



# HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

**School Committee Meeting ([Agenda](#)) and Public Hearing  
Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room  
In-Person Meeting, [Zoom Link](#) is for Public Comment Only  
Thursday, February 9, 2023  
6:30 PM - 8:30PM**

**Present:**

Dana Allara, Chair  
Julia Campbell  
Jen Carr  
David Frenkel, Assistant Secretary  
Amy Kunberger, Secretary  
Anna Siedzik, Vice Chair  
David Polito (arrival approx. 8:10PM)

**Also Present:**

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent (arrival approx. 8PM)  
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent to Finance and Administration

**1. Call to Order**

With a quorum present, Ms. Allara, Chair, calls the Public Hearing and School Committee meeting to order at 6:30PM. Ms. Allara states that the meeting is being recorded and live streamed on HWCAM. Ms. Allara shares that Superintendent Tracy is not yet present. He is currently at another meeting related to his duties as Superintendent. He will join as soon as he is able.

**2. Public Hearing #2 Budget Presentation**

Vincent Leone presents an overview of the proposed budget as presented in the [exhibit](#).

*Peter Gourdeau, 416 Bridge St. Mr. Gourdeau is here on behalf of the Hamilton Wenham Athletic Facilities Improvement Committee and also as a parent and 50+ year resident of the community here to speak in support of the portion of the budget that relates to the athletic facilities. Mr. Gourdeau wants to offer support for the proposed budget. The HWAFIC has already raised 350K and are continuing to fundraise. This is an important initiative and the group is confident that there is broad support for it in the community.*

*Brent Leland, 104 Main St, Wenham. Mr. Leland is here as a parent supporting the athletic facility, but also as the co-president of the Hamilton Wenham Edfund supporting these athletic facilities proposal. The EdFund unanimously agrees that they are in full support of this facility and this upgrade. He feels that this needs to be addressed. This is not only for the improvement of our towns but also important for safety as well. Mr. Leland states that we pride ourselves as having a competitive environment that attracts students, including school choice students. As a parent, he believes that this is going to be a grand improvement for his children and other students. The education on the field is as important as the education in the classroom at times. Mr. Leland's offers his support and the support of the Edfund.*

There are no additional comments at this time for the Public Hearing portion of the meeting. Ms. Allara keeps the Zoom link open in case members of the public wish to comment later during the regular Citizen's Comments portion of the meeting.

**I MOVE TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING PORTION OF THE MEETING**

**MOTION BY: ANNA SIEDZIK, SECONDED BY JEN CARR  
MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY OF THE SIX (6) MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ms. Allara states that the committee anticipates returning in approximately 15 minutes to resume the regular portion of the meeting.

*Meeting resumes at approximately 7:20PM*

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

**4. Citizens' Comments**

[Exhibit](#)

*Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify himself or herself by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. After Citizen's Comments, the chat feature will be turned off. If members want to be recognized, they can use the raise hand feature.*

There are no citizen comments at this time.

**5. Review of School Committee Protocols**

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Kunberger reads School Committee Protocol #13 as written in the [exhibit](#).

**6. Review School Committee Mission Statement**

[Exhibit](#)

Ms. Carr reads a portion of the School Committee Mission Statement as written in the [exhibit](#).

**7. Consent Agenda**

Ms. Allara asks to hold the donation of instructional materials from the Gloucester Public Schools.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON - WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN ON THE AGENDA WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE HELD ITEM**

**MOTION BY: AMY KUNBERGER, SECONDED BY ANNA SIEDZIK  
MOTION PASSES unanimously by vote of SIX (6) members present.**

Ms. Allara held the Gloucester schools donation to highlight that this is an excellent example of public schools collaborating and notes that this is the type of resource sharing that we all should hope to model.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACCEPTS THE DONATION FROM THE GLOUCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS LISTED ON THE AGENDA**

**MOTION BY AMY KUNBERGER, SECONDED BY JULIA CAMPBELL  
MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY BY VOTE OF THE SIX (6) MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ms. Allara asks the committee to take some items out of order and to move to item 11 on the agenda to allow the opportunity for the Superintendent to arrive for the budget portion of the meeting.

Hearing no objections the committee moves on to agenda item #11.

**8. Committee Reports (originally agenda item #11)**

Capital/Finance–Next meeting is on the 16th

Policy –Ms. Siedzik briefly reviews the four policies of the L Section that is being brought forward for a second reading and a vote. There were no substantive changes from the last reading.

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE L SECTION POLICIES AS LISTED IN THE EXHIBIT ON THE AGENDA**

**MOTION BY AMY KUNBERGER, SECOND BY David Frenkel  
MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY OF THE SIX (6) MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ms. Siedzik notes that the F Section of policy was never voted upon. The section was reviewed in the fall and there was a question regarding policy FF. That question has been answered by counsel and the policy subcommittee will review the F Section at their meeting on Monday and anticipates bringing it forward to the full committee for a first reading on 3/2/23.

**9. Chair’s Report (originally agenda item #12)**–Ms. Allara states that she and Ms. Kunberger participated in the League of Women Voters’ Volunteer Fair. Over 200 people were in attendance. Both Ms. Allara and Ms. Kunberger stress that this was a fantastic community event and that it was heartening to see a large crowd looking for ways to volunteer. Ms. Kunberger notes that the LWV has a useful pamphlet that was distributed giving information about how to run for local elected office.

Ms. Allara reminds the public and the committee that Mr. Tracy was needed at more than one public meeting this evening regarding the school budget and he is not yet in the room. Ms. Allara calls for a brief recess.

The committee reconvenes after approximately 15 minutes. Mr. Tracy enters the meeting.

**10. New Business (Originally agenda item #8)–**

**ADOPT FY24 BUDGET**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE FINAL FY24 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BUDGET OF \$42,027,855. THIS INCLUDES GENERAL FUND OPERATING EXPENSES, AFTER OFFSETS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$41,431,428 AND GENERAL FUND DEBT SERVICE EXPENSES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$596,427. FURTHERMORE, THE GROSS OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE DISTRICT, BEFORE OFFSETS, HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED BY THE DESE DEFINED CHART OF ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO THE**

**'SUMMARY BY DESE CATEGORY' CHART INCLUDED IN THIS BUDGET PRESENTATION AS DETAILED IN THE EXHIBIT.**

**MOTION BY AMY KUNBERGER, SECONDED BY ANNA SIEDZIK**

Discussion: Mr. Tracy thanks Mr. Leone for the long hours and hard work that he has put in to create a fair budget for our students and for our communities. Ms. Siedzik appreciates that Mr. Leone added a slide explaining the E&D (slide 31) to the presentation. This slide helps the committee as well as the public to understand a complicated aspect of the presentation.

David Polito enters the meeting.

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY OF ALL SEVEN (7) MEMBERS**

**New Business–Vote Athletic Field Project**

Mr. Tracy presents the Athletic Field Project as shown on the exhibit. He begins by thanking the committee for their flexibility as he presented this evening to the Wenham CPC (Community Preservation Committee) at 6:30 and then at 7PM to the Hamilton CPC both for applications for funding for the Athletic Fields Projects. Mr. Tracy announces that Hamilton has accepted the District's entire application for \$800,000. Wenham CPC will vote next week. Mr. Tracy provides an overview of the current state of the fields and facilities and an overview of the numbers of students participating in athletics—over 70% participate in at least one sport. He reviews the proposed project including anticipated and potential funding sources and overall cost. Mr. Tracy asks if there are questions from the committee.

Mr. Frenkel notes that there are other projects anticipated in the District and asks about priorities and where this ranks in priority.

Mr. Tracy states this project is an important mechanism to get kids back into our schools and have families want to send our kids to Hamilton-Wenham. This is a fairly short term project relative to the elementary school building project. This would start in March (2024) and be completed likely by November/December. Mr. Tracy is comfortable with the order of projects. The school project is 4 years out. The roof project is on hold due to the State shutting down the funding program for now. Given the economics of it, Mr. Tracy believes we are in the right order for these projects.

Mr. Frenkel asks about the roof project.

Mr. Tracy reminds the committee that the District continually has to invest in maintenance to repair frequent roof leaks. The District will continue to apply for funding for a roof project and hopes to be let into the process when the state resumes the program.

Ms. Campbell asks about private fundraising potentials. Mr. Tracy reviews the potential offsets. There is a discussion about the HWAFIC fundraising and potential naming rights and tax deductible donations.

Ms. Siedzik states that the time to do this project is now. If the community wants to retain and attract students and families we need to invest.

**I move that the Regional School Committee vote:**

**(i) to authorize the District to borrow the sum of Fifteen Million Dollars (\$15,000,000) for the purpose of designing, constructing, reconstructing, making improvements to and equipping the athletic and recreational facilities located at Hamilton Wenham Regional High School, 775 Bay Road, South Hamilton, MA, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, and to authorize the District Treasurer, with the approval of the Regional School Committee, to issue any bonds or notes that may be necessary for such purposes and to execute any and all documents required therefor, and provided further, that**

**(ii) the Superintendent is hereby directed to provide written notice of this authorization to incur debt and the purposes for which it is authorized to the Select Boards of the towns of Hamilton and Wenham, said notice to be provided no later than seven (7) days from the date hereof, and provided further that no debt may be incurred until the expiration of 60 days after the date hereof and being further subject to the contingencies set forth in Chapter 71, section 16 (d) of the general laws.**

**MOTION BY AMY KUNBERGER, SECONDED BY David Polito**

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY OF THE SEVEN (7) MEMBERS PRESENT**

**New Business–FY24 Budget and Annual Report**

**I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE FY24 BUDGET AND ANNUAL REPORT AS LINKED TO TONIGHT'S AGENDA**

**MOTION BY AMY KUNBERGER, SECONDED BY ANNA SIEDZIK**

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY OF THE SEVEN (7) MEMBERS PRESENT**

### **11. Superintendent's Report (Originally item #10)**

Mr. Tracy highlight's last night's Hearts and Flowers event fundraiser for choir. He wants to thank Ms. Katie Simko and the students for their work in creating a fantastic show.

The biggest part of the past weeks has been getting the budget put together. He wants the public to understand that the District cut \$900,00 out of this budget from the originally presented budget and looked at ways to cut it back at the request of town administrators. The use of E&D is an important piece of the puzzle to allow the District to fix up our schools and with committee support to create projects to improve our schools including the fields project, the auditorium project and improvements at the Buker school. He notes that this budget is realistic, appropriate and fiscally responsible and it speaks to the commitment to transparency and cooperation and communication

with other boards and committees in the towns. Mr. Tracy appreciates the work that has gone into this process.

**12. Topics for future meetings:**

Vinny Leone–Year End Forecast for next meeting

David Frenkel–Special Education costs and financial comparisons. Mr. Tracy will provide a report at a future meeting.

**I MOVE TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION BY DAVID FRENKEL, SECOND BY JEN CARR**

**MOTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY OF THE SEVEN (7) MEMBERS PRESENT**

Respectfully submitted,  
Dana Allara

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