



HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

School Committee Meeting ([agenda](#))

Quintuple Board - Joint Meeting with Towns of Hamilton & Wenham Board of Selectmen and Finance Committees

Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room

Thursday, January 11, 2023

6:30 p.m. - 7:25 p.m.

Present:

Dana Allara, Chair

Anna Siedzik, Vice Chair

Julia Campbell, Assistant Secretary (arrived at approximately 6:50 p.m.)

Jen Carr

David Frenkel

David Polito (arrived at approximately 6:45 p.m.)

Also Present:

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Administration

Members of the Hamilton Select Board and Finance Committee

Members of the Wenham Select Board and Finance Committee

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chair Allara called the School Committee to order at 6:39 p.m.

The Wenham Select Board called to order at 6:39 p.m. with 3 members present.

The Wenham Finance Committee called to order at 6:39 p.m. with 4 members present.

The Hamilton Finance Committee called to order at 6:39 p.m. with 3 members present.

The Hamilton Select Board called to order at 6:39 p.m. with 3 members present.

2 New Business

a. Town of Hamilton FY24 Budget Highlights

There will be a capital and operating budget presentation to the Select Board and Finance Committee on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be viewable on zoom and HWCam. It is a balanced budget projection for FY24 but with very little room to spare. There is approximately \$12,000 of unused capacity. Some programmatic changes were included in the budget for FY24 and there is a capital program that is largely being funded by free cash and borrowing. The operating budget total is \$37,629,176, a 4.86% increase over last year.

Discussion:

The following information was provided in response to questions raised:

- The education portion of the budget is approximately 62% and includes funds for both the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and the North Shore Technical School.
- The Excess and Deficiency Fund does not appear in revenues but rather shows as a reduction in the school expense line.
- The Town of Hamilton budget is the Town Manager's recommendation. After the presentation on Saturday, the Select Board and Finance Committee may make comments and recommendations but essentially what is being projected is what is being recommended for the FY24 budget.
- The town warrant is scheduled to be closed at the first meeting in February.
- They will know better if there is public support for the budget once it is presented on Saturday. The budget was created to protect services as we know them, not to develop or expand programming and also to make sure we stayed under a Proposition 2 ½ override.

b. Town of Wenham FY24 Budget Highlights

Wenham has essentially a break even budget. There are two to three more meetings scheduled to settle the budget including capital. The school budget represents 52% of the total budget, approximately 1.5% less than the current fiscal year. The free cash number will be finalized in the next few weeks so capital can be addressed. Primary budget drivers are schools, public safety and general government (library, group insurance, etc.) It is anticipated that we will go forward with a balanced budget even though some departments have yet to be finalized. The Wenham Select Board opened the warrant last night. A meeting will be held on January 24 and it is anticipated that a finalized recommendation and the warrant closing will occur at the meeting scheduled for February 7.

Discussion:

In response to a question, it was stated that the education portion of the budget includes funds for both the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and the North Shore Technical School.

c. HWRSD FY24 Budget Highlights

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the HWRSD proposed budget. Taking into account comments from the Town Boards, the school department reduced the budget request that was presented at the last meeting by \$850,000. This results in a budget increase request of approximately \$1.3 million, a 3.12% increase. The administration believes with this budget they will be able to deliver a high quality education for students.

d. FY24 Budget Discussion

The Boards discussed the improved communication, collaboration and culture of transparency among the boards. It was noted that the School Committee would be hosting two public hearings regarding the budget. The first hearing is scheduled on January 19 and the second on February 9.

In response to questions raised by the Boards, Superintendent Tracy provided the following information:

- The timing of the vote to approve the new school will likely be 2025 or 2026 depending on how long the feasibility study takes. He discussed the importance of educating the communities about the project well in advance of any vote.
- The Athletic Facilities Improvement Project offsets may include, if approved, funds from the stabilization fund, Patton Homestead Fund, Community Preservation Funds and the fundraising committee. He stated that there is a section on the district website with additional information for the community on this project including a list of FAQs.

In response to a request, Superintendent Tracy provided additional details on the status of staffing in the schools.

3. Vote to Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the Hamilton Finance Committee was moved and seconded. Motion passed unanimously by vote of the 3 members present.

A motion to adjourn the Hamilton Select Board was moved and seconded. Motion passed unanimously by vote of the 3 members present.

A motion to adjourn the Wenham Select Board was moved and seconded. Motion passed unanimously by vote of the 3 members present.

A motion to adjourn the Wenham Finance Committee was moved and seconded. Motion passed unanimously by vote of the 4 members present.

A motion to adjourn the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee was made by Anna Siedzik and seconded by Julia Campbell. Motion passed unanimously by vote of the 6 members present.

Respectfully submitted by Bev Zaggarri, School Committee Recording Secretary on 3/10/23.