

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee  
Regular Meeting of Oct. 6, 2011

Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER:** A. McCloughan called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. in the superintendent's office in the Center Building.

**PRESENT:** Sean Condon, Kym Donnellan, Roger Kuebel, Alexa McCloughan, Ann Minois, Jack O'Keefe, Dacia Rubel, and Larry Swartz

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning

**ABSENT:** William Dery & Peter Gray

**LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE:** A McCloughan said this meeting took place in the superintendent's office rather than the Buker multi-purpose room, and was not televised, because it was a simpler way to conduct it given its brief agenda and the expectation it would last approximately 30 minutes. The meeting was posted and members of the public were present in the audience.

She and K. Donnellan thanked C. Bowler for handling a water emergency that affected Buker School during the week of this meeting, in the acting superintendent's absence.

Assistant Superintendent Update C. Bowler reported on the following:

State officials discovered that Spring 2011 Grade 10 MCAS math scores were incorrectly scored statewide, so when the district mailed spring MCAS results to families early in the week of this meeting, students who took that test received letters explaining the error. The district just received the corrected scores, and will send them to families within days.

Cutler School was evacuated on Oct. 3 because of a suspected gas leak, but the fire department determined that although there was a smell of gas at the school, the leak was elsewhere in Hamilton.

Heavy rain flooded part of the Buker School parking lot up to the windows on Oct. 4; water leaked into the basement. The fire department pumped it out. Various items were removed for drying or disposal. Rugs have been removed, dried, and cleaned. A contractor is to inspect the area, and treat for mold if necessary.

The Town of Wenham issued a "boil water order" on Oct. 4 because e coli was detected in the town water supply. Town officials notified the district directly. Custodians covered water fountains and sinks at Buker and placed extra containers of anti-bacterial hand washing solution around the school. Jugs of bottled water were obtained for the nurse's use. Dr. Bowler said no problems or issues have arisen at Buker. The cafeteria staff is preparing meals that require no water, and in addition to wearing gloves as usual when preparing food, they are using anti-bacterial hand washing solution. Wenham selectman Molly Martin, who was in the audience, reported that the boil water order would remain in effect at least through Sat. Oct. 8. K. Donnellan praised teachers' handling of the situation; she said her children came home from school well informed, and not alarmed.

Payroll administrator Kenny Mayne has resigned as of Oct. 27 to take a job with the Essex Regional Retirement System. The job has been posted.

Dr. Bowler said she wrote to the Hamilton and Wenham fire and police departments to thank them for their prompt response to the week's multiple emergencies.

**NEW WORKING GROUP  
ASSIGNMENTS:**

A. McCloughan distributed and reviewed her proposal for Committee members' assignment to Committee working groups, and appointment of the chair of each one. D. Gallant, who no longer serves on the Committee, mistakenly was listed as a member of one group; the Committee agreed to delete his name. As proposed, L. Swartz would serve as a liaison to Buker School, and on the Facilities, Legislative, and Policy working groups; D. Rubel would replace D. Gallant on the Finance Working Group, and chair it. A. McCloughan said all Committee members can attend meetings of any group, and once the budget process begins, the Finance Working Group will no longer meet separately; the full Committee will deliberate on budget issues. Several members noted that W. Dery is nominated for just one working group because he declined to serve on several others.

The Committee discussed the proposed assignments. Some members favored appointing people with extensive financial experience to the Finance Working Group; others spoke of the importance of appointing people who know the "history" of the district and prior years' budget planning. L. Swartz said he worked on budgets as a Wenham selectman and Finance Committee member; he volunteered to join the Finance Working Group and said he would attend all its meetings whether or not

he is appointed to it. Members discussed the function of that working group. D. Rubel said it would direct the process for reporting on the annual audit that is nearing completion, and design the process for the full Committee to work on the budget in winter and spring; R. Kuebel said the group also should identify and explain variances between the way the district and auditors present budget information, explain all school accounts to the public, and with Town officials resolve what the budget format will be for the coming year, an issue about which he said the Committee and Towns' representatives have different opinions.

The Committee also discussed whether the Committee chair or members of a working group should choose who will chair that group. Several members said other local government bodies choose their own chairs. A. McCloughan said nomination by the Committee chair is standard practice for this Committee, and recognizes the seniority and experience of members of longer standing; she also said she nominates members for particular committees to "stretch" them beyond their areas of professional expertise so they gain broad experience and can make informed decisions about issues such as contract negotiations, policies and strategic planning. Discussion focused on the nomination of D. Rubel to chair the Finance Working Group. Several members said nothing the Committee does is unrelated to finance.

Upon the suggestion that members vote separately on the membership of working groups, and who will chair them, A. McCloughan proposed a vote first on the two combined, noting the matters could be divided for individual votes if the initial motion failed.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE WORKING GROUP ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHOOL BUILDING ASSIGNMENTS AS ESTABLISHED AT THE OCTOBER 6, 2011 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING, MINUS DON GALLANT'S NAME ON THE LEGISLATIVE WORKING GROUP. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0-3.** (Roger Kuebel, Ann Minois and Larry Swartz voted no.)

**SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH  
UPDATE:**

D. Rubel presented documents she drafted for use during the upcoming search for a superintendent, which she based on materials developed during the last search in spring of 2010. She said P. Gray expressed his intent to apply. She recommended a diligent, but not necessarily national, search. She recommended also that the Committee ask the Massachusetts Association of School Committee to help evaluate candidates, which she

said is a service available to MASC members at no charge; she said the timeline would permit the Committee to hire a search consultant later if necessary.

The Committee discussed the proposed timeline, and the process and criteria for appointing search committee members. They expressed a consensus favoring public review and revision or validation of the leadership profile written in 2010; this discussion touched on whether, because a recent administrative restructuring created the position of Assistant Superintendent for Learning, the new superintendent should be a business specialist. Several members mentioned the importance of making the search process equitable for outside candidates, given the expectation of an internal applicant.

Committee members decided to meet on Wed. Oct. 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Buker Multi-Purpose Room to discuss the leadership profile, and to request that meeting be televised. They rescheduled the Policy Working Group's Oct. 12 meeting to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Members discussed whether to hire a search firm, and agreed to gather more information about such firms before the Oct. 12 meeting.

**POLICY UPDATE:**

Expunge an Out-of-Date Policy,  
Cooperative Arrangement with Essex  
Public Schools for the Coordination of  
Preschool Services

D. Rubel said this policy refers to a program that no longer exists, so the Policy Working Group recommends the policy be expunged.

**R. KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE VOTE TO EXPUNGE THE COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT WITH ESSEX PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE COORDINATION OF PRESCHOOL SERVICES POLICY AS PART OF THE CURRENT DISTRICT POLICIES. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (8-0-0).**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. DACIA RUBEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (8-0-0).**

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Smith, School Committee Recording Secretary