Approved by the HWRSD School Committee on March 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: 83728172075
Thursday, February 27, 2025
7:00 p.m. - 9:56 p.m.

Present:
Dana Allara
Julia Campbell (via zoom departed at approximately 8:45 pm)
Jen Carr (departed at 8:35 pm)
Trent Honda
Amy Kunberger
David Polito

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

1. Call to Order
At 7:00 p.m. Dana Allara called the meeting to order.

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

3. Land Acknowledgement Exhibit
Amy Kunberger read the land acknowledgement.

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.

There was no citizen comment.

5. Review of School Committee Protocol Exhibit
Trent Honda read School Committee protocol number 10.

6. Review of School Committee Mission Statement Exhibit
Jen Carr 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: *Anderson Kraft*
Anderson Kraft gave an update on events and activities throughout the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. Anderson filled in as Emmy Pitkin was unable to attend.

Dana Allara reminded the community that the meeting is being live streamed and recorded via HWCAM and also noted that member Julia Campbell is participating remotely so all votes will be roll call votes this evening.

8. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants Exhibit
- Voucher No. 18
- Voucher No. 19
- Voucher No. 1028
- Voucher No. 1029
- Voucher No. 1030
- Voucher No. 1031
- Voucher No. 4077
- Voucher No. 4078
- Voucher No. 4079
- Voucher No. 4080
- Voucher No. 4081
- Voucher No. 4082

b. Minutes
- February 6, 2025 Exhibit

c. Donations
- Edfund Mini-Grant - “Mario Cart” Scooter Theme: Core Strength, Balance and Coordination; $9,994.39 Exhibit
-

d. Other
- 2024-25 Middle School Spring Waivers Exhibit

e. Field Trips
- Athletics Varsity Baseball Team Cooperstown, NY Exhibit

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

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

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

9. New Business

a. Water Testing Procedures Presentation Exhibit

Curtis Wightman Director of Facilities and Operations gave a presentation on the Water Testing Plan for Lead and Copper Compliance including the timeline for completing the testing at all schools. He noted that this plan does not replace the testing the Towns do.

I move that the School Committee task the Policy Subcommittee to develop a policy that outlines the Committee's expectations for being made aware in a timely fashion of any identified health risks in the schools.

Motion by: Trent Honda **Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

The Committee discussed whether such a policy may already exist and members of the Policy Subcommittee stated they would review current policies as part of the process.

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

b. Approve FY26 Budget and Annual Report Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed the FY26 budget and annual report

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the FY26 Budget and Annual Report as presented in tonight's agenda.

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

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

c. Cutler MCAS Root Cause Analysis 2024-2025 Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy discussed the MCAS Root Cause Analysis for the Cutler School. He noted that this is a more in-depth version of the information presented in October. The Committee discussed the MCAS trajectory over multiple years at the Cutler School and how going forward these issues could be identified earlier. Superintendent Tracy discussed the administrative changes over the last few years at the Cutler School. He also discussed the processes put in place district-wide such as school walkthroughs, more in-depth and frequent reviews of data throughout the year with instructional leaders, and the intervention processes put in place for students to address any identified concerns raised from data reviews and walkthroughs. In response to a request, he stated that he would provide the Committee with additional information on the real time evaluation process used throughout the year. Trent Honda requested that the District Accountability MCAS Report from November 7 be linked to the agenda, Dana Allara stated that because the agenda was posted for the public and that information was not originally included it could not now be linked to the agenda but it could be included in the minutes.

d. Superintendent Evaluation Procedure/Dates

The Committee discussed the evaluation procedures and dates. It was the consensus of the

Committee to continue with past practice of inviting outgoing members to submit their evaluation of the Superintendent through April 10 (election date) and they could attend and speak at the meeting but would not be able to vote on the evaluation and newly elected members would not be invited to participate in the evaluation process as they would only have been on the board for a short time before evaluations are due.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the dates for the Superintendent evaluation as follows: Superintendent summative data due April 17, School Committee individual evaluation submittals due by May 5, the compilation of draft submitted by May 12 for discussion at the May 15 meeting.

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

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

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee appoint David Polito as the compiler of the superintendent evaluation evidence and as a back-up, Jen Carr.

Motion by: Amy Kunberger **Seconded by: Trent Honda**

ROLL CALL VOTE MOTION PASSED 5-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Honda, Kunberger and Polito) Jen Carr was out of the room for the vote.

e. External Communications Exhibit

The Committee discussed the Committee's policy BBAA School Committee Member Authority. The Committee discussed the difficulty of communications especially social media and ways to be clear to the public about when a member is speaking whether they are speaking as an individual or they are speaking as a member of the Committee. Dana Allara stated that MASC has a handbook that speaks to this topic as well. Dana stated that one of the things the MASC handbook mentions is to think about whether the topic you are speaking to is something that is going to be coming before the Committee. If something is coming before the Committee, a member should enter the meeting with the potential to listen to colleagues or others before making a decision. The Committee noted that there is no consequence to a member for violating this except being spoken to at a School Committee meeting unless their action results in a violation of Open Meeting Law. The Committee discussed encouraging members to be more proactive and discussing with the Committee before making a statement in for example an editorial. Dana stated that she will share with members the link to the MASC handbook.

f. Approval of Prior Year Invoices Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the prior year invoices.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the payment of the invoices that appear on tonight's agenda under New Business Letter F.

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

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

10. Finance & Operations

a. FY25 2nd Quarter Update Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone gave a budget update for FY25 2nd quarter. He stated that at this time he is projecting the district will end the year with a $430,000 surplus. In response to a question regarding impact on possible capital repairs and using E&D funds next year for operating expenses Assistant Superintendent Leone stated that the decision to use the E&D funds will lower our ability to act but there are other avenues that could be taken. He discussed prepaying some amount of special education tuition again this next year if possible.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the FY25 Operating Expense Budget Transfers as recommended herein by the Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Administration and as presented on the previous slide entitled FY25 Q2 Transfer Request.

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

MOTION PASSED 4-0 (Members Allara, Honda, Kunberger and Polito)

11. Committee Report

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - next meeting March 17
b. Policy Subcommittee - meeting date tbd
c. Negotiations Subcommittee - no update
d. Secretary Report - David Polito discussed the spreadsheet he emailed to members listing missing minutes. Committee will review list of missing minutes and discuss again at the next meeting

12. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy stated that the MSBA Board voted to approve the Cutler Project maximum grant of $48.9 million with the possibility of increasing to $49.7 million based on owner's contingencies. He discussed the public forum held last night, the upcoming open house tours for the Cutler School and the kindergarten parent information night. The Committee discussed the need to have the tax calculator available to the public as soon as possible and mailing information to the public with the tax impact as provided by the Town FinComs. The information to be mailed out will need to be ready to be approved at the next meeting.

13. Chair's Report

Dana Allara informed the Committee that the nomination period for the April 10 election has closed and there are five candidates for the three School Committee seats.

14. Topics for Future Meetings

15. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 9:56 p.m.

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

MOTION PASSED VOTE 4-0 (Members Allara, Honda, Kunberger and Polito)