



HAMILTON-WENHAM

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

5 SCHOOL STREET, WENHAM, MA 01984 · TEL. 978-468-5310

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

In-Person Meeting, [Zoom Link](#) is for Public Comment Only

Meeting ID: 820 8349 2586

Thursday, September 22, 2022

7:00 p.m. - 9:05 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara, Chair

Jen Carr

David Frenkel, Assistant Secretary

Amy Kunberger, Secretary (arrival at approximately 7:07pm)

David Polito (arrival at approximately 7:55pm)

Anna Siedzik, Vice Chair

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration

Eliza Bassom, Senior Class President

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Ms. Allara, Chairperson, calls the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All those in attendance, with the exception of School Committee member Anna Siedzik, rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Citizens' Comments

[Exhibit](#)

Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material.

Ms. Allara states that this meeting is being recorded, live streamed, and broadcast by HWCAM, and is accessible through either HWCAM's [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#). Those offering a comment are asked to spell their first and last name and indicate their address for the record. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes, and the public is reminded that this is an opportunity to share their opinions, but not an opportunity for public dialogue.

Beth Herr, 340 Asbury Street, Hamilton: Ms. Herr appears to ask the School Committee to please consider rescinding the vaccination mandate. She explains that the district is at a disadvantage in retaining current staff and hiring new staff because of this requirement. She believes that there should have never been an approval process for the filed exemptions; instead those exemptions should have just been accepted. Further, Ms. Herr believes that the vaccine mandate, as voted by the School Committee last year, led to the district likely discriminating against many candidates and therefore creating potential legal

challenges. She suggests that the district consider reparations for those harmed by the requirement and reiterates her request for the School Committee to rescind the mandate.

Marty Cooke, Puritan Rd., Wenham: Mr. Cooke appears this evening on behalf of both himself and his wife, Sue Cooke. He notes that Ms. Cooke had reached out to the School Committee via email, and unfortunately only received a response from Superintendent Tracy. Both Mr. Cooke and his wife are concerned about the race and gender curriculum and presentations introduced throughout the schools. Finally, he notes that Mr. Frenkel contacted Ms. Cooke's place of employment, which he found very unprofessional.

There are no further citizen comments at this time; Citizens' Comments are closed at approximately 7:12 PM.

4. Review of School Committee Protocols

[Exhibit](#)

Mrs. Carr reads School Committee Protocol #3 as written in the [exhibit](#).

5. Student Representative Report; Eliza Bassom

Superintendent Tracy explains that this year, class presidents will take turns presenting to the School Committee. This week Senior Class President Eliza Bassom will present, and next week the Junior Class President will present. This will continue throughout the year to distribute responsibility amongst all class presidents.

Eliza Bassom, *Senior Class President*, provides the School Committee with an update on the High School, including: graduation robe changes; fundraising activities; student council meetings; cell phone policy; and activity club update. She reviews the Middle School update, including the introduction of cooking classes, chorale, intramurals, etc. The elementary schools all had their back to school ice cream social events, and it has been wonderful to share the excitement of the new school year.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Warrants

[Exhibit](#)

- Voucher No. 7
- Voucher No. 1012
- Voucher No. 3171
- Voucher No. 3172
- Voucher No. 3173
- Voucher No. 3174
- Voucher No. 3175

B. Minutes

- August 18, 2022

[Exhibit](#)

C. Donations

- EdFund Mini-Grant; MK Prevention Services; \$1,850

[Exhibit](#)

D. Other

- Field Trip - Cross Country Trip Request
- Field Trip - Miles River Middle School, Washington DC Trip Request

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MINUTES FROM 08/18/2022.

**MOTION by Amy Kunberger; SECONDED by Jen Carr.
MOTION PASSES unanimously by vote of five (5) members present.**

Ms. Allara notes that the 08/18/22 minutes include links to the HWCAM recording on Youtube. There is some discussion about these links existing in perpetuity; weblinks versus pdf exhibits; links to external sites versus those stored/owned by the district; etc. Ms. Allara suggests removing the links from the minutes, and addressing this issue in more detail in the future.

Ms. Siedzik points out that the student presenter name is misspelled as “Strozie” and needs to be corrected to “Strozier” (appearing on page 1 and 3).

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM 08/18/2022, WITH THE FOLLOWING REVISIONS: REMOVING HYPERLINKS TO EXTERNAL WEBSITES AND CORRECTING THE SPELLING OF THE NAME OF STUDENT PRESENTER, AENEAS STROZIER.

**MOTION by Amy Kunberger; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.
MOTION PASSES unanimously by vote of five (5) members present.**

7. New Business

A. Superintendent’s Draft Goals

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy reviews the Superintendent’s Draft Goals as presented in the [exhibit](#), including progress made, challenges and successes faced so far, standards, indicators, benchmarks, etc.

There is a discussion about the Superintendent Evaluation process, including the rubric at the top of the document; how standards and indicators are used; overall evaluation process; etc. Ms. Siedzik points out that goal #4 does not include specific indicators. Superintendent Tracy will revise the document to reflect *student learning* and *data driven decision making*, as he believes these would be the two most pertinent indicators for this goal.

There is discussion about the responsibility of managing the numerous software systems mentioned throughout the document. Superintendent Tracy offers a detailed explanation about the staff responsible for managing and integrating these software systems (including Infinite Visions, Vector, Panorama). There is some discussion about how data sets are determined and entered into software systems.

David Polito enters the meeting at approximately 7:55PM.

There is discussion about including the *Professional Practice* goal, which was removed from Superintendent Tracy’s goals last year. Superintendent Tracy explains that a large part of this goal was attending the New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP), and he details the amount of work involved in that program. School Committee members agree that this year’s Superintendent Goals should include the *Professional Practice* goal, giving Superintendent Tracy the opportunity to document his work with NSIP and any additional efforts falling under this goal.

Superintendent Tracy will revise Goal #1 to reflect the correct indicator (Standard 1 Indicator A is *curriculum* but is currently written as *commitment to high standards*), and will also revise the verbiage to clarify the 3-year Strategic Plan will begin, but not be *completed* this year.

There is a discussion about the intersections of District goals and Superintendent goals, and how the School Committee considers the listed standards and indicators when evaluating Superintendent Tracy's performance. School Committee members agree that this can be confusing when attempting to differentiate the goals. Superintendent Tracy explains that although he is ultimately responsible for meeting the goals, his success very much depends on his team and staff carrying out key actions associated with the goals.

Superintendent Tracy notes that the *School Improvement Plan* appears on the agenda for the next School Committee meeting (10/06/22). This will allow school principals to explain how each school is carrying out Goal #3, *Equity Focus/Culture Building*, as well as other goals. This will be a good opportunity for School Committee members to ask questions as well.

B. Vaccination Requirement

[Exhibit](#)

Last year, the School Committee voted to adopt the Vaccine Mandate Language 21-22, which details the requirements for current employees, and also requires that "new employees must be fully vaccinated before they begin their employment." Superintendent Tracy explains that Hamilton - Wenham seems to be the only district in the area to have a vaccine mandate for new employees, and he believes this is putting the district at a disadvantage. Superintendent Tracy reviews his 09/22/22 memorandum, which outlines three (3) options: 1. Keep the current language; 2. Rescind the language; or 3. Rewrite the language to allow exemptions approved by the Superintendent for new hires.

There is a discussion regarding the original language adopted by the School Committee, and the changing medical and cultural landscape over the past year. Ms. Allara believes it would have been wise for the School Committee to have indicated an 'end date' and/or 'revisit date' in their original motion/language.

There is discussion about the potential impact on the cost of health, life, and/or disability insurance.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESCIND THE MANDATORY VACCINATION REQUIREMENT FOR DISTRICT STAFF (OPTION # 2 IN SUPERINTENDENT TRACY'S 09/22/22 MEMORANDUM).

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by David Polito.

Discussion: There is a lengthy discussion regarding vaccination requirements, including whether to rescind completely or revise the language; HWEA opinion; vaccination exemptions; district's current practices and whether they align with the language found in the exhibit; DESE and other government oversight/guidelines; challenges in School Committee decision making; competitive disadvantage from the continued vaccination requirement; avoiding discriminatory hiring practices; allowing exemptions for new hires; etc.

MOTION FAILS: 3 members in favor, 3 members opposed.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVISE THE VACCINE MANDATE LANGUAGE 21-22, SO THE LANGUAGE WILL READ, "NEW EMPLOYEES MUST EITHER BE FULLY VACCINATED OR SUBMIT FOR AN EXEMPTION PRIOR TO BEGINNING EMPLOYMENT."

MOTION by Jen Carr; SECONDED by David Frenkel.

Discussion: There is discussion about procedure moving forward and whether the document's remaining language is relevant (weekly testing, SNAP system database, links to forms, etc.). Superintendent Tracy suggests that the committee consider amending the motion in order to have the requirements for current employees match the requirements for new employees.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AMEND THE MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO INCLUDE THE FIRST LINE AS PRESENTED, WITH THE FOLLOWING CHANGE:

COVID-19 VACCINES ARE A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT. ALL CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE HWRSD EMPLOYEES MUST BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19, UNLESS THEY HAVE AN APPROVED RELIGIOUS OR MEDICAL EXEMPTION.

MOTION by Anna Siedzik; SECONDED by Jen Carr.

Discussion: Ms. Carr suggests adding a sentence that the School Committee revisit this issue in three (3) months in order to determine if this helped with the district's hiring challenges. Superintendent Tracy and the School Committee agree that this topic will appear on future meeting agendas, and that adding a sentence to the motion is unnecessary.

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES unanimously by vote of six (6) members present.

Original motion as amended:

MOTION PASSES unanimously by vote of six (6) members present.

C. Strategic Planning Committee Members

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy thanks all those who requested to be a committee member, it is clear how much community enthusiasm there is for the district's future. He reviews the Strategic Planning Committee members, as well as the committee's charge, mission, and meeting dates (5 regular meetings and 1 data analysis meeting). There need to be two (2) school committee members who serve on this committee.

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINT ANNA SIEDZIK AND DAVID FRENKEL AS SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES ON THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE.

MOTION by Amy Kunberger; SECONDED by Jen Carr.

MOTION PASSES unanimously by vote of six (6) members present.

D. Town Meeting Flyer Approval

[Exhibit](#)

[Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy and Ms. Kunberger collaborated on the attached Town Meeting flyers. School Committee members offer feedback on the flyers, including:

- Revising all the numbers throughout to increase readability and maintain consistency (taking out the .00 cents, consistency with either \$1,000,000 00 or \$1 million);
- Clarifying the language to reflect that the towns would be voting to authorize their town's share of \$1 million, and then including the specific amounts for each town;
- Ensure consistency with "see reverse" language at the bottom of the flyers;
- Language will be revised to reflect that Article 1 is requesting reauthorization for the facilities feasibility study.

There is further discussion about Superintendent Tracy's planned presentation at the Town Meetings; structure of the meetings; clarification on all Articles and clearing up any misunderstandings; district's intended messaging with flyers; etc. Ms. Kunberger will incorporate the revisions as discussed this

evening. Once approved by the moderators, Superintendent Tracy will send out the flyers through his weekly update and through the district's Facebook page.

8. Finance and Operations

A. Draft Budget Calendar

[Exhibit](#)

Mr. Leone reviews the budget calendar draft as shown in the attached [exhibit](#). The dates in blue font will be finalized at the 09/28/22 Quintuple-Board Chairs Meeting, and a final version of the calendar will be provided at the 10/06/22 School Committee meeting. Mr. Leone notes that the School Committee is scheduled to vote on the final budget on 02/09/23, which is not a week that the committee typically meets.

Superintendent Tracy thanks Mr. Leone for his hard work. Ms. Allara highly recommends the 11/09/22 Budget 101 workshop.

9. Superintendent's Report

A. School Opening Update

- This week, the district wrapped up all the schools' open houses. Thank you to all the staff and parents who attended!
- Continuing to work to resolve transportation and bussing challenges. Superintendent Tracy has consulted with the district's council about the contract. He will continue to work towards resolution and provide updates as needed.
- Equity Audit: Through many iterations, Superintendent Tracy plans to include this on the 10/06/22 meeting agenda.
- NEASC Accreditation Report: The report has also gone through a few iterations. Superintendent Tracy notes that one of the elements the district was not meeting standards for was Portrait of the Graduate, so there has been some back-and-forth. This will be provided to the School Committee shortly.

Mr. Frenkel asks Superintendent Tracy to report on DESE's grant for indoor air quality. Superintendent Tracy explains that DESE opened a grant for \$100 million for HVAC repair, testing, and monitoring. The grant has some pretty heavy stipulations, as is the case with many grants. The deadline is the end of October. There is some discussion about the School Committee reviewing the grant before submission. Ms. Allara is hesitant to slow down the process by requesting the committee have a chance to review the grant, but is happy to ask for continued updates.

10. Committee Reports

A. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee (*Julia Campbell, Jen Carr, Dana Allara*)

Mrs. Carr reports that the *Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee* met on Monday, 08/19/22. The subcommittee discussed the upcoming quintuple board meeting and developed agenda items. They also scheduled future meeting dates, and established the next meeting's agenda.

B. Policy Subcommittee (*Anna Siedzik, Amy Kunberger, David Frenkel*)

Ms. Siedzik reports that the *Policy/Legislative Subcommittee* met on Monday, 09/19/2022. They completed review of D section policies, and anticipate bringing sections J, D, K and F to the full committee in the very near future. Ms. Kunberger has designed an infographic to illustrate the changes to A Section policies with the protected classes language, and this will be brought before the full School Committee on 10/06/22. The subcommittee also reviewed the three (3) policies requested by the Athletic Facility Improvement Committee, and reports that there were no conflicts found. Ms. Siedzik will draft a note about the subcommittee's review of these policies, and Superintendent Tracy will report this to the Athletic Facility Improvement Committee at their meeting next Monday.

C. Negotiations Subcommittee (*Dana Allara, David Polito, Amy Kunberger*)

No update at this time.

11. Chair's Report.

- Hamilton Master Planning Committee: They have wrapped up the first phase (collected a lot of information on existing conditions). The committee gave recommendations to the selectboard on the scope of the next phase, and they will also be seeking public input on that new phase.

12. Topics for Future Meetings

- Vaccine mandate revisited

13. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PURPOSE #2 (TO CONDUCT STRATEGY SESSIONS IN PREPARATION FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL OR TO CONDUCT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SESSIONS OR CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL, ERIC TRACY) AT 9:22 PM, AND NOT TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION THEREAFTER.

MOTION by Dana Allara; SECONDED by Anna Siedzik.

David Frenkel	YES;
Dana Allara	YES;
Anna Siedzik	YES;
Amy Kunberger	YES;
Jen Carr	YES;
David Polito	YES.

MOTION PASSES unanimously by roll-call vote of six (6) members present.

Respectfully submitted October 3 2022 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.

The agenda items listed are those items which were reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed on the agenda may be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Items may be heard out of the listed order.

****Times are provided as estimates and guidelines only and are subject to change.***