

TOWN OF WENHAM

Board of Selectmen & Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee
Joint Meeting of, October 28, 2015
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30 A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk delivered to all Board members, a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee (HWRSC) was held on WEDNESDAY, October 28, 2015 at 6:30PM in the Selectmen Chambers.

Call to Order

With a quorum present, Ms. Harrison called the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting to order 6:30 PM. Selectmen present Catherine Harrison, Chair; Jack Wilhelm, Vice Chair; John Clemenzi, Clerk

With a quorum present, Mr. Swartz called the School Committee meeting to order at 6:35 PM. Committee members present: Larry Swartz, Chair; Jeanise Bertrand, Deborah Evans, Hanna Fraley, Dennis Hurley, Stacey Metternick

Also Present: Peter Lombardi, Town Administrator; Catherine Tinsley, BOS Recording Secretary; Nancy Bergner, HWSC Recording Secretary

School Committee Vacancy Interviews

The Selectmen and HW School Committee met jointly to interview candidates for the open seat on the School Committee left vacant when former member Roger Kuebel resigned his seat in June 2015; this is a Wenham appointment through April 2016.

The BOS/ SC announced their intention to appoint one of the candidates following the interviews.

The candidates were interviewed separately; the BOS/ SC Chairs asked the initial questions of the candidate followed by questions from the other Board & Committee members. In closing, the candidate was given the opportunity to make a statement.

The candidates were asked the following questions:

1. Why are you interested in a position on the School Committee and how does your background prepare you for the position? Have you ever served on a government board or committee? If not, what organizations have you volunteered with in the past and what role(s) did you play?
2. The School Committee is responsible for oversight of the schools. It takes time to develop a working knowledge of its responsibilities and that of the administration. How would you approach developing your knowledge? Are you comfortable with the role of a School Committee member particularly as it relates to only having authority as a Committee and members' lack of involvement in day-to-day operations?
3. How comfortable would you feel speaking to support the School Committee budget at a Town Meeting? How often have you attended a Town Meeting either in Wenham or another town?
4. How do you see yourself working as a member of the School Committee? What special skills or interest do you feel will benefit the committee?
5. Do you have the time to prepare for and participate in 3 to 4 meetings per month?
6. What issues do you think are the most critical for the School Committee to address in the next three years? Do you plan on seeking election in April?

1. Candidate Megan McGovern answered the questions in detail saying she wants to get involved in the community and has children in the school system. She has a background in education, and currently works at a college in administration and serves on several committees on campus. Ms. McGovern confirmed she understood the roll of the SC, the time commitment, and meeting schedules.

Ms. McGovern said her strengths include a calm presence, good listening skills, planning, detailed oriented, and open to change.

Ms. McGovern stated she was interested in running for a seat on the School Committee in 2016.

2. Candidate Thomas Starr said he was first interested in serving on the School Committee when no one else came forward to complete the unexpired term of Mr. Kuebel.

He stated his interest in the schools was two-part, as a teaching professor, and as a parent with child in the school system. Mr. Starr currently serves on the Community Preservation Committee.

Mr. Starr went on to talk about how technology appears to be making a small shift away from digital at the University where he works, and how this approach may apply to learning skills and the curriculum used by HWRSD. During the interview, Mr. Starr explained his interest in serving on the SC was mostly due to the lack of candidates over the past few months saying he has his own concerns with the time commitment and was uncertain if he would run for a seat on the SC in 2016.

In closing Mr. Starr recognized the time and service of the BOS and SC.

3. It was prearranged for Candidate Emily Madden to interview via Skype.

Ms. Madden talked about her love of education, her passion for the schools, and teachers.

She went on to talk about her education, her experience as a middle school teacher/tutor, working for an Education Consulting firm, and an internship developing Assessments to help improve the approach used by teachers.

Ms. Madden stated she is new to Wenham and although she has not previously served on any boards/ committees, she would be "super excited to."

Ms. Madden confirmed she was aware of the meeting schedule and time commitment; she is also interested in running for a seat on the SC in the future to give back to the community.

7:50 PM - HWCAM video recorded with permission

The candidates were thanked for their interest in serving on the School Committee.

It was agreed that all three candidates were quite able and well qualified.

Each Selectman and Committee member opined on the candidates. Although Mr. Starr was a strong candidate, it was agreed that by his own admission, the time commitment was a concern.

A discussion followed regarding the experience and strengths of the two remaining candidates that would best be suited for the School Committee at this time.

The majority of the members supported the appointment of Emily Madden citing her understanding of difficult topics, budgeting, and potentially having a shorter learning curve due to her background with grades K-12, and assessments with differentiated learning.

Mr. Wilhelm moved, and it was seconded, the HWRSC / WBOS jointly appoint Emily Madden to HWRSC through the 2016 annual elections. The motion carried by majority vote with Selectman Clemenzi abstaining citing he did not agree with the reasons given to appoint Ms. Madden, adding he did not disapprove of Ms. Madden but believed the qualifications and experience of candidate McGovern were a much better fit for the position.

Adjournment

The Selectmen unanimously adjourned at 8:15 PM

The School Committee unanimously adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley
10.29.15