Approved by the HWRSD School Committee on June 24, 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: 81637865152
Thursday, June 5, 2025
7:00 p.m. - 8:58 p.m.

Present:
Dana Allara
Julia Campbell (remote participation)
Jen Carr arrived (arrived at approximately 7:30)
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. Recognize Student Government Representatives
Superintendent Tracy and the Committee recognized the student government representatives Emmy Pitkin, Whitney Fitzgibbons, Anderson Kraft and Evie Bernard.

Dana Allara reminded the community that the meeting is being recorded and live streamed via HWCam. She also stated that Julia Campbell is participating remotely and all votes will be roll call votes.

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.

Bob Knowles, a founding member of the Hamilton-Wenham Climate Action Team, encouraged the Committee to go with the 10 year transportation contract which would convert 17 fossil buses to electric and also encouraged the Committee to act before June 26 if possible.

Dolly Gallante, asked if there is enough money set aside for the potential water/wetland issue at the school building site.

Beth Herr stated if there is not enough in the budget to deal with the water/wetland issue she believes the school should be on the hill with portable classrooms. She read into the record a letter from a former town clerk who was a direct abutter to the Cutler School regarding the stream running parallel to the dirt road.

5. Review of School Committee Protocol Exhibit
David Polito read School Committee protocol number 3.

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. Minutes
   - May 15, 2025 Exhibit

b. Donations
   - Edfund Mini-Grant - Native Pollinator Garden; $4,500 Exhibit
   - Friends of Cutler - Cultural Enrichment Contributions; $8,559 Exhibit
   - Edfund Mini-Grant - Flexible Seating and Sensory Supports; $8,004.13 Exhibit
   - Edfund Mini-Grant - Environmental Science Research Equipment; $9,500 Exhibit
   - Edfund Project Grant - Advanced STEM Initiatives at HWRHS; $119,877 Exhibit
   - Edfund Mini-Grant - Robotics for MRMS; $9,245.04 Exhibit

c. Field Trips
   - Taiwan 2025-2026 School Year Exhibit

Dana Allara asked to hold the Edfund Mini-Grant Environmental Science Research Equipment Donation and the Taiwan Field Trip from the consent agenda.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the consent agenda as presented in the agenda packet with the exception of the Edfund Mini-Grant for Environmental Science Research Equipment and the Taiwan Field Trip.

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

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 4-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Kunberger and Polito)

In response to a question Superintendent Tracy discussed the Edfund Mini-Grant and stated that the equipment being purchased is a one time purchase that can be used long term to support the class.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the Edfund Mini-Grant for Environmental Science Research as presented in tonight's packet.

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

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 4-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Kunberger and Polito)

In response to questions, Superintendent Tracy stated that this is the 2nd time the district is running the trip and it will be for 8th, 11th and 12th graders. He stated they will begin advertising the trip in the fall and trip insurance will be offered. He suggested the Committee do a 30 or 45 day final review prior to the departure date.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee approve the Taiwan 2025-2026 school year trip as presented in the packet pending review at least 45 days prior to the scheduled departure date.

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

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

8. New Business

a. Vote 2025-2026 School Committee Meeting Schedule Exhibit

The Committee reviewed the proposed 2025-2026 school committee meeting dates. In response to a question regarding why there was a meeting on Wednesday, February 18 Assistant Superintendent Leone stated that it was due to the regional agreement timeline for budget approval. The Wednesday, August 20 retreat date there is now a Committee member and Superintendent Tracy that both have a conflict on that date. Amy Kunberger will send a doodle poll to members to reschedule the retreat date.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to approve the School Committee meeting schedule as presented in the agenda packet with the exception of the Wednesday, August 20 retreat date.

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

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

b. Composite Superintendent Evaluation Exhibit

The Committee discussed some issues with opening the document and formatting of the document. David Polito reviewed the composite document with members. Some of the feedback

given was that the first sentence needs to state that not all ratings were proficient, some were needs improvement, some proficient, some exemplary. In addition, David will double check to ensure items listed as quotes are actual quotes. David will get the updated composite out to members by June 9 to give members an opportunity to review and provide additional feedback.

c. District Goals Report 24-25 SY Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy gave a report on 24-25 SY goals. In response to a question regarding why the district uses chromebooks instead of apple products he stated that chromebooks function better on the district's platform, they are easier to use for the MCAS requirement and are less expensive. In response to a concern regarding math scores for middle school students on IEPS he stated that the leadership team is having discussions on this and reviewing what adjustments need to be made in that area. In response to a question regarding the amount of work teachers need to do for data collection, he stated that data is collected 3 times per year now and the district is using technology to aggregate the data.

d. School Committee 6/26/25 Scheduling Conflict Discussion

The Committee discussed alternate dates for their June 26 meeting as it conflicts with the town meeting of Hamilton.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee change the June 26 School Committee meeting to Tuesday, June 24.

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

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

e. Town Meeting Logistics

Superintendent Tracy stated that there is a legal requirement to reauthorize the debt as we are outside the 60 day window. He stated that the motion is the same one taken on February 6.

I move 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**

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

Superintendent Tracy stated that he tried to get permission to use a video of himself for the presentation at the Wenham Special Town meeting but that request was denied. He stated that he is requesting permission to have Jen Clifford do the presentation at the Wenham Special Town meeting and he will do the presentation at the Hamilton Town Meeting. Kevin Nigro will also be at the Wenham Town Meeting with Jen for the presentation. David Polito stated that he will need to leave immediately after the vote and Jen Carr is unsure if she will be able to attend.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee allow Superintendent Tracy to designate the person or persons of his choice to present the presentation to Wenham Town Meeting on Monday, June 9.

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

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

9. Finance & Operations

a. Re-appoint Treasurer

Assistant Superintendent Leone stated that per the district's bylaw the district needs to appoint the treasurer and assistant treasurer annually.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee reappoint Treasurer Kevin Merz for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

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

b. Re-appoint Assistant Treasurer

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee reappoint Assistant Treasurer Corrina Warner for the 2025-2026 school year.

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

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

10. Committee Report

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - reviewed quarter 4 outlook at last meeting
b. Policy Subcommittee - still trying to find date to meet
c. Negotiations Subcommittee - meeting on 6/11
d. Secretary Report - making progress on outstanding minutes and approving executive session minutes this evening. Please send the draft of subcommittee minutes immediately to Janell and she will include them on the next subcommittee agenda.

11. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy congratulated the Class of 2025 and wished all the sports teams good luck in the tournaments.

12. Chair's Report

Dana Allara reminded the members and the community that the town meetings are on Monday.

13. Topics for Future Meetings

Assistant Superintendent Leone requested approval of the transportation contract be included on the next meeting agenda.

14. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 8:58 p.m. to Executive Session for Purpose #2, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for Negotiations with nonunion personnel, not to return to Open Session.

Motion by: Dana Allara **Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

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