Approved by the HWRSD School Committee on August 21, 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: 96471586406
Tuesday, June 24, 2025
7:00 p.m. - 10:16 p.m.

Present:
Dana Allara
Julia Campbell (remote participation)
Jen Carr
David Frenkel (remote participation)
Amy Kunberger
David Polito
Trent Honda

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

1. Call to Order
At 7:03 p.m. Dana Allara called the meeting to order.

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

3. 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.

Dana Allara reviewed the process for citizen comments and stated that at 7:30 p.m. the Committee would evaluate whether to close citizen comments or continue.

Marjorie Gajeski, 7 Perkins Street, Wenham, spoke against the consolidated elementary school project and against holding another vote on the project.

Nanette Melero, 247 Forest Street, Hamilton, spoke in support of the consolidated elementary school.

Jeff Austin, Hamilton resident, spoke against bypassing the regional agreement to hold another vote on the consolidated elementary school.

Scott Maddern, 12 Old Cart Road, Hamilton, spoke in support of the consolidated elementary school.

Sandy Fisher spoke in support of honoring the votes already taken regarding the consolidated elementary school project. She asked whether the Committee follows up on public comment and if they had addressed the question raised at the last meeting regarding the water table on the proposed site.

Bob Knowles, 201 Main Street, Wenham, spoke in support of the electric bus proposal from Doherty's Garage.

Anna Siedzik, 227 Highland Street, Hamilton, and former School Committee member spoke in support of the consolidated elementary school project.

Jay Burnham, 21 North Street, Hamilton, spoke in support of the consolidated elementary school project.

Julie Lenocker, a Hamilton resident, spoke in support of the consolidated elementary school project.

Dana Allara stated that it was 7:30 p.m. and she would check again to see if anyone on zoom wanted to speak and reminded the audience that not everyone may get a chance to speak this evening.

Mr. King, an attorney representing a group of Hamilton and Wenham citizens, spoke against circumventing the regional agreement and noted that if the Committee moves forward with this his clients will legally challenge that decision.

Dana Allara stated that there are no other comments from zoom and stated that with no objection from the Committee she would extend public comment and allow 5 more speakers.

Tap Stephenson, 18 Lake Ave, Wenham, spoke against holding another vote on the consolidated elementary school project.

Deb Safford, 46 Maple Street, stated that this is not personal, it's about the process. She spoke against holding another vote on the consolidated elementary school project.

Ed McCarthy, 60 Cunningham Drive, spoke about the ⅔ supermajority being a circuit breaker to ensure the community is supportive of a project and asked the Committee to adhere to the supermajority language.

Susan Normand, 24 Lee Park, spoke against the consolidated elementary school project.

Dan Hogan, 59 Willow Street, encouraged the Committee to respect the votes already taken on the consolidated elementary school project.

Dana Allara stated that with no objection from the Committee she would allow the last 4 people to speak and then public comment would be closed. There was no objection.

Steve McWhirter, 18 Cunningham Drive, asked the Committee to look into the MSBA model school project and discussed the water issue at the proposed site.

Josh Blake, Sagamore Street, discussed concerns regarding the 3A requirement. He encouraged the Committee to keep both school sites and renovate and expand both.

Michelle Bailey, 2 Remington Road, spoke in support of the consolidated elementary school and a vote being held so all residents can cast their vote.

Linda Mastrianni, Maple Street, thanked the Committee for recognizing teachers who are retiring this year as that is what makes the district special.

Dana Allara thanked the community for their emails and comments regarding this topic.

4. Review of School Committee Protocol Exhibit
David Polito read School Committee protocol number 4.

5. 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.*

6. Consent Agenda

a. Warrants Exhibit
   - Voucher No. 28
   - Voucher No. 29
   - Voucher No. 30
   - Voucher No. 1044
   - Voucher No. 1045
   - Voucher No. 1046
   - Voucher No. 1047
   - Voucher No. 1048
   - Voucher No. 1049
   - Voucher No. 4112

- Voucher No. 4113
- Voucher No. 4114
- Voucher No. 4115
- Voucher No. 4116
- Voucher No. 4117
- Voucher No. 4118
- Voucher No. 4119
- Voucher No. 4120
- Voucher No. 4121
- Voucher No. 4122

b. Minutes
- June 5, 2025 Exhibit

c. Donations
- Edfund Mini-Grant - Applied Math Lab; $9,025.84 Exhibit
- Edfund Grant - Dig Deep in the Schools; $34,277.17 Exhibit
- Ipsen Bioscience - Large Format Printer; $3,000 Exhibit
- Edfund Mini-Grant - Anatomy in Clay; $5,237.73 Exhibit
- Edfund Mini-Grant - Cameras for Video Production & Theater; $8,918.62 Exhibit
- Edfund Mini-Grant - High-Tech Data Analysis for Integrated STEM Learning; $9,914 Exhibit

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

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

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

The Committee acknowledged the generous donations from the EdFund.

7. New Business

a. Recognize Retiring Staff Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy read the list of retiring staff and thanked all for their service. The Committee thanked and congratulated the retiring staff members.

b. Vote Student Handbook Changes Exhibit

Principal Menegoni reviewed the proposed handbook changes. In response to questions, Principal Menegoni stated that he would be coming back to the Committee in August regarding how grades are weighted at the high school and he stated that he would add the language regarding medical waiver to the cell phone policy.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee vote to approve the updated high school student handbook as presented in tonight's agenda.

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

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 7-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito voted yes)

Dana Allara stated that with no objection from the Committee that she would take Item E, after a brief recess, out of order. There was no objection.

e. Elementary School Building Project Next Steps (out of order)

I move that the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee direct Superintendent Tracy to formally request a 90-day extension from the Massachusetts School Building Authority in order to secure the necessary debt authorization for the proposed Cutler Elementary School Building Project to allow sufficient time for placing the debt exclusion question before the voters of the district's member towns and completing the required local approval process.

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

Trent Honda stated that he is not comfortable voting on this motion without the information from the proposed second motion because the two motions are inherently linked.

I move to table the motion until we have the opportunity to discuss the specifics of what we would be asking the MSBA to delay us for.

Motion by: Trent Honda **Seconded by: Jen Carr**

MOTION TO TABLE PASSED ROLL CALL 5-2 (Members Allara, Carr, Frenkel, Honda and Kunberger voted yes and Members Campbell and Polito voted no)

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District (the "District") hereby appropriates the amount of $142,266,034 for the purpose of paying costs of designing, constructing, and equipping a new Cutler Elementary School at 237 Asbury Street, Hamilton, MA, that will allow for the consolidation of grades 1-5 across the District, and for the payment of all other 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 Cutler School Building Committee. To meet this appropriation, the District is authorized to borrow said amount, under and pursuant to Chapter 71, Section 16 (n) of the General Laws and the Regional Agreement, as amended, or 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.

The debt authorized by this vote shall be submitted to the registered voters of the District's member towns for approval at a District-wide election in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 71, Section 14D and Chapter 71, Section 16 (n) of the General Laws and the Regional Agreement. The date of such District-wide election shall be September 15, 2025, from noon to 8:00 p.m.

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

The Committee members discussed their positions on the proposed motion. In response to a question, Superintendent Tracy stated the district has not done a comprehensive estimate for renovations, only an order of magnitude.

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 5-2 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Polito voted yes and Members Frenkel and Honda voted no)

Dana Allara stated that the Committee would now vote on the motion previously tabled.

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 5-2 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Kunberger and Polito voted yes and Members Frenkel and Honda voted no)

Dana Allara stated that with no objection from the Committee that she would take Item D out of order. There was no objection.

d. Request for FY26 ESP FTE Exhibit (out of order)

Superintendent Tracy discussed the request for an additional 1.0 FTE ESP for FY26 to be paid for through IDEA funds.

I move that the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee accept the request for a FY26 ESP full time position as presented in tonight's agenda.

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

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 7-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito voted yes)

Dana Allara stated that with no objection from the Committee that she would take Item 8A out of order. There was no objection.

8. Finance & Operations (out of order)

a. Award Student Transportation Contract Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit, Exhibit

Assistant Superintendent Leone discussed the student transportation bids. He stated that is recommending the Committee go with Salter for financial reasons as well as concerns regarding the roll out for the beginning of the school year. He noted that after he made his presentation he was notified that Doherty has made advancements in their leasing process and also has offered to reduce their price below the diesel price for the first 3 years. He stated that in their 10-year electric bus bid, Doherty's provided letters from 3rd party companies promising to provide sufficient inventory of diesel buses (needed in the interim as EV buses are procured and manufactured), land for the future electric vehicle infrastructure, and comprehensive electrification analysis, repairs, and maintenance services and he has spoken to the 3rd party vendors and it sounds good but there are no guarantees. He stated that he would not be willing to take the risk but that it is the Committee's decision. He stated that if the Committee decides to go with Doherty he will have the contract written to protect the district should the federal grant be withdrawn. In response to a question raised, Assistant Superintendent Leone confirmed the battery replacement would be at the expense of the contractor.

I move to accept the Doherty contract for the 10 year electric vehicle buses.

Motion by: Jen Carr **Seconded by: Trent Honda**

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 5-2 (Members Carr, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito voted yes and Members Allara and Campbell voted no)

The Committee requested that representatives from Doherty's Garage attend a future School Committee meeting to further discuss the process.

I move to extend the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee meeting until 10:30 p.m. and then reevaluate.

Motion by: Jen Carr **Seconded by: Amy Kunberger**

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 7-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito yes)

Dana Allara stated that without objection she would take Item F out of order. There was no objection.

f. School Committee Open Seat Procedures & Timing Exhibit (out of order)

Dana Allara reviewed the process to fill the open School Committee seat. She stated that the joint meeting has been scheduled for July 21, 2025. The Committee discussed the interview questions used the last time they filled an empty seat. It was the consensus of the Committee that Dana Allara confirm the start time of the meeting with the Chairs and also talk to the Chairs about the questions to be asked by the Select Boards.

c. Vote Superintendent's Evaluation Exhibit (out of order)

The Committee discussed the Superintendent's summative evaluation.

I move to accept the summative evaluation report of the Superintendent as presented.

Motion by: Julia Campbell **Seconded by: Trent Honda**

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 7-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito yes)

9. Committee Report

a. Capital/Financial Planning Subcommittee - will need to appoint someone to replace Trent Honda on the subcommittee
b. Policy Subcommittee
    - First Reading - Policy ADF Updated - Wellness Exhibit

Superintendent Tracy stated that this policy is reviewed every two years and has been updated by the Wellness Committee.

c. Negotiations Subcommittee - no update
d. Secretary Report - no update

10. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tracy thanked all for an amazing school year and stated he is looking forward to another year of making positive changes for students, families and staff.

11. Chair's Report

Dana Allara stated that the retreat date is confirmed for August 12. She thanked Trent Honda for his service to the committee and wished him well.

12. Topics for Future Meetings

Invite representatives from Doherty's Garage to a future meeting and appoint a new member to the Capital Finance Committee.

13. Adjourn

I move to adjourn at 10:16 p.m.

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

MOTION PASSED ROLL CALL 7-0 (Members Allara, Campbell, Carr, Frenkel, Honda, Kunberger and Polito)