

**Regular Board of Education Meeting – Draft Minutes
Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room**

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Heather Lombardo, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Karen Richmond-Godard, Ali Zafar, and Katie O’Neill (Student Representative)

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. and welcomed everyone in attendance as well as online this evening.

II. Chairperson's Report

Board Chair, Monica Logan, stated it was a wonderful start to school last week. She announced over the summer Board Member, Rosemarie Weber, stepped down from the Board after 12 years of service and that Ali Zafar was appointed for the remainder of her term by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Logan shared that Governor Ned Lamont issued a statement promoting the elimination of cell phones in schools due to their high level of distraction. The BOE fully acknowledges this distraction and negative impact on students and purposefully read the book, *The Anxious Generation*, to understand the data behind cell phone use and its generational impact on learning. She went on to state that cell phones are permitted at the middle school either in backpacks or in pockets to be used only before and after school hours and the high school has a bell-to-bell policy that cell phones cannot be used during class periods. Ms. Logan admitted that in the past, policies at both schools were not consistently enforced. There are no changes to practices at this time and schools are working to be consistent in enforcement of the policies. This information was shared with all parents and students by administration. She stated the Board, administration and staff will be working together to see what can be done long-term and that any changes made must be done with the support of the community and the stakeholders. She shared that discussions will be facilitated with the community for long-term workable solutions.

Additionally, Ms. Logan stated there are detrimental impacts of social media negatively impacting staff, board members and students. Appropriate staff or BOE members should be contacted to address any issues. Communicating directly to the Superintendent, school principal, Board member or teacher regarding issues will get you closer to an accurate and appropriate answer. Ms. Logan went on to state that there were concerns around a return to a pre-COVID practice at the middle school of using lockers. Since school began, all students were provided with locks and are doing a great job thus far.

Ms. Logan announced Sofia Brenson, Junior at GMHS, as the new BOE Student representative. Unfortunately, Sofia could not be in attendance this evening but she read a short bio about her. She also acknowledged Katie O’Neill who is returning to the Board as a Senior Student Representative this year.

III. Public Comment

Nick Faraco, 10 Fawn Drive in Granby, stated he is a former teacher and guidance counselor and shared his concern about a survey that was distributed to students and finds, in his opinion, inappropriate for the educational setting and has nothing to do with education. It is his hope that Granby reconsiders this line of thinking and he asked the Board to educate themselves about the gender transitioning of students.

Mike Kramarenko, 150 Notch Road, Granby, complained about the meeting held on Tuesday, June 18th (instead of on Wednesday, June 19th (Juneteenth holiday)) and stated there was no communication about the date being changed. He also shared that he called the Superintendent’s office regarding the survey given to students and was not able to speak to the Superintendent but only to the Assistant Superintendent. He also stated that he feels teachers should not ask students about their activities outside of school.

Susan Regan, Hungary Hill Road, Granby, shared the following concerns: 1) Test scores notably disappointing with minimal improvement; 2) Current direction not is not beneficial to our student’s welfare - DEI and BLM are taking time from education; 3) Cell phones 100% not in school or locked up in cell phone pockets; 4) Sexually oriented questions without authority to do so; and 5) Transgendering and how to address students – what is this about – it is not helping students. Ms. Regan extended her congratulations to Ali Zafar’s daughter Zainab Zafar on being appointed as a Student Representative on the Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Heather Lombardo to move Item VIII. Superintendent's Report to Item IV. This motion passed unanimously at 7:33 p.m. On a motion by Heather Lombardo and Donna Nolan the agenda was amended. This motion passed unanimously at 7:34 p.m.

IV. Superintendent's Report

- Superintendent Burke stated there was an outstanding opening to school and ongoing work throughout the summer to prepare was very purposeful. Convocation was very well received by staff and she thanked the many individuals across the district such as office, custodial and IT staff, teachers and teaching assistants, and bus drivers for a tremendous amount of effort to open on the first day.
- New teachers were welcomed to the district with 2 days of professional development and time was also spent over the summer with the leadership team to plan for the year.
- The theme for the year was unveiled: Connect. Believe. Achieve. The theme identifies our ultimate goal around student achievement.
- There will be a SEPTO Meeting on Sept. 9th at 6 pm and middle school PAC Meeting at 9 am on Sept. 20th.
- The middle school open house is on September 10th followed by the high school open house on September 12th. Curriculum nights will be held later in the month at the elementary schools.
- Sue Henneberry began this week as an Interim Assistant Principal at the high school. Sue was formerly Principal of the middle school. Interviews are underway with a very strong pool of candidates. Additionally, Shannon Sullivan stepped down from his position as the Director of Facilities and that position is posted.
- The district is in Year 2 of the Communications Plan promoting information as a two-way opportunity. This year to improve upon that, a flowchart was created to address school concerns. Superintendent Burke stated that the district is aware of some recent issues. She spoke about the flow chart, *Addressing School Concerns*, that was created in order to help community members identify the appropriate person to contact when an issue arises and stated to please reference this flow chart which can be found on the website.
- Lastly, with regard to student surveys, it is her wish for parents to have full transparency and understanding when dealing with surveys. The definition of survey is around official capacity, i.e., climate and culture surveys. mental health surveys or federally/state funded surveys. Parents can opt out of these types of surveys and the district supports that. Google forms or questions to students at the start of the year are commonplace and ways for teachers to get to know students. Last year, it was directed that questions must be optional and this did not happen. Two or three teachers sent out surveys and included a variety of questions. The district is committed to students feeling included and celebrated going forward and we take feedback and learn and grow from it. Superintendent Burke emphasized that picking up the phone and directly speaking to the right staff member is essential and stated she wanted to address these concerns early in the meeting.

V. Student Representative Reports

- Katie O'Neill stated it was unfortunately foggy for the senior sunrise but it was still nice to be together.
- Freshman orientation was held the day before school started. Student Government members gave tours.
- Drama auditions for *Twisted Tales of Poe* are currently being held.
- Jazz band and chamber singer tryouts will be held soon.
- NHS held their first meeting and members are looking forward to the induction ceremony in October.
- Open House for the high school will be held on September 12th.
- Sports are just gearing up with many teams holding scrimmages and their first games.

VI. Reports and Discussion

VI.A. Summer Programming Report

Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, presented on recent summer enrichment programming and stated ESY (Extended School Year) Services for individualized tutoring are based on a student's goals and objectives in their Individual Education Plans. Camp Kelly is a pre-school service structure which runs for 20 days of in-person instruction consisting of 11 students. Additionally, secondary vocation program services are held for individualized in-person academic, social and vocational instruction. A total of 11 students participated in this service. Jennifer Miller ran this program and stated it was a very productive summer.

Katie Busbey joined Mrs. Parsons to discuss Enrichment Programming. 139 students participated which was an increase of 29 registrations, which enabled more programs to run in science and art. Classes are held for Grades 1-3 and 4-6. She discussed two other areas which are part of the enrichment programming which are Credit Recovery and RAMP Intervention. The RAMP program is invite-only (38 students this year). One hour is spent on reading/writing and one hour on math. The program runs for 15 days total (3 weeks, 5 days/week). Ms.

Parsons stated an additional enrichment activity was provided in the Open Choice Grant for Open Choice students to attend the Salmon Brook Park Camp. Four (4) students participated from the middle school and 8 students participated in the grade level camps at the elementary level.

Additionally, 26 high school students who will be taking their first AP course this school year, participated in a one-week program over the summer to boost skills for AP courses. Activities included study skills, note-taking skills, support for summer assignments, and team-building/collaboration. The College Exploration Summer Seminar also ran this summer. 29 students attended who are entering grades 10-12. Students visited Trinity College, UConn, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Assumption University, Bryant University, and the University of Rhode Island. There was a video to share but, unfortunately, the video did not work but can be seen in the presentation listed in the online agenda.

Ms. Parsons stated professional learning for staff also happened over the summer. Lunch and Learn sessions occurred over the summer; staff worked on implementing and operationalizing the new teacher evaluation plan; and, teachers spent time writing curriculum over the summer. She shared that 18 new staff were hired this year and attended New Teacher Orientation in August.

Questions were raised by the Board. Monica Logan inquired if there was anything needed or in demand for the summer enrichment programming and Katie Busbey stated she has tried in the past to do sports, etc. but so many students enjoy science and art; however, she mentioned creative writing and keeping ELA skills fresh over the summer might be ideas. Donna Nolan inquired if there is a cap on attendance for students with IEPs and Ms. Parsons stated that there is no cap Jennifer Miller puts together a matrix as to what PPT teams have determined students need over the summer. Parents are able to decline if they want to; however, the need is met for all families. Liz Barlow inquired about the RAMP Program and if it was for students receiving intervention through MTSS but are not necessarily special education students. Ms. Parsons stated, yes, students who may not have an IEP but need to maintain growth over the year can take part in this program. Lastly, Heather Lombardo inquired about the fee for the enrichment programming. Ms. Parsons stated the fee is \$80/week for the enrichment fee, credit recovery is \$200/course and college explorations is self-funding and costs \$250 for 3 days (including lunch and transportation).

VI.B. Superintendent's 2024-2025 Annual Goals

Superintendent Burke presented her goals for the 2024-2025 school year to the Board and stated there are two primary goals again this year: 1) To improve student achievement, academic performance and opportunity at all grade levels; and, 2) To enhance communication and build trusting relationships. She stated the district is in Year 2 of its Communications Plan. She explained the achievement goal is the same goal as last year because the district is not there yet. Last budget season, the BOE approved the addition of a Math Intervention Teacher at the MS – purposeful planning in terms of assessments. The focus is to move each individual child in their growth in mathematics. Superintendent Burke reviewed some of the ways that the achievement goal will be accomplished for the 2024-2025 school year, such as, expanding the use of vertical surfaces and Building Thinking Classroom strategies; utilize EduClimber to better analyze data and monitor progress; and integrate small group instruction for deficit areas across all grade levels to name a few.

Superintendent Burke reviewed the second goal of communication around community engagement and discussed the Addressing School Concerns chart recently sent to parents and published in *The Granby Drummer*. She shared that this summer, administrators were engaged in professional learning around communications. Parents are inundated with emails, newsletters, etc. and the district needs to ensure we are communicating the right way. She stated she is looking forward to continuing the review of our practices. Superintendent Burke concluded by stating that certainly all six (6) Board of Education goals are in place all year, however, the two goals presented this evening will be a focus for the district this year.

VI.C. First Reading of New Policy 3171.1, Non-Lapsing Education Fund

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended new Policy 3171.1, Non-Lapsing Education Fund, for a first reading. Nickie Stevenson, Director of Finance and Operations, stated this is a fund for the BOE and an opportunity to put up to 2% of unspent monies of the previous year for expenditures or emergencies. Funds are suggested by the Superintendent and approved by the BOE, as are any expenditures. Monica Logan stated this policy was reviewed in the Curriculum Subcommittee this evening, will go to the Finance Subcommittee September 18th and to the Board at the next meeting for a second reading and approval.

VII. Business Requiring Action

VII.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Karen Richmond-Godard that the Granby Board of Education adopt the minutes of the June 18, 2024 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:13 p.m. with one abstention (Ali Zafar).

VII.B. Approval of Granby Memorial High School Roof Replacement Project

The Board considered the approval of the Granby Memorial High School roof replacement project as complete. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Heather Lombardo that the Granby Board of Education accept the Granby Memorial High School Roof Replacement, State Project No. 056-0053 RR, as complete as recommended by the School Projects Building Committee. Donna Nolan stated this motion is made this evening in order that the district can be reimbursed by the State. Superintendent Burke shared her gratitude to Donna Nolan and the Building Committee as well as to district leadership stating the roof currently meets the expectations and she is happy to present this to the Board this evening for approval to request reimbursement. This motion passed unanimously at 8:18 p.m.

VIII. Committee Reports

VIII.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

Karen Richmond Godard stated this subcommittee met this evening to discuss the Assistant Superintendent's report including professional learning, hiring and staffing. The Director of Finance & Operations shared information about the Non-Lapsing Education Fund Policy. Two policy revisions were also reviewed and approved to go forward to the Board for approval. Summative Assessments were also discussed and there will be a presentation to the Board at the next meeting. And, lastly, an update was given on the Scheduling Committee to optimize instruction in the middle and high school schedules.

VIII.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

This Subcommittee did not meet this evening. Approved minutes from the last meeting are in the Board packet.

VIII.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VIII.B.1. CREC/CABE

Monica Logan stated a representative is still needed for CREC/CABE. Board members should let her know if interested.

VIII.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Liz Barlow stated grants were awarded as follows: \$16,000 to the high school Drama Program to purchase new wireless mics and related equipment; \$200 for a Wells Road graphic novel unit in 4th Grade; and a \$400 grant to the middle school for baskets and discs to play to start up a new disc golf program. She also shared that Lynn Guelzow of the GEF stated she loves to see creative and interesting ways how Granby staff and teachers use GEF funds to support schools and students., and that new members to GEF are welcome.

VIII.C. Calendar of Events

Monica Logan stated the calendar of events is as reported.

VIII.D. Board Member Announcements

Monica Logan shared a new column will be in *The Granby Drummer* concerning Board issues going forward.

VIII.E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the regular Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Barlow
Board Secretary