Approved by the HWRSD School Committee on February 27, 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: 83223169555
Thursday, February 6, 2025
6:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

Present:
Dana Allara
Julia Campbell (via zoom departed at approximately 8:40 p.m.)
David Frenkel (joined via zoom at approximately 7:30 p.m.)
Trent Honda
Amy Kunberger
David Polito

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

1. Call to Order
At 6:33 p.m. Dana Allara called to order Public Hearing #2 on the FY26 Budget.

2. Public Hearing #2 - HWRSD FY26 Budget - School Choice for 2025-2026 School Year
Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone gave a presentation on the FY26 budget.

There was no public comment on the budget.

At 7:04 p.m. Dana Allara closed the public hearing and called to order the School Committee meeting.

3. Pledge of Allegiance
All those in attendance rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Dana Allara reminded the community that the meeting is being live streamed and recorded via HWCAM.

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.

Bridget O'Donnell, 105 Main Street, Wenham and an employee at the Winthrop Elementary School spoke in support of the new elementary school project.

Katie O'Brien, 114 Forest Street, Hamilton spoke in support of the new elementary school project.

Linda Mastriani, 23 Maple Street, and a Hamilton elementary teacher spoke in support of the new elementary school project.

Alicia Anderson, a Hamilton-Wenham teacher spoke in support of the new elementary school project.

Chontelle Clark, a Hamilton-Wenham teacher spoke in support of the new elementary school project.

Bridget O'Donnell read a brief statement in support of the new elementary school project from Heidi Caccivio, 11 Hilltop Drive, Wenham.

5. Review of School Committee Protocol Exhibit
Dana Allara read School Committee protocol number 9.

6. 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 Is a source of civic pride and municipal engagement to serve the community for generations to come*

7. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants Exhibit
   - Voucher No. 16
   - Voucher No. 17
   - Voucher No. 1025
   - Voucher No. 1026
   - Voucher No. 1027
   - Voucher No. 4072
   - Voucher No. 4073
   - Voucher No. 4075
   - Voucher No. 4076

b. Minutes
   - January 16, 2025 Exhibit
   - January 15, 2025 Exhibit

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

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

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

8. New Business

a. Vote HW Elementary School Project Funding Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

I moved that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District hereby appropriates the amount of $142,266,034 for the purpose of paying costs for designing, constructing, and equipping a new Cutler Elementary School at 237 Asbury St. Hamilton, MA, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the "Project"), which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least 50 years, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the Hamilton-Wenham School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation, the District is authorized to borrow said amount, under and pursuant to Chapter 71, Section 16(d), of the General Laws and the District Agreement, as amended, and pursuant to any other enabling authority. The District acknowledges that the MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District; provided further that any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA shall not exceed the lesser of (1) fifty-one point twenty-eight percent (51.28%) of eligible, approved Project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, and that the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA.

FURTHER VOTED: That within seven (7) days from the date on which this vote is adopted the Secretary be and hereby is instructed to notify the Select Board of each of the member towns of this District as to the amount and general purposes of the debt herein authorized, as required by the District Agreement and by Chapter 71, Section 16(d), of the General Laws.

Motion by: David Polito **Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

Superintendent Tracy discussed the language in the motion which was provided by the MSBA and has been reviewed by both the district legal and bond counsel. He stated that if approved this evening this still needs to be approved at both town meetings and if approved at both town meetings will then need to be approved as a debt exclusion on the ballots. In response to a question regarding providing information on the tax impact of the project on each residence, Superintendent Tracy stated that a calculator will be available on the website for tax calculation. In addition, he stated that he would work with the Towns and look into possibly sending out a

mailer to each resident and would also work with local media/newspapers to be sure information is published.

David Frenkel raised concern that the project does not include funding for ASHRAE Standard 241. Superintendent Tracy stated that the project is still in the design phase. The project meets all state requirements at the highest level and that if in the future there is a new Massachusetts mandate for Standard 241 it is something that could be upgraded down the line. The Committee discussed the purpose of this motion is to allow the citizens of Hamilton and Wenham to decide if they would like to move forward with a new elementary school project. David Polito stated that 3 members of the School Building Committee are present at this meeting and hear the concerns raised by David Frenkel. He noted that the School Building Committee works with experts to ensure all areas of the project meet the most up-to-date codes and all project choices are made with the best interest of the children of the community in mind. David Frenkel stated that he feels this topic has not been fully debated by the Committee.

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-1 (Members Allara, Campbell, Honda, Kunberger and Polito voted yes and Member Frenkel voted no)

b. Superintendent's Formative Evidence Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed his mid-year evaluation evidence.

c. Update Communications/Branding

Amy Kunberger stated that she has met with Chris Ford and he has volunteered his designers to take on the next step of the project and she is waiting to hear back from him on the timeline. Superintendent Tracy stated that he is also working with Chris Ford on graphic designers for signage.

d. Procedures for Addressing Protocol Concerns

Dana Allara stated that this item is an opportunity for members to discuss procedures for addressing protocol concerns.

David Frenkel stated that he would not address each allegation made at the previous meeting as it would take too much time but he would address the allegation regarding applying for a grant without authorization. He stated that he rejects the characterization of what happened, he stated that he made an inquiry but did not apply for a grant. He stated that he filled out a form for information and made it clear during a phone conversation that any grant would need to be accepted by the Superintendent and the Committee. He discussed email communications he had with Superintendent Tracy regarding the grant opportunity. He stated that he does not believe there was a foundation for the accusation that was made. He expressed disappointment that the grant was not accepted by the Superintendent. The Committee discussed having a future agenda item regarding the procedures for donations/grants being accepted by the Committee.

9. Finance & Operations

a. FY26 Final Budget Vote Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone reviewed the FY26 budget.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the Final FY26 General Fund Expenditures Budget of $45,441,149. This includes General Fund Operating Expenses, after offsets in the amount of $43,493,242, and General Fund Debt Service Expenses in the amount of $1,947,907. 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: David Polito **Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

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

b. SC Budget & Capital Communication

Superintendent Tracy discussed the need to put together the annual flyer for town meetings.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee task Amy Kunberger with putting together the one-page flyer for Town Meeting.

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

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

10. Committee Report

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - next meeting on Monday
b. Policy Subcommittee - meeting date TBD
c. Negotiations Subcommittee - no update
d. Secretary Report - no update

11. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy discussed the 100th day of school celebration event next week, the Hearts and Flowers event and kindergarten information night scheduled for February 25. In response to a question regarding the status of the electric bus grant, he stated that the grant has been impacted by the recent hold on government grants and he has been in contact with Congressman Moulton regarding the matter. In response to a question regarding the energy study, he stated that the Director of Facilities will provide an update at the next meeting. In response to a question regarding the policy on ill students attending school, he stated that the district relies on the school nurses for such determinations. In response to a question regarding use of the filter boxes in classrooms, he stated that is up to the individual teachers. In response to a question regarding the cell phone policy at the high school, he stated that Principal

Menegoni is working on the policy and he anticipates it will come before the Committee soon as part of the handbook approval.

12. Chair's Report

Dana Allara stated that she wanted to be sure members are clear and in agreement that as School Committee members all requests for information should go through the Superintendent, they should not be contacting staff directly asking for information unless they are asking for information as a parent for information related to their child.

13. Topics for Future Meetings

Trent Honda requested to have a discussion regarding donation procedures and external communications. Assistant Superintendent Leone requested to have a Quarter 2 update on the next agenda if possible. Superintendent Tracy stated that Title IX readdress will need to be on a future agenda.

14. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

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

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