

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Regular Meeting of Oct. 12, 2011

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER: A. McCloughan called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Multi-purpose Room of Buker School. The Committee and audience rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Peter Gray, Superintendent

ABSENT: No one

AMENDMENT OF AGENDA **JACK O'KEEFE MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO ACCOMMODATE TOPICS THAT THE CHAIR DID NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATE 48 HOURS BEFORE THE MEETING. DACIA RUBEL SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1. (ROGER KUEBEL ABSTAINED.)**

The amendments were to add two matters to the agenda: to hear a report from state Rep. Brad Hill, and to appoint a School Committee member to the Budget Process Committee.

STATEMENT OF GUEST Rep. Brad Hill reviewed state school funding issues and explained House Bill 3538 (which was introduced by Rep. Lori Ehrlich of Marblehead, and about which the House Committee on Education held a hearing during the week of this meeting), and asked the Committee to support the bill. He said it calls for the state to catch up over the next two years on its pledge to provide funds to provide a minimum of 17.5% of the foundation budget of every school district in the state. He said this year many communities already get more than that, including Hamilton (budgeted to receive 20% of its total budget from the state this year), so the bill would directly impact 50 to 55 districts, including Ipswich and Swampscott. Rep. Hill said he earlier filed a similar bill that asked the state to bring all districts up to the 17.5% level by Jan. 1, 2012. He also forecast a rise next year in state funding of special education.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH UPDATE

A. McCloughan noted that this meeting was scheduled for review of the leadership profile used during the search for a superintendent in 2010. W. Dery asked the Committee to consider extending P. Gray's one-year appointment as interim superintendent to make it a two-year appointment (through the end of his three-year contract with the district). He reiterated the reasons he gave when he suggested this at an earlier Committee meeting; he said it would provide continuity, and avoid large expenditures next year to either buy out P. Gray's contract if he applies for the job of permanent superintendent but is not hired, or to pay his salary to keep him on district staff, despite an administrative restructuring that eliminated the position he held prior to being named interim superintendent. W. Dery said he would make a motion at the Oct. 20 meeting to extend P. Gray's appointment by a year. Several other Committee members commented on this proposal. The topics they addressed included the superintendent's role in setting a strategic plan; involvement of the community in district decisions; the stages and time involved in public surveys, and how delaying the start of a 2011-12 search might affect the candidate pool; and the nature of district administrative positions per the recent reorganization. P. Gray clarified the net change in central office administrative positions (a .6 reduction) and said there is a trend toward the hiring of superintendents with management and business backgrounds. A. McCloughan asked people watching the meeting on TV to comment on the issue during the coming week and at the Oct. 20 meeting.

The Committee then discussed the leadership profile that a consulting firm drafted for the district during the last search, which was based on 8 focus groups that firm conducted. Members expressed general satisfaction with the profile but suggested a few minor amendments; the Committee agreed to update the document with those changes and post the amended version on the district website for public review, and public comment at the Oct. 20 meeting. P. Gray noted that a public hearing on school choice is also scheduled for that date, at 6:30 p.m.

DISTRICT TREASURER

P. Gray asked members to sign Disclosure of Appearance of Conflict of Interest forms and file them with the Town Clerk of their town of residence, to satisfy a state requirement prior to the scheduled discussion at the Oct. 20 meeting about prospective candidates for the position of District Treasurer.

**APPOINTMENT TO BUDGET
PROCESS COMMITTEE**

Members briefly discussed the nature and meeting schedule of the Budget Process Committee (BPC), which brings together representatives of this Committee, the Town governments, and the public.

ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPOINT LARRY SWARTZ AS THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE BUDGET PROCESS COMMITTEE. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

ADJOURNMENT:

ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Smith, School Committee Recording Secretary