

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee**

**Meeting of Dec. 15, 2011**

**Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER AND  
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

A. McCloughan called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. at the Buker Multi-purpose Room. The Committee and audience rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PRESENT:**

Sean Condon, Bill Dery, Kym Donnellan, Roger Kuebel, Alexa McCloughan, Ann Minois, Jack O'Keefe (until 8:30), Dacia Rubel, and Larry Swartz

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Peter Gray, Superintendent; Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning

**ABSENT:**

No one.

**STATEMENTS OF GUESTS:**

None.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:**

**ROGER KUEBEL 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: FIRST, DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSED POLICY ON CONCUSSIONS AND HEAD INJURIES, AND SECOND, A HANDOUT PROVIDED BY BILL DERY, ON WHICH HE WILL COMMENT. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 1, 2011. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

**RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS**

Jeff McCormack, Information  
Technology Coordinator

P. Gray thanked J. McCormack, who is retiring, for his service. He introduced the incoming technology coordinator Alan Taupier who is currently the technology director at Minuteman Voc Tech and who will begin work in the HWRSD on Jan. 3, 2012.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

Regional Districts (Stephen Hemman,  
Executive Director, Massachusetts  
Association of Regional Schools) MARS

S. Hemman gave a PowerPoint presentation about regional school districts, which addressed topics including the reasons for and nature of regional districts in Massachusetts; the role, responsibilities, and authority of regional school committees; the rule of regional superintendents; regional agreements, and the process by which they can

be amended; and sharing services with member towns. The Committee asked S. Hemman to send them examples of inter-municipal agreements and organizational charts.

Discussion followed. S. Hemman responded to Committee members' questions about contracts between districts and member towns to share services, differences between how district-owned and leased buildings might be regarded in such contracts, the process and timing for submission of budgets for approval by member towns, and the role and authority of the state Commissioner of Education. A. McCloughan invited the audience to ask questions; none were forthcoming.

#### Principals' Updates

Carol Bratt, who is the acting principal at Cutler Elementary while Jennifer Clifford is on a leave, reported on the fifth grade play, Colonial Day, student use of iPads, a Toys for Tots drive, kindergarten "Gingerbread Night," and the 2011-12 cultural enrichment theme, folk tales.

Buker principal Brian O'Donoghue reported that monthly classroom newsletters are now posted online, students are involved in video podcasts of morning announcements, and a workshop took place recently on executive functioning strategies in the classroom.

High school principal John Hughes said students have submitted the highest number of college applications in the school's history. He complimented students for their involvement in the community. He said parents and students now have online access to grades, which has eliminated the need for the school to send out mid-term progress reports. Associate principal Brian Menegoni spoke about the recent musical and student applications for the new global competency program, and expressed appreciation for the senior class leadership. Athletic director Don Doucette noted that 6 of the 8 high school teams advanced to tournaments this fall; he highlighted the success of the football, cheerleading, and girls' cross-country teams. He discussed MIAA certification of coaches, and the district's continuing work on a state-mandated policy about concussions.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### MSBA SOI Grant Program / Science Lab Upgrades

Jon Richardson of the district and Towns' joint Capital Management Advisory Committee (CMC) reported he inspected the high school science labs several days before this meeting and concluded it is uncertain whether the Massachusetts School Building Association would give high priority to an application by the district for funds to upgrade them. He said the labs are undersized per MSBA standards, but were renovated and updated in 1999 and equipment is fairly up to date. Discussion followed about options for improvements, and the potential cost of renovating existing labs versus building several new labs as an addition to the school; Mr. Richardson and B. Dery agreed it might cost less to add on. The Committee also discussed educational and safety issues related to crowding in labs due to large class sizes. They reached a consensus not to submit an SOI for Lab upgrades at this time.

J. O'Keefe left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Winthrop School Roof

B. Dery reported a roofing company and structural engineer are to inspect the Winthrop roof during the week following this meeting; they will open up sections of it to evaluate the extent to which materials below the roofing have been damaged by leaking. The projected cost of replacing the roof has been doubled because the estimated square footage provided for the initial estimate was incorrect. B. Dery said if they find little damage, replacement cost would be \$600,000, but if there is substantial damage it would cost more.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Field Trip Request for High School Band to Toronto, Canada

P. Gray asked the Committee to approve a high school band trip to a music festival in Canada in April 2012.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE RHS BAND TO TRAVEL TO TORONTO, CANADA FROM APRIL 26, 2012 THROUGH APRIL 29, 2012. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION.**

Committee members discussed whether the proposed ratio of students to chaperones meets district guidelines; no one present was certain of those guidelines. Committee members reached a consensus that the number of chaperones for this trip should comply with the district's policy or recommendation about the student/chaperone ratio.

**THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (8-0-0).**

Cutler HVAC Bond

P. Gray reported the district received its final reimbursement from the state for HVAC work at Cutler, and the related bond issue has been referred to the Finance Working Group. B. Dery questioned whether the district should execute the bond. A. McCloughan deferred discussion until the Finance Working Group discusses the matter and reports to the full Commission.

CMC Proposal for Town/District Building Maintenance Agreement

Prior to the meeting B. Dery distributed to members copies of a draft agreement for joint building maintenance, which the Capital Management Advisory Committee proposes for the District and the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham. A. McCloughan suggested the Committee schedule an extra December meeting to discuss the proposal. B. Dery said the CMC is to make a presentation in mid-January to the two Towns' boards of selectmen about its recommendation; he invited Committee members to attend.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Finance Working Group

D. Rubel read aloud a letter from the accounting firm employed by the District to perform the 2011 fiscal audit, which lays out the reasons for a delay in the report on that audit. Members noted the need to resolve this

promptly, as well as the bond issue related to Cutler HVAC work, because both could impact budget planning.

#### Legislative Working Group

A. Minois reported state Rep. Brad Hill recently said he expects no mid-year cuts in state funding, forecasts Ch. 70 aid may be level funded, and thinks state aid for regular school transportation may increase. She briefly reported on proposed legislation that would administratively restructure educational collaboratives.

#### Communications

K. Donnellan said this working group and administrators are preparing the annual report. Also, a community survey is to take place in early January, from which data is expected by late that month.

#### Working Group Minutes

Prior to this meeting, the Committee received copies of the minutes of the Nov. 2, 2011 meeting of the Finance Working Group and the Nov. 14, 2011 meeting of the Policy Working Group. They are available to the public

#### **LEADERSHIP REPORT:**

##### Superintendent

P. Gray said the Town Facilities Assessment Committee plans to hire a consultant to gather information, because the committee made little progress over several meetings because members do not have the time or expertise required.

#### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ADOPTION:**

##### School Committee Self-Evaluation Policy

Committee members received copies of this proposed policy before this meeting. D. Rubel asked them to review it prior to deliberation and a vote at a later meeting.

##### Interim Policy on Head Injuries & Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities

State law requires the district to enact a policy on head injuries and concussions by Jan. 1, 2012. R. Kuebel said administrators plan to further fine-tune the policy but they and the Committee's Policy Working Group request approval now by the Committee of an interim policy, to meet that deadline. The Committee must approve a final policy by March 1, 2012. Committee members received the proposed interim policy for review prior to this meeting. It designates a staff member to implement the policy and lays out procedures and standards for annual training of school staff, parents and others; documentation of students' physical exams prior to participation in extracurricular athletics; removal of athletes from competition following an apparent head injury; student reentry into extracurricular athletics; notification of parents; and other matters. The interim policy makes the superintendent responsible for ensuring compliance, appointing another staff member to implement the policy, and reporting annually to the Committee about compliance.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF THE INTERIM POLICY ON HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES. LARRY SWARTZ SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (8-0-0).**

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

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

PowerPoint presentation by Steve Hemman, Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools

Request for approval of HS Band field trip to Toronto, Canada 4/26-29/2012  
(Memo dated 11/28/2011; field trip request form; music festival itinerary; memo to parents)

Towns of Hamilton and Wenham and H-W Regional School District Building Maintenance Agreement (draft)

Letter from Powers & Sullivan re 2011 fiscal audit (dated 12/13/2011)

School Committee Self-Evaluation Policy, Draft 1

Interim Policy on Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary