

**Regular Board of Education Meeting – Draft Minutes**  
**Wednesday, December 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Town Hall Meeting Room**

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Heather Lombardo, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan (arrived at 8:10 p.m.) David Peling, Whitney Sanzo, Rosemarie Weber, and Chase Alexander and Katie O’Neill (Student Representatives).

Absent Board Members: None

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Ms. Logan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She shared a change in the agenda format beginning this evening that Public Comment was moved up towards the beginning of the agenda.

**II. Awards/Recognition**

Nicholas Halsted, 5<sup>th</sup> grade student in Mrs. LaFlamme’s class at Wells Road Intermediate School, was recognized for his artwork which was submitted to Superintendent Burke for the district’s holiday card. Ms. Logan thanked Nick for sharing his art with district and stated the district is very proud of him.

Gabriela de los Reyes, a senior at Granby Memorial High School, was recognized for attaining the Seal of Bilingualism in Spanish and French AP/ECE. Gabi worked independently to achieve this and is very fluent in both languages. Ms. Logan shared with Gabi that the Board is very proud of her achievement. She thanked both families for attending the meeting this evening.

**III. Public Comment**

Debbie Reelitz, 24 Silkey Road, North Granby. expressed her support for diversity and kindness efforts in the Granby Public Schools. She shared she has been a homeschool mom for 12 years and it was amazing to see her son’s journey which included socialization by a huge range of people and explained that diversity has enabled her son to relate to people of all types as he is now in Granby High School. She is hopeful that Granby Public Schools continues to make these types of diverse experiences for students.

Beth Carroll, Quail Lane, stated she has been engaged with the communication project since it began this fall and has reviewed all of the documentation available on the school website and actively participated in the community portion of input for the plan. She viewed Superintendent Burke’s presentation of the plan on December 6<sup>th</sup> and stated as a non-school participant, if she was given this presentation in a business environment, she would have inquired how is it known this is just a three-year plan and also in three years’ time. community members may no longer live in Granby and students may no longer attend school here. Perhaps this should be approached in a business capacity. She would like the Board to consider prioritizing categories in the plan with the need to address cost/risk/time/quality.

**IV. Student Representative Reports**

- Katie O’Neill shared there was an implementation of a shot clock for basketball which is 35 seconds.
- In sports news: Boys basketball ball is 1-1 and their next game is against Ellington on 12/21; girls’ basketball is 2-2 and their next game is also on 12/21 at home against Holyoke; wrestling had their last meet at Suffield and their next meet is today, 12/20, also at Suffield; boys’ and girls’ indoor track has their next meet on 1/4; boys’ ice hockey will have their next game this Saturday, 12/23 at ISCC at 4 p.m. and, girls’ ice hockey is 2-2 and won their last game against Guilford Coop and their next game is today, 12/20, at home against Simsbury.
- Chase Alexander reported NHS “wrapped up” the 2023 stocking drive on Monday. Students stayed after school to stuff stockings with the donated gifts.
- Leo held a toy drive as well.
- Capstone students practiced their presentations in class before presenting to advisories next month.
- World Language Honors Societies held a winter celebration including food from French, Spanish and Chinese cultures.
- GMHS will hold a Onesie Day on Friday to celebrate the upcoming winter break.
- GMHS students began using the broadcast studio to host morning announcements via live stream which is viewable in each classroom. It is working great.
- Chase shared with the Board that he has received an acceptance to the Honors Program at Northeastern University for next year. The Board congratulated Chase on this amazing achievement.

## **V. Reports and Discussion**

### **A. Business Manager's Report**

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the November statement of accounts and stated the general fund shows an unfavorable forecast of \$265K which is \$3K better than the previous month. Regular education is projected to be overbudget \$7K which is \$20K less than last month. Salaries and substitute services continue to fluctuate and are offset by a favorable variance in regular education transportation. The special education forecast is overbudget \$190K which is \$16K worse than the previous month. The main driver in overbudget condition is out-of-district transportation as students and placements continue to fluctuate. Revenue to the town is projected to be unfavorable \$173K which is \$38K better than the previous month. The Quality & Diversity (Q&D) Fund continues to be positive. Expenses and revenues are holding steady at this time; however, tuition for magnet schools and Assunpink Community College were higher than budgeted. The projected ending balance in the fund is \$132K which is \$22K better than the previous month. Rosemarie Weber stated the Finance Subcommittee reviewed and approved the report earlier this evening and noted the overbudget forecast is something that is typically covered by the Excess Cost Grant from the state.

### **B. FY25 Plus One Budget Presentation**

Superintendent Cheri Burke presented the FY25 Plus One Budget to the Board, stating it is a sneak peak as to what is to come for the Administrative Budget. One of the goals is to share the Plus One Budget to offer timely information to the community and to the Board of Finance (BOF) as well as the BOE to make the decisions that lie ahead. On January 3<sup>rd</sup> the Board will reconvene to delve further into the budget. Ms. Burke thanked Anna Robbins for her assistance in helping her learn about the budget process. The budget needs to be responsible in future thinking as well as look very carefully and responsively at spending, to meet the needs of our "customers" (students). Ms. Burke shared her two goals for the year, one for student learning and achievement and the other for community engagement. She also shared the drivers of the budget, such as, contract obligations which include salaries and benefits (72% of the budget); transportation; health plan; fuel/oil, natural gas and electricity; and the nursing contract. Another budget driver is special education, specifically out-of-district tuition and transportation and personnel. She explained how a savings was possible in other areas by reductions, as well as retirement savings. Ms. Burke shared a list of unfunded mandates and legislative impacts which affect the budget and allocation of resources in FY25. She stated the mandates listed are not accounted for in this budget; however, there will be a financial impact, such as professional development, HVAC annual testing, school climate and Right to Read legislation. Costs are unknown at this point as more research needs to be done, and the reading curriculum waiver decision is currently being appealed. Current and projected enrollment was shared and, due to the projected decline in enrollment in future years, there will most likely be a reduction in personnel.

With regard to the Q&D Fund, Ms. Burke stated this fund is for all students and is used to meet a variety of needs and is received from the Open Choice Program tuition. Some items included in the fund include magnet and vocational school tuition; school social workers; one-to-one computing program; and school-based tutors for academic support. Additionally, Ms. Burke shared she is requesting an Intervention Specialist in Math (certified teacher instead of tutor) for the middle school out of this fund in FY25. The Small Capital Fund was also explained and includes transportation and equipment; furniture, fixtures and equipment; technology; and building maintenance projects. Ms. Burke stated in the absence of large capital funds, the district uses the small cap funds and she is taking a practical approach on this funding and plans to spend the money on security for all schools stating significant upgrades are needed on all of the security panels in order to alleviate false lockdown and fire evacuations and improve communication between the security panels. Mr. Peling asked if grant funding is available for security upgrades; Ms. Burke stated that less funding is available as in the past for these needs. Large capital expenditures were explained which support larger projects, such as, track, turf and field repairs; bathroom repairs and renovations; HVAC controls and roof top units; and parking lot repairs. These issues are unable to be addressed until the Town goes out to bond to fund them. Ms. Burke closed by stating the foundations being built are integral to the work and the goals are first and foremost academic excellence; mental health and wellness; community engagement and communication; special education supports; and, security. Ms. Burke requested the Board review the budget and submit questions to Linda Powell, Anna Robbins and herself by December 29<sup>th</sup> in order to prepare for the January 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. At that meeting it will be requested to get Board support for the Plus One Budget prior to forwarding it to the BOF. Ms. Burke is confident a responsible budget will be presented to the Board.

## **VI. Business Requiring Action**

### **A. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the December 6, 2023 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 7:58 p.m.

## **B. Approval of District Communications Plan**

The Board discussed the approval of the 2024-2027 District Communications Plan. A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education approve the District Communications Plan for the 2024-2027 school years. Mrs. Weber stated this plan was well thought out with regard to preparation and research and she was very impressed with the level of participation required from the board, school and community. Ms. Burke stated this was a collective effort with over 1,000 people participating. The Board will continue to have input and oversight for this plan. Ms. Burke stated she is appreciative of the Board's support. This motion passed unanimously at 8:02 p.m.

## **C. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding (BOE/Town IT Operations)**

The Board discussed the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Granby Public Schools and the Town of Granby concerning IT Operations. A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Whitney Sanzo that the Granby Board of Education approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Granby Public Schools and the Town of Granby concerning IT Operations as of December 1, 2023. Ms. Weber stated this project began last spring with the idea to ensure that IT for the Granby Public Schools as well as the Town is properly supported and to improve the Town's infrastructure as it relates to IT. The MOU expresses the shared goals for the BOE as well as the Town to improve IT operations for the entire community, realize savings and have a systemic approach for operational as well as hardware needs. Ms. Burke thanked Jon Lambert as well as Frank Melanson who have taken a tremendous leadership role and stated the school district has maintained high-quality technology and leadership and she is grateful to share resources in a highly collaborative way. This motion passed unanimously at 8:06 p.m.

## **D. Approval of Connecticut Primary Mental Health Grant Program**

The Board discussed the approval to submit a grant proposal for the Connecticut Primary Mental Health Grant Program. A motion was made by Whitney Sanzo and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education approve submission of a grant proposal for the Connecticut Primary Mental Health Grant Program. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, stated an application has been submitted and the grant provides \$20K for the use over 2 years for students in Grades K-3. The program would provide for a child associate to provide, under supervision, targeted Tier 2 school-based intervention for students displaying mild to moderate school adjustment needs. The services provided would be individually, weekly in a 1-1 play-based support for 12-25 weeks and is linked to funding related to mental health as well as pandemic relief. Board approval is required for this grant in the event that the district continues to apply in future years, beyond state funding. There is no Board contribution the first two years. Liz Barlow inquired if there is a curriculum associated with the grant and Ms. Parsons stated there is no specific curriculum or resource being mandated; however, the program follows the students' needs and will be developed organically. Ms. Barlow also inquired if there would be data collection for the program and Ms. Parsons stated, yes, work will be related to DESSA results and as well as continue to monitor our own program and report back to the state. This motion passed unanimously at 8:15 p.m.

## **E. Acceptance of First Reading of Draft Policy 6141.51 - Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment**

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended new draft Policy 6141.51, Advanced Courses or Programs, Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment, to the Board for a first reading. Whitney Sanzo stated this policy is presented due to a state mandate requirement. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Ms. Sanzo or Ms. Parsons. This policy will come to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

## **F. Acceptance of First Reading of Draft Policy 6141.52 - Challenging Curriculum**

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended new draft Policy 6141.52, Challenging Curriculum, to the Board for a first reading. Ms. Parsons stated this policy is also due to a state mandate requirement. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Ms. Sanzo or Ms. Parsons. This policy will go to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

## **VII. Committee Reports**

### **A. Board Standing Committee Reports**

#### **1. Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communication**

This subcommittee has not met. Approved minutes are in the packet.

#### **2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities**

Rosemarie Weber stated this subcommittee met this evening. The approval of the minutes was tabled due to a lack of quorum. The subcommittee discussed the November statement of accounts; stipends in schools based on collective bargaining (which was tabled to Executive Session); voted to increase Pre-K tuition from \$1,855 to \$1,925 which is a 3.6% increase; and discussed the BOE/Town IT Operations Memorandum of Understanding.

## **B. Other Board-Related Reports**

### **1. CREC/CABE**

No details reported on CREC/CABE business, however the board is seeking a member to work with CREC/CABE as a representative.

### **2. Granby Education Foundation**

Whitney Sanzo stated the GEF met on Monday evening and discussed the GranBee. Students and teachers are welcome. A lot of great grants were looked at and approved. Applications for teams are upcoming.

## **VIII. Calendar of Events**

Ms. Logan stated choral concert rescheduled to January 4<sup>th</sup>; Choral concert at the middle school on January 11<sup>th</sup> and mid-term exams at the high school.

## **IX. Board Member Announcements**

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

## **X. Action Items**

1) Members will submit questions for budget to Linda Powell, Cheri Burke and Anna Robbins.

## **XI. Chairperson's Report**

Ms. Monica Logan, Board Chair, thanked everyone for their work on the budget and wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

## **XII. Superintendent's Report**

- Ms. Burke wished everyone a wonderful holiday break stating it will be 2024 when we reconvene.
- Held PJ day fundraiser for CCMC. Still tabulating the final about but well over \$3K was raised so far.
- Pleased to share that a meeting was held with a new Fine Arts Booster Club to help support the arts.
- At GMMS today, Trooper White provided an assembly for MS students which was engaging and timely around social media use. A parent presentation is upcoming and parents will be notified.
- Reminder early release this Friday and the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **XIII. Executive Session**

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Rosemarie Weber that the Granby Board of Education will enter into an Executive Session to discuss an update regarding stipends pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement and a student discipline matter. This motion passed unanimously at 8:27 p.m.

Discussion occurred regarding the faculty stipend positions in the teachers' contract. Jennifer Parsons contributed and then was excused while the stipend payments were discussed. Rosemarie Weber and Monica Logan will finalize the Board's proposal regarding the stipends and bring it to our meeting on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

A motion was made by Whitney Sanzo and seconded by Donna Nolan that the Granby Board of Education accept the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools to expel Student "B22023-24" for 45 school days from Granby Memorial High School, as well as all buildings and grounds and activities of the Granby Public Schools for violation of School Board Policies #5114, Student Discipline and #5131.6, Drug & Alcohol Use. This motion passed unanimously at 9:10 p.m.

Ms. Burke shared details regarding a personnel issue.

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Whitney Sanzo to adjourn Executive Session. This motion passed unanimously at 9:27 p.m.

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Whitney Sanzo to enter back into Regular Session. This motion passed unanimously at 9:27 p.m.

## **XIV. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Whitney Sanzo and seconded by Dave Peling to adjourn the regular Board of Education meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Barlow  
Board Secretary