Approved by the HWRSD School Committee on December 5, 2024

HAMILTON-WENHAM
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
5 School Street, Wenham, MA 01984 • Tel. 978-468-5310

School Committee Quintuple Meeting (agenda)
Joint Meeting with Towns of Hamilton & Wenham Select Board and Finance Committees
Buker Elementary School Multipurpose Room
In-Person Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2024
6:30 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

Present:
Dana Allara
David Frenkel
Trent Honda
Amy Kunberger

Also Present:
Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent
Joseph Domelowicz, Hamilton Town Manager
Wendy Markiewicz, Hamilton Finance Director
Members of the Wenham Finance Committee
Members of the Wenham Select Board Members
Members of the Hamilton Finance Committee Member
Members of the Hamilton Select Board Members

1. Call to Order
At 6:35 pm the School Committee, Hamilton Finance Committee and Wenham Finance Committee called to order. The Hamilton and Wenham Select Boards did not have a quorum present.

Public Comment
Dana Allara reviewed the guidelines for public comment and reminded the community that the meeting is being recorded and live streamed via HWCAM.

Stephen McWhirter, 18 Cunningham Drive, asked for clarification on costs and reimbursement amounts from the state for the consolidated school project. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed site including an underground stream that is on the lot.

Peter Fisher, Hamilton resident, stated that he would like the ability to compare the cost of rehabbing the 3 schools instead of building one consolidated school. He asked that Superintendent Tracy ensure that information is posted on the website including the names of contractors. He encouraged a vote be held sooner than later to stem the flow of costs.

2. Elementary School Project Presentation by Architects Exhibit
Superintendent Tracy discussed the progress of the elementary project to date. He introduced the members from JCJ Architecture and PMA Consultants that were in attendance at the meeting.

Nick Massi of PMA Consultants discussed community outreach to date as well as additional community outreach events scheduled over the next few months. He reviewed the project timeline.

Members of JCJ Architecture gave an overview of the progress to date on the schematic design phase of the project.

Kevin Nigro from PMA Consultants discussed the recent increase in the MSBA per square foot reimbursement amount. He stated that PMA has sent a letter to MSBA to confirm this project will be eligible for the new reimbursement rate of $645 per square foot.

Superintendent Tracy discussed next steps in the project.

Hamilton Finance Committee stated that they are doing a deep review of the options presented by SBC, looking at details of recent projects completed in surrounding towns and encouraged anyone interested in that information to attend or watch Finance Committee meetings online. In addition, they urged community members to learn more about the neighborhood concept of the proposed building which addresses concerns raised about the large school size. The proposed building design includes 5 learning neighborhoods.

Superintendent Tracy stated the following in response to questions raised:

- Current grade 1-5 enrollment is 640 students
- Current estimate for the project is $150 million with $50 million reimbursement and he anticipates actual numbers will be available in December
- 740 is the capacity of the school based on DESE 22 students per classroom guidelines but the larger physical size of the classrooms will allow for the district to go beyond 22 students per classroom if needed
- There will be two entrances for drop off/pick up, one in the front and one in the back
- Staffing needs at the new building would be similar to the current set up with the exception of administration - 3 building principals will not be needed
- The district will use the same model as used in current buildings for supervision of young children in hallways
- Maintenance will still be needed at the Buker School which will house the PK and K programs
- MSBA does not reimburse for the cost of PK classrooms so moving PK and K to the consolidated school may not be cost effective and in addition, the regional agreement requires at least one school in each town
- The School Building Committee had input into the exterior design of the building but not the community at large

- With the exception of the addition of outside fencing, no major changes are required at the Buker School to house the PK and K program

3. New Business

a. HWRSD FY26 Budget Highlights Exhibit
Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District's FY26 budget highlights.

Assistant Superintendent Leone stated the following in response to questions raised:
- Currently 6 out-of-district students are elementary level and 33 are secondary level
- The standard for what it takes to qualify for out-of-district placement has not changed
- School choice amount is set by the state and is the same for incoming and outgoing students with the exception of some incremental increase if student receives special education services

Assistant Superintendent Leone provided additional information on Circuit Breaker, Chapter 70 funding and E&D.

b. Town of Wenham FY26 Budget Highlights Exhibit
Members from the Town of Wenham reviewed the Town's FY26 budget highlights.

c. Town of Hamilton FY26 Budget Highlights Exhibit
Members from the Town of Hamilton reviewed the Town's FY26 budget highlights.

d. FY25 Budget Discussion
The Boards and Committees discussed the FY26 budgets.

4. Vote to Adjourn
At 8:15 p.m. the Hamilton Finance Committee, Wenham Finance Committee and School Committee voted to adjourn. School Committee motion by David Frenkel and seconded by Amy Kunberger 4-0.