



**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, [Zoomlink](#) is for Public Comment Only**

**Meeting ID: 81837567895**

**Thursday, January 18, 2024**

**6:30 p.m. - 8:54 p.m.**

**Present:**

Dana Allara

Julia Campbell (remote participation)

Jennifer Carr

David Frenkel

Amy Kunberger

David Polito arrived at 7:40

**Also Present:**

Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent

Assistant Superintendent Leone

**1. Call to Order Public Hearing**

With a quorum present, Dana Allara called the public hearing of the School Committee to order at 6:30 p.m. Dana Allara stated that the meeting is being recorded and live streamed via HWCAM. Dana Allara stated that Member Julia Campbell is participating remotely.

**2. Public Hearing - School Choice for 2024-2025 School Year [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)**

Superintendent Tracy discussed the state's requirement that School Committees vote each year on whether to participate in school choice for the upcoming year. He reviewed the district's current school choice enrollment.

In response to questions from the Committee, Superintendent Tracy discussed the revenue the district receives for accepting school choice students.

Andrew St. Pierre, 743 Bay Road, asked why the enrollment of school choice students was significantly higher in the past. Superintendent Tracy stated that historically the district's goal for school choice participation was to bring the high school enrollment up to a target number and now school choice participation is based on filling seats in classes already scheduled.

There was no additional public comment. Dana Allara closed the public hearing on School Choice.

**3. Public Hearing #1 - HWRSD FY25 Budget [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)**

Dana Allara called to order the public hearing on the HWRSD FY25 Budget.

Assistant Superintendent Leone gave an overview of the tentative FY25 Budget.

There was no public comment. Dana Allara closed the public hearing on the HWRSD FY25 Budget.

The Committee took a brief recess.

At 7:00 pm Dana Allara called to order the meeting of the School Committee.

#### **4. Pledge of Allegiance**

All those in attendance rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **5. 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.*

Bill Shields, 721 Bay Road, spoke on behalf of abutters of the high school who do not oppose the athletic field project but strongly oppose the use of artificial turf. He stated that the abutters asked the Committee for reconsideration of the decision to use artificial turf and were told there would be no reconsideration. He reviewed a list of the reasons the abutters believed reconsideration is warranted. He stated that if the Committee is not willing to reconsider, the abutters will request voters at Town Meeting reconsider the votes taken last year. Mr. Shields distributed to the Committee a presentation for review.

There were no further citizen's comment and the zoom link was closed.

#### **6. Review of School Committee Protocols [Exhibit](#)**

Amy Kunburger read School Committee Protocol 4.

#### **7. Review of School Committee Mission Statement [Exhibit](#)**

Jen Carr read the following from the Mission Statement: *The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee will lead and inspire a district that attracts and retains high quality educators, by acknowledging and respecting their expertise and professionalism.*

#### **8. Student Representative Report; Julia Tsappis**

Julia Tsappis updated the Committee on events and activities throughout the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

#### **9. Consent Agenda**

##### **a. Warrants [Exhibit](#)**

- Voucher No. 15
- Voucher No. 1078

- Voucher No. 1079
- Voucher No. 3350
- Voucher No. 3351
- Voucher No. 3352
- Voucher No. 3353

b. Minutes January 4, 2024 [Exhibit](#)

c. Other

- 2023-2024 Spring 8th Grade Waivers [Exhibit](#)

**I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the consent agenda as presented withholding the minutes of January 4.**

**Motion by: Julia Campbell**

**Seconded by: Jen Carr**

**ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel and Kunberger)**

Dana Allara stated that there was an error in the spelling of Amy Kunberger's name on the bottom of page 1 of the minutes.

**I move to approve the minutes of January 4 with the correction of the spelling of Amy Kunberger's name on the bottom of page 1.**

**Motion by: Julia Campbell**

**Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

**ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Kunberger)**

## **10. New Business**

a. Vote School Choice [Exhibit](#)

**I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the school choice proposal from the Superintendent for the 2024-2025 school year.**

**Motion by: Julia Campbell**

**Seconded by: Jen Carr**

**ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Kunberger)**

b. Determine Liaisons for SEPAC & Cutler Elementary

Dana Allara stated that liaison positions for SEPAC and Cutler need to be filled. David Frenkel agreed to serve as the SEPAC liaison and Amy Kunberger agreed to serve as the Cutler Elementary School liaison

**I move that Amy Kunberger serve as the School Committee liaison to the Cutler**

**Elementary School for the 2023-2024 school year.**

**Motion by: Julia Campbell**

**Seconded by: Jen Carr**

**ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Kunberger)**

**I move that David Frenkel serve as the School Committee liaison to SEPAC for the 2023-2024 school year.**

**Motion by: Julia Campbell**

**Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

**ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Kunberger)**

c. School Start Times

Dana Allara stated that this item is on the agenda at the request of Jen Carr.

**I move that the School Committee authorize the Superintendent to create and administer a survey of stakeholders regarding school start times.**

**Motion: Jen Carr**

**Seconded by: David Frenkel**

Dana Allara stated that she is in support of the motion but is concerned about the additional work this process could create for the district moving forward .

**ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Kunberger and Polito)**

d. Superintendent's Mid-Year Evidence [Exhibit](#)

Superintendent Tracy gave an overview of his mid-year evidence, which is the beginning of a compilation of evidence that supports the work towards meeting the Superintendent goals for the year.

## **11. Finance and Operations**

a. Updates to FY25 Tentative Budget [Exhibit](#), [Exhibit](#)

Assistant Superintendent Leone provided information on the updates to the FY25 tentative budget. Superintendent Tracy stated that he will address the concern raised in the email from 6th grade teachers at the next meeting. Assistant Superintendent Leone encouraged members to notify him if they would like anything in particular highlighted during his February 1 budget summary.

## **12. Committee Reports**

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - meeting rescheduled to January 24

b. Policy Subcommittee - reviewed restraint policy and now waiting for Superintendent Tracy to provide the written procedures referenced in the policy. Next meeting is scheduled for February 5.

Jen Carr requested a discussion regarding the role of subcommittees. Dana Allara stated that in response to this concern, she has a clarifying statement to provide to the Committee. She stated that there is no rule, no bylaw and no law that says a subcommittee's work must be tasked by the full committee. Also, on August 17 the Committee held a discussion regarding the Committee's preference on the scope of work of subcommittees. The minutes of August 17 state: *Subcommittees having a discussion on a topic not tasked to the subcommittee by the full committee should, for transparency and efficiency, bring that topic to the full committee to determine if the full committee is interested in the subcommittee pursuing that topic further.* Dana Allara asked that with that clarifying information in mind, the Policy Subcommittee reconvene and try to work out the issue. In response to an additional concern raised by members of the policy subcommittee regarding scheduling concerns, Dana Allara asked the subcommittee members to have a discussion after the meeting and try to work out the scheduling concerns. She stated that she is hopeful the subcommittee can resolve the concerns and if the concerns can't be resolved by the subcommittee a specific motion needs to be brought back to the full committee for consideration.

- c. Negotiations Subcommittee - a strategy session meeting is planned for next week and the meeting with Office Personnel is scheduled for January 29.
- d. Secretary Report - Dana Allara stated that the secretary report will be provided at the next meeting

### **13. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Tracy stated that kindergarten registration opened this week and the Cutler principal search will be underway soon. He stated that the third quarter started on Monday. In response to a question, he stated that the district does not offer SAT prep but does offer the PSAT test during the school day.

### **14. Chair's Report**

Dana Allara stated that the average meeting length for this year so far is 1 hour and 57 minutes, excluding executive sessions. She shared information from MASC in response to questions raised by members. First, a member can send articles or information to other members without violating Open Meeting Law but doing so could potentially open the door to a violation if members respond to the email. Members should also be cautious about sharing information that may be an exhibit at a future meeting. Second, members can approve minutes of meetings that they did not attend. Dana Allara provided information regarding upcoming election signature requirements and nomination paper due dates. She stated that she had attended the recent School Building Committee information night and found it to be information and engaging. Dana Allara reviewed the upcoming meeting dates and start times.

David Frenkel made a motion to spend 10 minutes discussing the field project and the serious statement made this evening regarding information that was allegedly not available to the Town. There was no second.

Superintendent Tracy stated that the bid documents include a clause to have 3rd party testing for PFAS and that PFAS need to be at or below requirements. He stated that the bid documents will be complete and ready for review in February.

#### **15. Topics for Future Meeting**

David Polito asked that an agenda item be added to ensure the concerns in the email referenced earlier this evening are being considered. Superintendent Tracy will review and determine what that agenda item should be. In response to a question raised, there was discussion on the status of a bill filed in the state legislature regarding turf fields.

#### **16. Vote to Adjourn**

**I move to adjourn the meeting of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee at 8:54 p.m.**

**Moved by: David Frenkel**

**Seconded by: David Polito**

**ROLL CALLMOTION PASSED 6-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Kunberger and Polito)**