

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee**

**May 16, 2013**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER AND  
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Roger Kuebel opened the meeting at 7:28 p.m. in the Buker Multipurpose Room. The Committee and others present rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Prior to the official start of the meeting, high school students who have advanced to the National History Day competition presented and/or described their projects to members of the Committee and the audience, starting at 6 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:**

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

**ABSENT:**

Bill Dery, Melissa Even Moore

**CITIZENS' CONCERNS:**

None

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Dr. Harvey said former HWRHS principal John Elwell began a temporary position last week at Miles River Middle School, to fill in during principal John Driscoll's absence due to illness. J. Elwell will work two days a week, and assistant principal Christy Reynolds' schedule is increased to four days a week, for the rest of this school year.

He reported on middle and high school students' high achievement on the recent national Spanish exam; described the "ed camp" that took place the day before this meeting in which members of the faculty teach other teachers about educational technology; and recognized Brian Riordan, the student representative to the Committee, who was attending his final meeting.

**CHAIR'S REPORT:**

None

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Field Trip Request to University of Maryland; Minutes of May 2, 2013; Executive Session minutes of May 9, May 31 and Dec. 11, 2011, and of Feb. 9, April 5, May 3, May 7, May 21, and June 21, 2012

R. Kuebel explained that portions of some minutes of executive sessions of the Committee that are part of the Consent Agenda are redacted (blacked out) because counsel advised that anything that could affect future collective bargaining should be redacted.

J. Bertrand asked that the minutes of the executive session on May 9, 2011 be removed from the consent agenda.

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA BUT THE May 9, 2011 EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES. THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER DISCUSSION OR AMENDMENT OF THIS MOTION. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-0.**

J. Bertrand said she requested separate consideration of the minutes of May 9, 2011 (a negotiating session between the School Committee's Negotiating Working Group and the teachers' bargaining unit) because much more of the text is redacted in those minutes than in the others; she suggested a note be added to the top of the document to explain to readers the reason for this. The Committee discussed various options; R. Kuebel said he would consider them and make sure the reason is communicated.

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2011. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-0.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Student Government

Two officers of the high school student government reported briefly on elections of next year's officers, and other details of closing out this academic year.

Vote to Accept the Friends of the Arts' Gift from the Take A Seat Campaign

Kathy Swierzewski of Friends of the Arts reported on the group's fundraising campaign to improve the sound system in the high school auditorium, and said additional funds for phase 2 might be follow.

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE GIFT OF \$7,175.00 (SEVEN THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS) FOR THE UPGRADES TO THE FERRINI DRAMATICS CENTER. SHEILA MACDONALD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-0.**

Vote to Accept the EdFund's Gift for Chromebooks for the RHS English Department

High school English teacher Bob Hickey briefed the Committee about Chromebooks, for which the EdFund has offered a grant for purchase of 30 devices, a cart, and professional development to train teachers to integrate them into instruction. He answered Committee members' questions.

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE GIFT OF**

**\$9,778 (NINE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-EIGHT DOLLARS) FOR CHROMEBOOKS. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-0.**

Personnel Policies (First Reading)

Dr. Harvey briefed the Committee on the purpose and some details of proposed personnel policies. (The draft policies are appended to these minutes.) B. Lawrence said the Policy Working Group surveyed other districts and found they have an average of 34 personnel policies, but at present HWRSD has just one. Some proposed policies were uncontroversial; for others, notes below indicate the topics of discussion.

- General Policy (states personnel goals)
- Recruitment & Selection (recruiting, selection, career support, job descriptions, personal interviews and background checks)
- Equal Employment Opportunity (complies with law) The draft designated Dr. Harvey as the person who would handle inquiries; the Committee decided to list just the job title, not the personal name, of the responsible party.
- Gifts To and Solicitations By Staff (limits, more than state law, the type of gift an employee could accept from parents, students, or vendors) Discussion topics included whether families would be disappointed, and whether to solicit the opinions of teachers before voting on this policy.
- Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest (specifies and prohibits types of conflict of interest). The Policy Working Group decided the closely related draft Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct policy would be redundant; those draft policies will not move forward.
- Resignation of Professional Staff (stipulates procedure and expected timeframe of notice before departure)
- Retirement of Professional Staff Members (stipulates procedure, timing, and Committee action as needed)
- Suspension and Dismissal of Professional Staff Members (sets out due process that complies with state law and recognizes contractual agreement)
- Drug-Free Workplace (complies with law)
- Personnel records (states confidentiality, and employee's access and right to rebut)

The documents Committee members received before this meeting mistakenly included outdated versions of the draft policies, and omitted some policy drafts; therefore, additional personnel policy proposals are to be presented for a first reading at a future meeting, including draft policies on Suspension and Dismissal of Support Services, and Posting Vacancies. B. Lawrence said the Policy Working Group hopes to have all personnel policies approved by the end of June.

Review Draft of Strategic Plan

Dr. Harvey gave a PowerPoint presentation about his draft mission, vision and core beliefs statements, and strategic plan. (The slides are

appended to these minutes.) His 35-minute presentation touched on topics including 10 core beliefs, student assessment, regular review of curriculum documents, more cohesive professional development, definition of the measures of evaluation of student performance the district will use going forward as one element of the new state-mandated educator evaluation system, and the sequence and timeline for development of annual district and school improvement plans.

Questions followed, and each Committee member offered his or her individual critique and suggestions; group discussion was postponed until a future meeting.

R. Kuebel invited comments from the audience. Helen Allard of Woodland Mead, Hamilton, said the draft strategic plan focuses excessively on data-driven decision-making; she spoke of the value of insight and qualitative activities and connections. Grace Belfiore of Hamilton spoke about the challenge of improving current practice, learning and outcomes at the same time it is necessary to respond to dramatic changes in the nature of education due to technology-driven shifts in how students learn; she recommended gathering extensive input from teachers, and also from parents and community members. Richard Boroff of Moynihan Rd., Hamilton said he prefers the existing mission statement; advocated articulating a strategic goal before designing a strategic plan; and said the draft presented at this meeting seems "bottom up, not top down."

R. Kuebel said the Committee would discuss the draft strategic plan at the next meeting.

Vote to Transfer Funds from E&D to  
Capital Account—Approximately \$750,000 Postponed

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**BILL WILSON MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. JEANISE BERTRAND SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 7-0-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

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

Field Trip Request form and supporting documents, high school trip to Maryland for National History Day, June 9-13, 2013 (30 pages)  
HWRHS Ferrini Dramatics Center Upgrades, Audio/Video Systems: Phase 2 (1 page)  
EdFund grant request for Chromebook Laptops, dated Feb. 27, 2013 (3 pages)  
Draft personnel policies: General Policy, Recruitment & Selection, Equal Employment Opportunity, Gifts to & Solicitations By Staff, Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Interest & Ethical

Conduct, Resignation of Professional Staff Members, Retirement of Professional Staff Members, Suspension & Dismissal of Professional Staff Members, Drug-Free Workplace Policy, Personnel Records

HWRSD draft Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs, dated 5/13/2013  
(8 pages)

HWRSD Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs and HWRSD Strategic Plan Blueprint, PowerPoint presentation dated 5/16/13 (12 slides)

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary