Approved by the HWRSD School Committee on February 6, 2025

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: 82486695488
Thursday, January 16, 2025
6:30 p.m. - 8:09 p.m.

Present:
Julia Campbell (via zoom)
David Frenkel
Trent Honda (arrived approximately at 6:50)
Amy Kunberger
David Polito

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

1. Call to Order
At 6:30 p.m. Amy Kunberger opened the public hearing on School Choice. She stated that Julia Campbell would be participating via zoom and all votes will be roll call votes. She reminded the community that the meeting is being live streamed and recorded via HWCAM.

2. Public Hearing - School Choice for 2025-2026 School Year Exhibit, Exhibit
Superintendent Tracy discussed the school choice program and his recommendation that the district continue participating in this program.

There was no public comment regarding school choice and the public hearing was closed at 6:34 p.m.

3. Public Hearing #1 - HWRSD FY26 Budget Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit
At 6:34 p.m. Amy Kunberger opened the public hearing on the HWRSD FY26 budget. Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the Superintendent's FY26 budget recommendation. He stated that later this evening at the full meeting he will be updating these numbers.

There was no public comment regarding the budget and the public hearing was closed at 6:55 p.m.

The Committee took a brief recess.

At 7:00 p.m. Amy Kunberger called the School Committee meeting to order.

4. Pledge of Allegiance
All those in attendance rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. She reminded the community that the meeting is being live streamed and recorded and also a member is participating remotely and all votes will be roll call votes.

5. 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.

Maria Machart, 14 Chestnut Street, a teacher at the Miles River School encouraged the Committee to make the physical structures that children learn in each day a priority.

Linda Mastrianni, 23 Maple Street, a teacher at the elementary schools, stated that she is hopeful that the new school passes as the students deserve a school that encourages and supports learning.

There was no additional citizen comment.

6. Review of School Committee Protocol Exhibit
Amy Kunberger read School Committee protocol number 8.

7. Review of School Committee Mission Statement Exhibit
Amy Kunberger 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 inspires all students to realize their fullest potential and feel a powerful sense of individual and collective belonging.*

8. Student Representative Report; *Whitney Fitzgibbons*
Whitney Fitzgibbons updated the Committee on events and activities throughout the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

9. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes
   - December 19, 2024 Exhibit
   - January 2, 2025 Exhibit

b. Donations

   - Trenton & Cassie Honda - Middle School Donation for Scholarship Fund; $1,000 Exhibit
   - FOTA Grant - Cape Ann Museum Field Trip; $655 Exhibit
   - FOTA Grant - Spring High School Play Props, Set Supplies and Costumes Exhibit

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the consent agenda as written in the packet.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Campbell, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito)

10. New Business

a. State of the Buildings Report Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy introduced Curtis Wightman, Director of Facilities, Maintenance and Operations. Mr. Wightman provided a state of the buildings report to the Committee.

In response to questions, Mr. Wightman stated that he has been emailing with National Grid regarding the assessment study but has not connected with them yet. He is hoping for additional information on that matter soon and will provide that information to Superintendent Tracy and in his next report he will address the water quality testing reports.

b. Vote School Choice

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to accept school choice participation for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Campbell, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito)

c. Competency Determination Class of 2025 and Beyond Exhibit, Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed the new language in the statue regarding competency determination and graduation requirements. He stated that MCAS will still be required and be used by the state for accountability.

d. Town Election Information Exhibit Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy reviewed the town election dates and information.

11. Finance & Operations

a. FY26 Updated Budget Exhibit, Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the updated superintendent's tentative budget. He highlighted the changes from the budget presented during the public hearing on the budget. He stated if there are no changes recommended this is the budget that the Committee will vote on at the February 6 meeting. He reminded the Committee a super-majority is required for that vote.

In response to a question he stated that if all things remain the same in FY27 the Committee will need to decide whether to seek an override or make reductions of an estimated $2 million (the amount of the E&D funds used). As a comparison of what cuts may look like he reminded the Committee that during COVID a $1.2 million reduction was needed and that resulted in a reduction of 20 staff members, not all teachers.

The Committee discussed ideas on how to make the tax increase models for the new school available to the public including having a tax calculator available or a flyer sent to each household estimating what the tax impact would be for their home for the new school project. The Committee also discussed how to provide the community with information on all possible upcoming capital projects and priorities.

12. Committee Report

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - Trent Honda has been appointed to the Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for mid-February
b. Policy Subcommittee - meeting to be scheduled, Superintendent Tracy to attend
c. Negotiations Subcommittee - no update
d. Secretary Report - no update

13. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy reminded the community that mid-year exams are coming up soon.

14. Chair's Report

There was no chair report.

15. Topics for Future Meetings

David Frenkel requested to discuss his response to the procedure issue brought up by Dana Allara at the last meeting. Amy Kunberger asked all members to think about ideas for procedures to respond to actions of committee members when procedural questions arise. Trent Honda requested the Facilities Director respond to water quality reports. David Frenkel requested that the Director of Facilities give an update at each meeting.

16. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 8:09 p.m.

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

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL VOTE 5-0 (Members Campbell, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito)