

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Regular Meeting of March 15, 2012  
Minutes

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

A. McCloughan called the regular meeting to order at 8:09 p.m. at the Buker Multipurpose Room (following a separate joint meeting of the School Committee with both Towns' Boards of Selectmen and Finance & Advisory Committees). 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, Dacia Rubel, and Larry Swartz

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Peter Gray, Superintendent (until 10:15); Dr. Celeste Bowler, Assistant Superintendent for Learning (until 10:15); Pola Andrews, HWRSD Business Manager (until 10); Alan Taupier, HWRSD Director of Information Technology (until 10)

**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, SPECIFICALLY THE LEADERSHIP PROFILE FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT. KYM DONNELLAN 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 POSTPONE THE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES UNTIL THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING. SEAN CONDON SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Bonding Cutler HVAC

After briefly discussing the Towns' boards of selectmen's varying positions on whether the district should issue a bond related to the already-completed HVAC work at Cutler Elementary, members agreed that in the absence of a consensus recommendation from both Towns, the Committee would table the issue.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO DEFER ANY DECISION ON BONDING THE CUTLER HVAC UNTIL UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT IS REACHED WITHIN THE TOWNS WITH THE SELECTMEN OF WENHAM AND HAMILTON. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

They agreed to notify the chairs of the Boards of Selectmen of the date by which the Committee would have to vote to issue bonds in order to provide time to

make the practical arrangements for such bonding prior to the June 30, 2012 deadline.

#### Discussion on FY13 Budget

The Committee discussed the updated version of the budget reflecting its decisions at its March 12 meeting, and district administrators provided additional information. L. Swartz and A. McCloughan mentioned corrections needed on the all-day kindergarten Excel sheet and list of proposed uses of the fund balance (documents included in a packet of budget-related material relating to budget issues which was prepared for the Committee's earlier joint meeting with Town boards; the packet is appended to these minutes).

Members discussed budget issues including user fee reductions' effect on the budget gap, setting a target soon for closing the budget gap in order to evaluate what increases to support in teacher pay, variations in class size across levels and subjects, and the possible cost of handicap accessibility upgrades at Cutler Elementary. P. Gray said central office staffing rose by one person but the line item increased more because insurance and unemployment insurance moved from one budget line to another. R. Kuebel asked P. Gray to add explanatory notes to the budget about why rental, school choice, parking and non-resident tuition are not rolled into the general fund.

They reviewed the items on the updated list of proposed uses of the fund balance and revisited the positions they arrived at on March 12.

A. Taupier explained the rationale for increasing the hours of existing information technology (IT) staff and hiring or contracting for additional support staffing, and responded to members' questions about such details as the number and age of the district's computers, cyclical replacement of equipment, whether the mix of equipment and software is appropriate. B. Dery requested more data, and said he did not consider additional staffing necessary. The rest of the Committee expressed willingness to expand the hours of existing staff and contract for additional services if needed.

The Committee reaffirmed its earlier support for maintaining the E&D account at 3% of the budget.

Members discussed but did not decide whether to support the athletic director's proposal to restore a full schedule for fall sports, which would add two games and two scrimmages to the reduced schedules that have been in place for six years, at a cost of \$23,000. S. Condon said he would gather information about whether other districts have 18-game seasons.

C. Bowler briefed the Committee regarding language arts and math support services at the elementary schools. She recommended increasing Buker's library/media specialist to full time, as at the other schools. She recommended against hiring more math tutors; she said existing staff could provide support. She favored restoring a half-time literacy specialist position at Winthrop, but said the hours required are an estimate and the actual needs are impossible to gauge until incoming students are assessed in September. The Committee reached a consensus supporting the part-time literacy position.

B. Dery contested the Committee's counsel's opinion that the district must make handicap accessibility modifications at Cutler because of requirements of the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). He estimated modifications might cost \$300,000. R. Kuebel recommended including that sum in the budget, and reducing the line item later if cost estimation now underway establishes the project would cost less; A. McCloughan directed P. Gray to so do.

The Committee discussed capital improvements related to NESC accreditation and decided to shift high school auditorium improvements and Cutler ADA upgrades from the proposed operating budget into the proposed capital budget.

L. Swartz said the Committee should consider leaving the positions of some retiring teachers unfilled for FY13, and said the need for an accounting clerk has not been persuasively established. He recommended the Committee budget \$12,000 for a language arts tutor at Winthrop rather than the \$24,000 requested.

P. Andrews explained the intended duties of a proposed new accounting clerk, and said the cost in the original budget proposal has been decreased to \$45,000. L. Swartz requested a close check of the central office and technology budgets to make sure there is no duplication of what is being requested for those departments in the operating and capital budgets. P. Andrews said the proposed clerk would do some data entry and clerical work she now does herself because the payroll clerk and accounts payable clerk are unable to share these tasks because of state requirements regarding segregation of duties in the business office. She said this would free up some of her time for analysis and details requested by the Committee and the community. She responded to questions about required training and the proposed wages. P. Gray and P. Andrews spoke of additional projects requiring the attention of upper level administrators. Most members agreed to include funds in the budget for a 19.5 hour part-time accounting clerk position, which would not include benefits; L. Swartz did not support this.

C. Bowler provided more details about tutoring services and student needs. The Committee discussed whether to budget for 10 hours or 20 of literacy tutoring at Winthrop.

They discussed whether to commit to a long-term reduction in user fees, or just one year.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Field Trip Request—London/Paris

The Committee deferred until March 22 discussion and action on the high school history department's proposal for an April, 2013 student trip to London and Paris. The proposal is appended to these minutes.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

The Committee deferred reports and review of Working Group minutes until the meeting of March 22.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
& ADOPTION:**

D. Rubel noted that the Policy Working Group has submitted some proposals for significant revision of district policies, but in other cases simply recommends formatting changes and updates of language that would not alter the substance of the policy. The Committee decided to defer consideration of the recommended substantive revisions, but to consider and vote on the proposed routine updates. The text of the policies below and those the Committee deferred action on are appended to these minutes.

Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services Policy

D. Rubel said minor changes in formatting were recommended.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON HOMELESS STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES. KYM DONNELLAN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1.**

Emergency Closings

D. Rubel said only formatting changes were recommended.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON EMERGENCY CLOSINGS. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1.**

Gifts and Contributions to Individual Employees

D. Rubel said the proposed revisions would bring this district policy into compliance with new guidelines issued by the state Inspector General.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

Pest Management

D. Rubel said the proposed change would shift responsibility for pest control from the business administrator to the superintendent, in conjunction with the Director of Facilities.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON PEST MANAGEMENT. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Requirements Policy

D. Rubel said proposed revisions would clarify some points of the policy and bring it into agreement with current law. As revised it would apply to individuals who provide services, supervision or instruction to children, whether or not they are employed by the district, and sections about inquiring about criminal records on job applications would be deleted as this is now barred by state law.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON CRIMINAL RECORD INFORMATION (CORI) REQUIREMENTS. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1.**

Private Funding Policy

D. Rubel said the revision would adjust formatting, and direct the superintendent to thank benefactors.

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON PRIVATE FUNDING. JACK O'KEEFE SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-1.**

**MORE OLD BUSINESS:**

Superintendent Profile

Members discussed the March 15, 2012 draft of the Superintendent Search Leadership Profile (which is appended to these minutes), and discussed how to strengthen it. B. Dery said he thought the Committee had agreed the position would be heavily weighted toward business management; other members said that was discussed but not approved. They agreed to the following editorial changes:

- Move to the top of a bulleted list, and add language to, a bulleted item under "Core Competencies." The revised text is "Provide the strong leadership necessary to hire, retain, manage and motivate high quality administrators, faculty and staff"
- Revise another bulleted item under "Core Competencies." The revised proposed text is "Collaborate with regional town leaders to develop a budget that both supports the strategic plan and is supported by a majority of the community"
- Delete reference to arbitration with unions
- Delete two asterisks for which there was no corresponding later note
- Capitalize a work in the third subheading to match the style elsewhere

**ROGER KUEBEL MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH LEADERSHIP PROFILE AS AMENDED. 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. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).**

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

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

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget, Draft, March 8, 2013 [sic]  
Untitled packet of documentation in response to questions asked at the meeting of 3-7-2012 (26 pages)  
Draft Superintendent Search Leadership Profile (15 March 2012 DRAFT) (1 page)  
Field Trip Request from Johann Knets dated 1/8/12 for history field trip to London/Paris (11 pages)  
School Committee--Staff Communications Policy (1 page)

Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services Policy (policy dated 2/05/04; version w/ old text crossed out and new text underlined, plus separate document showing proposed revised text only) (5 pages)

Emergency Closings Policy (policy dated Oct. 2, 2011; version w/ old text crossed out and new text underlined, plus separate document showing proposed revised text only) (4 pages)

Gifts and Contributions to Individual Employees Policy (policy dated March 4, 1999; version w/ old text crossed out and new text underlined, plus separate document showing proposed revised text only) (4 pages)

Pest Management Policy (revised policy dated 12/11/08; version w/ old text crossed out and new text underlined, plus separate document showing proposed revised text only) (6 pages)

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Requirements Policy (amended policy dated Nov. 2008; version w/ old text crossed out and new text underlined, plus separate document showing proposed revised text only) (10 pages)

Private Funding Policy (policy dated 6/2/03; version w/ old text crossed out and new text underlined, plus separate document showing proposed revised text only) (6 pages)