILA MACDONALD MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADOPT THE WARRANT LIST OF SHEILA MACDONALD, SEAN CONDON, MELISSA EVEN MOORE AND JEANISE BERTRAND. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Review Draft of Strategic Plan

Dr. Harvey said he would share this draft with school advisory councils and parent groups over the coming month and request feedback. R. Kuebel proposed the Committee dedicate a significant amount of time at a future meeting to discussion of members' opinions about the draft, and of feedback from others.

Vote to Establish  
RFQ Selection Committee

Dr. Harvey proposed appointment to this committee of the same people who developed the RFQ document, with the exception that another representative of one of the Towns' governments replace the Hamilton selectman who helped develop the RFQ but has since left the select board. He recapped the committee's responsibilities. R. Kuebel suggested appointment of Grace Belfiore to this committee because its function is her area of professional expertise. B. Dery asked to be removed from the slate. B. Lawrence asked to be added.

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE FOLLOWING PERSONS FOR THE SELECTION COMMITTEE WITH REGARD TO THE RFQ FOR THE HWRSD FACILITIES AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM MASTER PLAN: HELEN ALLARD, JENNIFER CLIFFORD, WILLIAM MELVILLE, A TOWN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TO BE NAMED AT A LATER DATE, WILLIAM WILSON, SHEILA MACDONALD, BARBARA LAWRENCE, AND GRACE BELFIORE. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

Vote to set the last day of school as June 19

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR THE FY13 SCHOOL YEAR AS JUNE 19, 2013.**

Discussion of Treasurer's Contract

R. Kuebel informed the Committee of the district treasurer's request for renewal of his contract; the current contract expires June 30. He read from a letter from the treasurer (which is appended to these minutes). Discussion touched on the fact that the Committee has never officially evaluated this employee (who works directly for the Committee).

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT ROGER KUEBEL BE AUTHORIZED TO NEGOTIATE A 1-YEAR CONTRACT WITH THE TREASURER. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0-0).**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**DEB EVANS MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. JEANISE BERTRAND SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

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

List of working group member slates (1 page)  
HWRSD Theory of Action Strategic Blueprint (2 pages)  
HWRSD Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs (2 pages)  
HWRSD Designer Selection Procedures, April 10, 2013 (5 pages)  
HWRSD Request for Qualifications for HWRSD Facilities and Educational Program Master Plan (40 pages)  
Terms of Employment, Don Gallant, District Treasurer, 2011-2012 (1 page)

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary