

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Draft Minutes
Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Monica Logan, Heather Lombardo, David Peling, Karen Richmond-Godard, Ali Zafar (via Zoom), and Sofia Brenson and Katie O'Neill (Student Representatives)

Absent Board Members: N/A

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Board Chair, Monica Logan, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Chairperson's Report

Chair Logan, extended a special thank you to all who voted in favor of the budget.

III. Awards and Recognition

III.A. CAFE Student Leadership Awards

Chair Logan, presented the annual CAFE Student Leadership Awards to Hallie James and Robert Hazen, Granby Memorial Middle School students, and Sofia Brenson and Benjamin LaVigne, Granby Memorial High School students. The CAFE Student Leadership Award recipient must exhibit leadership skills based on the following criteria: Willingness to take on challenges; capacity to make difficult decisions; concern for others; ability to work with others; willingness to commit to a project; diplomacy; ability to understand issues clearly; and, ability to honor a commitment. Biographies were read of each student's accomplishments.

IV. Public Comment

High School Junior students Kaitlyn Wagoner and Maria Peterson addressed the Board regarding concerns over the schedule changes for the middle school and high school next year. They shared that even though a survey was given to students, student concerns were not relayed. The new schedule presents numerous challenges and students feel undervalued. If there is a true cost savings that results from this schedule change, it should be shared with the school community. Both students requested the Board to re-examine their decision.

High School Junior, Jenna Stevens, addressed the Board and stated she cares deeply about the high school and the students and she is also concerned about the schedule change, stating it goes against the Board's goals as well as the district's theme *Connect. Believe. Achieve*. She shared the new schedule will create shorter, more fragmented instruction with fewer double periods and less in-depth learning. Double period days give teachers more time and this new schedule does not enhance teaching. She asked the Board to please re-examine the decision on the new schedules and to ask for more input.

V. Student Representative Reports

- The spring band concert was held on May 1st.
- A Foreign Food Festival was held on May 2nd and was a fundraiser to support a scholarship.
- AP exams began this week and will run until May 16th.
- The Senior Prom will be held on Friday, May 16th, at The Riverview.
- NHS will once again hold a Science Night for elementary students on May 20th.
- The Senior outing will be held at Boulder Ridge on May 22nd.
- Spring sports are in full swing.

VI. Reports and Discussion

VI.A. Schools in the Spotlight

Kristin Rice, Instructional Specialist at Granby Memorial Middle School, shared a brief history of the Crew Program and how it has been implemented at GMMS. Ms. Rice stated Crew started this year at the middle school and stated it is a structure with a group of students who meet weekly with a Crew Leader to support and push each other in school and life. Students shared the three parts of a crew meeting: the opening and greeting, samples of activities and the closing. Crew Leader, Ms. Collins, her crew present tonight created a very special community. She shared what a typical crew meeting looks like with Board members by doing an activity and also played a game with the Board. She shared after the activity, there is a closing reflection to discuss what was challenging about the activity; how students can use what was learned; and, how small miscommunications lead to big misunderstandings. Students shared what

themes were done over the past few months as well as shared comments from other students and families about the program and Ms. Collins shared comments from other staff members.

Nick Gaeta, Technology Education Teacher at Granby Memorial High School, along with two of his Advanced Communications students, Damiano Hernandez and Hayden Baker, presented their work to make the Morning Bears Broadcast an exciting new part of the GMHS culture. Mr. Gaeta stated the Broadcast Studio was built in 2022 and the first broadcast was March of 2023. The program allows for students to engage in the school community. A video was shared thanking the Granby Education Foundation and the Board of Education as well as a sample of a typical broadcast. Senior at GMHS, Damiano, stated the impact on the GMHS culture has been huge and he explained the production process stating a script is written and entered into the teleprompter. Mr. Gaeta stated the production crew has full control of the class. Tasks are slowly given to students and the show is eventually produced solely by the students. When asked how this program has helped them grow, Damiano stated it led him to an interest in communications along with journalism. Hayden shared it has helped her overcome shyness and that she loves making students happy.

VI.B. First Reading of Revised Policy 5141.5, Suicide Prevention

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 5141.5, Suicide Prevention, to the Board for a first reading. Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Parsons stated that state legislation requires policy changes around prevention and post-prevention of suicide as well as posting the suicide prevention phone number. These changes bring the policy up-to-date with the law. This policy will be brought forward to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

VII. Business Requiring Action

VII.A. Director of Finance & Operations Report

Nickie Stevenson, Director of Operations & Finance, presented the Budget Expense Report for March 2025 and stated personnel and program account expenditures are stable and within budget. With year-end approaching there will be an increase in shifting of funds to accommodate year-end purchases and alleviate any negative line item balances. Special education accounts are stable nearing year-end and special education expenses are coming in less than budgeted with substantial savings. Revenue to the town is anticipated to decrease by \$36,160 primarily due to the final excess cost reimbursement. This year's final anticipated entitlement is \$579,471 with an expected final payment of \$72,265 to the town in June. One student in the B.E.A.R. Program withdrew decreasing revenue by approximately \$10,000. Ms. Stevenson concluded by stating all-in-all, the financials are looking favorable. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education approve the March 2025 Budget Expense Report. This motion passed unanimously at 8:08 p.m.

VII.B. Minutes

MOTION #1: A motion was made by Karen Richmond-Godard and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the April 2, 2025 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Donna Nolan) at 8:09 p.m.

MOTION #2: A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the April 7, 2025 Special Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed at 8:10 p.m. with two abstentions (David Peling and Ali Zafar).

VII.C. International Field Trip Approval

The Board considered approval of International field trips for Granby Memorial High School students for the 2025-2026 school year. Superintendent Burke stated the first trip is to Quebec, Canada during the February 2026 break and the second one to Madrid, Spain during the April 2026 break. David Peling suggested reaching out to the GEF to see if they can provide a scholarship for one student. Liz Barlow stated a teacher would need to write a grant for something like this but it is a great idea, as long as it complies with GEF bylaws. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Karen Richmond-Godard that the Granby Board of Education approve the International field trips for the 2025-2026 school year for Granby Memorial High School students as presented. This motion passed unanimously at 8:14 p.m.

VIII. Committee Reports

VIII.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

VIII.A.1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication

Karen Richmond-Godard reported this subcommittee met this evening and discussed the school climate policy which has significant legislated changes with regard to bullying and challenging behaviors. The second policy discussed was a policy regarding the new Kindergarten age requirement and withdrawal from school procedures for students at the age of 17. Both policies will go forward to the Board at the next meeting. Reviewed the Assistant Superintendent's Monthly Report: 1) DLT discussed curriculum review cycle and departments will assess the status of their respective curriculum; 2) Principals and Assistant Principals working on finalizing the secondary schedules; and, 3) Teacher of the Year and climate surveys were sent to families, students and staff.

VIII.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

This Subcommittee has not met but will meet in 2 weeks on May 21st.

VIII.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VIII.B.1. CREC/CABE

Chair Logan stated she attended the CABE Board Chair Meeting. There are changes in a variety of policies and budgets. Many towns in Connecticut are having a tough time and cutting programs and staff.

VIII.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Liz Barlow reported the GranBee was held at the end of April. It was well attended and auction items raised a lot of money. The GEF is talking about what to do next year and how to creatively adapt to the times.

VIII.C. Calendar of Events

There are many end-of-year activities going on around the district.

VIII.D. Board Member Announcements

Liz Barlow shared at the last district equity committee meeting there was a speaker from Avon Public Schools who spoke about gender and oppression.

VIII.E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

IX. Superintendent's Report

- Teacher Appreciation Week is being celebrated across the district this week with support from parents and PTO. Signs are up at all of the schools and lanyards were given to all staff members.
- The GranBee was so much fun and great to see so many varying groups and stakeholders. Lucy Lawton, a 3rd grader, won the chance to spend the day with Supt. Burke on May 29th.
- Granby Educator of the Year, Kristin LaFlamme, was celebrated by the Granby/Simsbury Chamber of Commerce last week.
- Attended New Teacher Celebration this week with new teachers and their mentors to celebrate completing their first year in Granby.
- Given a larger than projected class size in Kindergarten next year, an additional FTE has been added.
- Transition night for incoming 6th graders on May 14th and Kindergarten orientation on May 16th.
- There are many year-end activities happening around the district. Check the website for details.
- 8th graders will travel to Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, May 20th and return on Thursday, May 22nd.
- A Learning Walk will be held on May 14th. Thank you to Heather Lombardo for attending.
- The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on May 21st.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Barlow, Board Secretary