

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Committee

Meeting of June 7, 2012

Minutes

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

P. Gray called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Buker Multi purpose Room. The Committee and audience rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. P. Gray chaired the beginning of the meeting because it was the first one following municipal elections and the Committee's reorganization and election of a chair and other officers for 2012-13 was scheduled to take place during this meeting.

PRESENT:

Sean Condon, Bill Dery, Kym Donnellan, Roger Kuebel, Barbara Lawrence, Sheila MacDonald, Ann Minois, Larry Swartz, and Bill Wilson

ALSO PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

No one

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE:

None

RECOGNITIONS:

Introduction of New Committee Members

P. Gray welcomed Barbara Lawrence, Sheila MacDonald and Bill Wilson to the Committee.

Faculty Retirements

Faculty members and P. Gray spoke appreciatively about departing colleagues, who received parting gifts from the district and were applauded by the Committee and audience. Technology teacher Bill Corley is retiring after 31 years on the high school faculty. High school art teacher Gail Lake is retiring after 23 years. High school math teacher and grade 6-12 math coordinator Dolores Redman is leaving after 12 years in the district, for a job at Endicott College. Grade 1 and 3 teacher Linda Penniman is retiring after a total of 25 years in the district. High school history teacher Ann Tassinari is retiring after more than 30 years in this district. Four of the retiring faculty members were present and spoke briefly.

Departing School Committee

P. Gray and former Committee members Lisa Gaquin, Tess Leary and Lauren Prior spoke appreciatively of Alexa McCloughan, Jack O'Keefe, and Dacia Rubel, whose terms on the Committee have ended. The retiring members spoke briefly.

Departing Student Representative

A. McCloughan thanked Ian MacLean for his insight and positive comments during his year as the student representative to the Committee.

2012 College Bowl Winners

P. Gray and high school College Bowl advisor Vince Bucci congratulated the College Bowl team for winning the statewide WGBH High School Quiz Show for the second consecutive year. The team members are Chris Anderson, Ian MacLean, Siobhan McDonough, Connor Schmidt, and alternates Taylor MacDonald and Pat Xu.

2012 Massachusetts Food Service Director of the Year

P. Gray congratulated food service director Catherine Donovan for being named 2012 Food Service Director by the Food Service and School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts. She spoke briefly.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

R. Kuebel invited Committee members to nominate themselves or other Committee members for Committee offices for 2012-13. He noted that no second is required for nominations.

BILL DERY NOMINATED ROGER KUEBEL AS CHAIRPERSON FOR THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JUNE 7, 2012 AND ENDING THE DAY OF THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL DISTRICT ELECTIONS OR AT SUCH TIME THAT THE CHAIRPERSON NO LONGER SERVES ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

ROGER KUEBEL WAS ELECTED 7-2-0. (Kym Donnellan and Ann Minois voted no.)

ROGER KUEBEL NOMINATED LARRY SWARTZ AS VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JUNE 7, 2012 AND ENDING THE DAY OF THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL DISTRICT ELECTIONS OR AT SUCH TIME THAT THE VICE CHAIRPERSON NO LONGER SERVES ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

LARRY SWARTZ WAS ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

KYM DONNELLAN NOMINATED BILL WILSON AS SECRETARY FOR THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JUNE 7, 2012 AND ENDING THE DAY OF THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL DISTRICT ELECTIONS OR AT SUCH TIME THAT THE SECRETARY NO LONGER SERVES ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

BILL WILSON WAS ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

ROGER KUEBEL NOMINATED BARBARA LAWRENCE AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JUNE 7, 2012 AND ENDING THE DAY OF THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL DISTRICT ELECTIONS OR AT

SUCH TIME THAT THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY NO LONGER SERVES ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

BARBARA LAWRENCE WAS ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

ROGER KUEBEL NOMINATED ANN MINOIS TO SERVE FOR SECOND YEAR OF A TWO-YEAR TERM AS ASSISTANT TREASURER FOR THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR A TERM BEGINNING JUNE 7, 2012 AND ENDING THE DAY OF THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING FOLLOWING THE ANNUAL DISTRICT ELECTIONS OR AT SUCH TIME THAT THE ASSISTANT TREASURER NO LONGER SERVES ON THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

ANN MINOIS WAS RE-ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

PRESENTATION

Special Education Parent
Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Helen Allard and Mary DeLorenzo of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) briefed the Committee on its mission, activities, and expertise. They proposed more frequent and close communication with the Committee, and collaboration on planning and evaluation of SPED programs. H. Allard suggested appointment of B. Lawrence as a Committee liaison to the SEPAC. (SEPAC's brochure is appended to these minutes.)

NEW BUSINESS:

Bond Anticipation note

P. Gray explained an accounting detail that auditors have warned could result in the state Department of Revenue freezing the district's Excess and Deficiency (E&D) account unless corrective action is taken by the close of the fiscal year on June 30; P. Gray noted that were E&D frozen, the district's intended "payback" of funds from E&D to the Towns would be substantially delayed. Payments for boiler work at Cutler School were made from the general fund, but the sum remains on the capital account on the district balance sheet. If any accounts on the balance sheet owe money to the general fund at the end of a fiscal year, DOR freezes E&D; P. Gray said it would likely remain frozen through early fall 2013. He conveyed the auditors' recommendation that the district take out a 30-day bond anticipation note at a cost of approximately \$10,000 to enable the capital account to repay the general fund, and pay off the note in early July.

Committee members discussed the pros and cons of a bond anticipation note. B. Dery requested that a representative of the auditing firm attend the Committee's June 18 meeting to provide further information. L. Swartz requested that the auditors forward information to the Committee in writing in the interim. P. Gray acknowledged that Town officials have expressed concern about whether such a bond would affect the Towns' bond ratings, and about whether the Towns would bear the cost of the bond; he recommended the Committee transfer \$10,000 from an as yet undetermined line item of the FY13 budget to cover the cost of the bond.

R. Kuebel noted that the Committee would vote at the June 18 meeting on whether to take out a bond anticipation note.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on VDPW

L. Swartz reported that the district and Town representatives who have been meeting to shape the details of a joint agreement for a joint "virtual Department of Public Works" (VDPW) have realized the constituents had different understandings about the scope of the work it might do and the nature of staffing, but having realized that, the group is now working productively toward a common understanding. He said the June 30 deadline for a draft joint agreement is still feasible but resolution might take longer. Brief discussion followed about whether the department would employ skilled trades people or generalists, and potential pay rates. To brief new members of the Committee, B. Dery reviewed background information about the Capital Management Committee's study of Town and district facilities, and issues regarding bonding to fund several categories of repairs. (Updated CMC project lists are appended to these minutes.)

P. Gray reported that the fire and police chiefs of the Towns informed him that \$1.6 million in security upgrades to the schools are required by law. He said he requested documentation of statutory requirements but has not yet received it. The Committee referred this matter to the Finance Subcommittee.

P. Gray also reported that the MSBA approved partial funding of roofing work at Cutler School, but none for re-roofing Winthrop School. He said he contacted MSBA and was told the agency decided not to fund the Winthrop project because more extensive work is contemplated at that school than at Cutler, and a subsequent project such as HVAC work might void a warranty on a new roof.

NEASC Accreditation Report

P. Gray noted that the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) have continued the high school's accreditation, and "warning" status. (NEASC's letter is appended to these minutes.) High School principal J. Hughes is to update NEASC in the fall about work planned to address identified issues.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE:

P. Gray thanked Committee members for attending the high school Candlelight and graduation ceremonies.

He noted that the last day of school is June 12.

He reported that a community member filed a complaint about the removal of chairs from the high school auditorium for refurbishing off-site over the summer, due to concern that the work might release asbestos particles from the flooring. He said the district hired a consultant who concluded that cutting the bolts that secure the units to the floor would release no asbestos.

He said light upgrades are underway and work will start soon on handicap accessibility upgrades at Cutler.

R. Kuebel noted that the agenda for the meeting of June 18 includes a decision about whether to take out a bond anticipation note, and an executive session regarding a contract with office personnel.

The Committee briefly discussed the ideas of a Committee retreat, setting priorities for 2012-13, reconfiguring working groups, and a social gathering. R. Kuebel asked members to submit forms to indicate which working groups they prefer to serve on and P. Gray noted members also serve as liaisons to each of the schools, SEPAC, the CMC, and the Budget Process Committee.

ADJOURNMENT:

KYM DONNELLAN MADE A MOTION THAT THE HW REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE VOTE TO ADJOURN. BILL DERY SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY (9-0-0).

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

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

HWSEPAC brochure
Updated CMC project lists for MSBA-eligible district projects, district projects ineligible for MSBA funding, and Town projects
Letter from NEASC dated May 29, 2012

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Sierks Smith, School Committee recording secretary