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: 84195621536
Thursday, November 21, 2024
7:00 p.m. - 9:29 p.m.

Present:
Dana Allara
Jen Carr
David Frenkel
Trent Honda (arrived at approximately 7:05)
David Polito

Also Present:
Eric Tracy, HWRSD Superintendent
Vincent Leone, Assistant Superintendent

1. Call to Order
At 7:02 p.m. Dana Allara called the meeting to order. She stated that the first order of business is to adjourn to executive session and she estimates the Committee will return to open session in approximately 10 minutes.

2. Vote to Adjourn to Executive Session
I move to adjourn to Executive Session for Purpose #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the HWREA where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares, to return to Open Session.

Motion by: Dana Allara **Seconded by: David Frenkel**

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel and Polito)

3. Pledge of Allegiance
All those in attendance rose for the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Citizen's Comments Exhibit
Any citizen wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themself by name and address. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material.

Deb Safford, Maple Street, discussed concerns that the Committee does not engage with the community during public comment. She asked how a new school provides equity, how being in a large school will help a child's sense of security and well being, why the schools are in such ill repair and asked for truth in accounting.

Jeff Austin, 50 Sharon Road, asked why the board will not present a fiscally responsible plan to renovate and maintain the 3 neighborhood schools. He asked why the board is prioritizing state funding over the desire of town residents. He stated that years of poor maintenance does not justify abandonment of neighborhood schools and the board needs to come up with creative solutions. He asked what the contingency plan is if the project is voted down. He stated that unlike other boards the school board restricts citizen comments and shuts out the people that will be impacted by the decisions.

Sandy Fisher, Greenbrook Road, stated that she shares the view of the previous two speakers.

5. Review of School Committee Protocol Exhibit
Trent Honda read School Committee protocol 5.

6. Review of School Committee Mission Statement Exhibit
David Frenkel read the following from the mission statement: *The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District School Committee's mission is to ensure our schools create graduates with a passion for lifelong learning together with the critical skills needed to maximize their potential. 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.*

7. Student Representative Report; *Emmy Pitkin*
Emmy Pitkin updated the Committee on events and activities throughout the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

8. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants Exhibit
- Voucher No. 10
- Voucher No. 1016
- Voucher No. 1017
- Voucher No. 4052
- Voucher No. 4053
- Voucher No. 4054
- Voucher No. 4055

b. Minutes
- November 7, 2024 Exhibit

c. Other
- 2024-25 Winter H-W AD Books & Game Day Advertisements Exhibit

d. Donations
    - Friends of Winthrop - Change Is Simple STEM Program; $7,200 Exhibit
    - Edfund Grant - Creating a Therapeutic Educational Experience; $18,973.94 Exhibit

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the consent agenda as written.

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: David Frenkel**

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel, Honda and Polito)

9. New Business

a. Vote Teacher Contract 2024-2027 Exhibit

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the Hamilton-Wenham Teachers' Contract for school years 2024-2027 as presented in the agenda.

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: Jen Carr**

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel, Honda and Polito)

Dana Allara stated that without objection the Committee would take the FY24 Audit Presentation out of order. There was no objection.

10. Finance & Operations

a. FY24 Audit Presentation; *Marcum LLP* Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

Frank Seretti gave a presentation on the FY24 audit. He thanked Assistant Superintendent Leone for his cooperation on the audit. He stated that no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses were noted during the audit.

9. New Business (continued)

b. Class Size Report Annual Enrollment Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed the 2024 class size report based on the October 1 enrollment numbers.

c. New Student Activity Fund Account Request Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed the request to open a student activity fund account for HOSA, the Future Health Professionals club at the high school.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the new student activity fund for HOSA, the Future Health Professional club at the high school as stated in the agenda.

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: Jen Carr**

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel, Honda and Polito)

d. 1.0 FTE ESP Staffing Request Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed the request for a 1.0 FTE ESP staffing request for a student at the high school.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the new 1.0 FTE ESP staffing request as presented in the agenda.

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: Jen Carr**

In response to questions, Superintendent Tracy stated that this is typically a difficult position to fill and there is a balance in the 240 Grant that could be used to fund this position for the remainder of the year.

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel, Honda and Polito)

10. Finance & Operations (continued)

b. Superintendent's Initial Recommended FY26 Budget Presentation Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone gave a presentation on the Superintendent's initial recommended FY26 budget.

In response to questions, Assistant Superintendent Leone stated the following:

- Facilities rental revenue may go higher from field rentals but we have left the dollar amount flat until we have a full year of data
- Estimated increase for electric 39% and gas 42%. He is meeting with National Grid to review and ensure consumption estimates are accurate
- Old and new gas and electric rates are available and will be emailed to members
- The 3.67% maximum increase in out-of-district rates has been set by the state

Assistant Superintendent Leone stated that there is $1.3 million in one time E&D money that the Committee could consider using to offset the town assessments for FY26 and potentially avoid an operating override. He stressed that this is one time money and would have to be made up in FY27 and he is not confident at this time that even with the $1.3 million Wenham would be able to avoid an operational override.

The Committee briefly discussed the possibility of using those funds along with the need to be fully transparent with the community if the decision is made to use the one time funds.

11. Committee Reports

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - next meeting December 18
b. Policy Subcommittee - meeting to be scheduled
c. Negotiations Subcommittee - no meetings scheduled
d. Secretary Report - report will be available at the next meeting

12. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy discussed the upcoming Harvest event at the high school. David Frenkel requested the new Facilities Director attend an upcoming meeting and give a presentation to the Committee.

13. Chair's Report

Dana Allara notified members of an opportunity to provide information to the community about the proposed consolidated school project at the upcoming EdFund Christmas tree sale. She stated that she will email information about the event to members to see if anyone is available to attend.

14. Topics for Future Meetings

Q1 Update, Sale of BAN, Root Cause Analysis on Cutler MCAS Scores, Presentation by Director of Facilities

15. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 9:29 p.m.

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: Trent Honda**

MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel, Honda and Polito)