

## **Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes**

**June 17, 2020, 7:00 p.m.**

**High School Grounds (back entrance in the horseshoe driveway)**

Present Board Members: Jenny Emery, Mark Fiorentino, Melissa Migliaccio, David Peling, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, and Brandon Webster.

Absent Board Members: N/A

Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Ms. Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.**

### **I. Administrative Reports**

#### **I.A. Chairman's Corner**

This is the last regular Board of Education Meeting for this school year; however, this semester at the high school has been anything but regular. The reason we are hosting this meeting outside and socially distancing. There was a good community conversation hosted by first selectmen last week which was hacked by racist comments and other disparaging and disgusting comments at the end of the meeting. There was also a Board of Education Meeting in New London where the same thing occurred. The Board had the option to be creative and not be subject our Board Members and community to that so thank you to everyone for making this happen. Ms. Migliaccio stated Brandon Webster, encouraged her to issue a statement on behalf of the Board of Education. This statement was read by Ms. Migliaccio and is posted on the website. The statement reaffirms the district's commitment to equity and non-tolerance of bias or prejudice. She stated she is excited to see the work being done.

With regard to the Reopening Task Force, she reminded the Board to save July 6<sup>th</sup> and July 13<sup>th</sup> for Special Board of Education Meetings to discuss how to implement reopening school in the fall.

#### **I.B. Superintendent's Announcements**

- Dr. Grossman welcomed everyone and introduced the Board to Marian Hourigan, Interim Assistant Superintendent and Jennifer Parsons, the new Assistant Superintendent.
- Graduation was held yesterday and it was a great event. Dr. Grossman congratulated Dave Peling, Sarah Thrall and Mark Fiorentino on their students who graduated.
- The middle school had their moving-up ceremony on Monday and the senior and underclassmen award ceremonies were held last week. All of these videos can be viewed on the website.
- Had a great closing ceremony on Monday. Thank you to Mark Fiorentino for speaking to the staff. Retirees Sue Henneberry, Phil Livsey, Lisa Nilson, Beth Spellman and Margaret Thibodeau were honored as well as 25-year employees Jane Grant and Jane Sullivan and Teacher of the Year, Kim Narciso, and Staff Member of the Year, Frank Melanson.
- A Reopening Task Force Meeting was held today and there will be an update later in the agenda.
- Interim Assistant Superintendent will present first draft of the Cultural Proficiency and Equity Plan. Dr. Grossman stated he is excited to show the plan moving forward to the Board.
- The search for the Kelly Lane Primary School Principal is underway. The committee has been formed. Thank you to Brandon Webster for volunteering to be the Board Representative on the committee.
- Summer school will begin on June 29<sup>th</sup> and will be virtual.
- Professional development next year will have a strong focus on the strong social/emotional needs of students, families and staff.
- A reminder there will be a Board Retreat on August 19<sup>th</sup>.

Brandon Webster requested to make a statement and thanked Board members and the Superintendent and Board Chair for swift and strong statements to foster equity in the community. He stated he attended the community conversation with cautious optimism. Sadly, the meeting was hacked in the last few minutes. Mr. Webster stated he hopes this shows the need for more dialogue and hopes we can all agree there is work to do. He stated the district has an obligation to our students of color and questions if the district has done enough. He stated students should be provided with education to understand history and racism and teachers should be provided training. He stated hopefully everyone is committed and black lives matter. He is eager to hear from the equity team regarding scheduled training, workshops, resources for psychology and social workers, etc.

### **I.C. Interim Assistant Superintendent's Report**

Ms. Marian Hourigan, Interim Assistant Superintendent, presented the first draft of the Cultural Proficiency and Equity Action Plan to the Board. Ms. Hourigan explained the terms equity and cultural proficiency stating that equity is defined as being fair and impartial and cultural proficiency defined as policies and practices of an organization or the values and behavior of individuals that enable that organization or individual to engage effectively in groups of people that are different. Ms. Hourigan reviewed the mission and vision of the Granby Public Schools as well as Granby Equity Team Statement of Equality and the purpose of the plan stating the Granby Public Schools has engaged in work like this since 2017 to achieve equity in our schools and community with the goal being to build capacity around equity with administrators, teachers, staff, students, and the community. In the 2020-21 school year a multi-faceted approach will be taken to realize this vision. Ms. Hourigan reviewed the goal area to improve the communication between all stakeholders and discussed strategies moving forward, such as, letters from the principals to parents; develop a book list around equity/publish on the Granby Equity Resource page; and, host a forum for high school teachers to brainstorm ideas for creating a strong community in our schools with an equity focus. In the summer, Ms. Hourigan stated the district will explore Anti-Defamation League/CREC for offerings for teachers and students; continue the Better World Book Club with monthly book discussions (the first one planned for September 15<sup>th</sup> beginning with social justice); develop a slogan or symbol for unity (i.e., Granby Strong); and, strengthen the host family program for Choice students.

For the 2020-21 school year, the plan is to redesign the advisory program to have a monthly equity cultural proficiency focus; implement Anti-Defamation League programs; expand the Bridges Program to provide leadership opportunities; develop units around equity in curriculum; develop prof dev on equity themes; create building-level equity teams; school-wide/small group conversations in all of the schools; explore opportunities for minority recruitment; and, Granby BOE, administrative team and staff to participate in cultural proficiency training with the Connecticut Center for School Change. Melissa Migliaccio inquired about host families for Open Choice students and is willing to help reconstitute this effort. She also stated she would also love to see an alumni relationship with graduates. Jenny Emery stated has become personally more sensitive that our education was weak in reality and this can be a catalyst for more of the learning at the adult level in town to perhaps include the faith-based community and GEF for adult education. Mark Fiorentino commented on the tremendous amount of detail and specificity to the plan and stated kids have to be taught what bias is. He also stated minority recruitment should be prioritized and Granby should reserve slots and he would like to see specific action steps to be in the next round of that program. He also stated it is great to see a goal to reach out to Open Choice families. Brandon Webster commented on the library program in September and inquired if the Media Center Specialists will receive any training to handle conversations. Dr. Grossman stated one of the things we have to do is we have to bring in outside consultants and professionals to guide us in this work. Ms. Hourigan stated the document will be drafted for staff members prior to the start of school to help communicate with students. Dr. Grossman stated there is cultural prof curriculum out there which can be aligned with our current curriculum. Melissa Migliaccio commented she appreciated the Anti-Defamation League training piece and that they have great speakers.

### **I.D. Business Manager's Report**

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the May statement of accounts stating the full-year forecast reflects distance learning for the remaining days of FY20 and is favorable \$706K which is almost \$200K better than last month. The forecast includes many assumptions in March and April; however, with only one month remaining, many POs have been closed and more will be closing. Ms. Robbins stated the district is currently in negotiations with our transportation contractor, therefore the required payment for the contracted diesel for transportation is also not in this forecast. Estimates are in but will be adjusted after settlement. Utility bills are not final and difficult to estimate at this time. The Q&D fund continues to project savings and the forecast is better than budget by \$89K. Projected revenue to the town is unfavorable \$44K due to the reduction of rentals and pay-for-participation fees. The Excess Cost Grant is a major driver in the negative forecast in revenues to the town and is a result of a lower than budgeted reimbursement rate as well as a higher stop loss cap. Ms. Robbins thanked the Board for their patience with this process and the Business Department is doing best they can to keep ahead of grants and expenditures. Jenny Emery stated the Finance Subcommittee reviewed the statement of accounts this evening.

### **II. Public Comment**

Salina Hogan stated she has been a resident of Granby for 8 years and has 5 children in the system. She is concerned about the state of affairs in Granby. She has been a silent participant in the district and does not feel she

can be quiet any longer. She informed the Board her children have had wonderful teachers and she feels the action plan is very thorough. She is glad to see the first bullet is to increase minority staff members stating the Board of Education is primarily white as well as the administrators and faculty. She commented that Dr. Grossman spoke about experts but that everything begins and ends with community members in town. She stated she would love to be a part of any action going forward and that one of this goes anywhere without people in this town who are minorities. She stated she would love to be on the Task Force but would need to know how the work is getting done. Ms. Hogan will get more information and consider joining the Task Force.

## **II. Consent Agenda**

### **III.A. Minutes**

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Jenny Emery that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed unanimously at 7:51 p.m.

## **IV. Old Business**

### **IV.A. Distance Learning Update**

Ms. Aimee Martin, Director of Pupil Services, updated the Board on the distance learning survey sent to special education parents stating approximately 299 parents were surveyed. There were only 3 questions and only 45 responses were received (8 from the high school; 11 from the middle school; 20 from Wells Road; 6 from Kelly Lane). The questions were what school(s) are your children in; what has gone well with distance learning; and, if we did distance learning again what would you like to see improved. Many parents felt distance learning went well and they liked the flexibility with which kids could work; not getting up early; 1-to-1 lessons with Teaching Assistants; reading intervention; and, did not miss social distress of being in/going to school.

With regard to what could be improved, parents stated the need to have more face-to-face time; extra help sessions; small group discussions; connectedness of students; no clear direction on how to improve but a real detriment not to have peer interactions. Melissa Migliaccio inquired how OT and PT were being delivered. Ms. Martin stated there were live interactions with students as well as some videotaped sessions. Younger students were difficult due to attention span. With regard to summer school plans, Ms. Martin stated all assignments will be synchronous with some Edgenuity on-line classes but those are not recommended for all students. The plan is to bring some students back in August for transition as this is a concern for special education students.

### **IV.B. Reopening Task Force Update**

Dr. Jordan Grossman provided an update to the Board on the Reopening Task Force and stated this is not just a decision for the Superintendent, BOE or the Task Force. At the present time, the district is waiting for guidelines from the State of Connecticut regarding how the school systems all across Connecticut can open in the fall. Once this is received, we will immediately inform the public and immediately continue work analyzing those guidelines and the best way to open Granby Public Schools in the fall. Dr. Grossman informed the Board they may hear a lot of rumors; however, all of the models you are hearing about, nothing firm was released. He stated again that he will notify the Board and community immediately and start reviewing guidelines with the Task Force. Minutes, recordings and agendas are on the website. Rosemarie Weber stated the Task Force met twice since the last BOE meeting and discussed what models might work for Granby and what would it look like for different age groups. She stated there was also a third workshop with the Connecticut Center for School Change and they shared their research and what is important to consider, such as, maintaining a high level of teaching and learning; accelerating rather than remediating; and, younger learners benefit more from being in the buildings than older students. She stated there are three models that the Task Force seems to agree on and takeaways are that we want to get the kids back to school as soon as possible. Melissa Migliaccio stated there is an overwhelming desire in the community to have K-12 back in the classrooms. Rosemarie Weber cited the models as follows: 1) K-6 in district and 7-12 rotating; 2) K-8 in-person and 9-12 need-based only; and, 3) rotating K-12 with a half-day model or every other day or every couple of days. Dr. Grossman stated all of these models are based on the summer school guidelines that came out three weeks ago which were very strict.

## **V. New Business**

### **V.A. Approval of Food Services Contract**

The Board considered the approval of the food service contract with Fresh Picks for the 2020-2021 school year. A motion was made by Jenny Emery and seconded by Mark Fiorentino that the Granby Board of Education approve the food service contract with Fresh Picks as recommended by the Finance/Personnel/Facilities Subcommittee. The contract was held up at the state and there is very little flexibility. This new contract documents wellness. The

vendor is new to us but currently has contracts in MA, NH and VT. The Finance Subcommittee reviewed and recommended the contract for Board approval. Sarah Thrall inquired what was going to happen if families had balances on their lunch program account. Anna Robbins stated all of the funds on accounts now are with the district and will remain on account with the next vendor. This motion passed unanimously 8:17 p.m.

#### **V.B. GEA Negotiations Committee**

Board Chair, Melissa Migliaccio, discussed upcoming negotiations for the Granby Educators' Association in the fall and requested Board representatives for the negotiations committee. Jenny Emery, Mark Fiorentino and Sarah Thrall have volunteered to serve on this committee.

### **VI. Miscellaneous**

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

##### **VI.A.1. Finance/Personnel/Facilities**

Jenny Emery stated this Subcommittee met this evening and had a discussion on the fiscal year end on June 30<sup>th</sup>. As of the end of May the net surplus in the budget is projected to be \$706 and maybe larger. Rec for admin the last several months is to not look for ways to spend it now and return it to the town with the ongoing conversation with the BOF and BOS that we really don't know if the budget passed for next year reflects the reality of what we will need next year. Hope and expect the BOF and BOS will work with us during the course of the next year to fund the things we need to. Small cap budget was not fully expended this year – there is about \$95K balance. Endorsed the admin rec to spend the first \$75K on laptops for teachers as well as a catch basin issue for \$10K and also getting drinking water to the fields for \$10K. Authorized administration to spend down small cap for those items. Ongoing discussions on the transportation contract which will be discussed in executive session. Brandon Webster inquired if the things that were not done this year will be done next year. Anna Robbins stated, yes, they would.

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

##### **VI.B.1. CREC/CABE**

Mark Fiorentino stated CREC met today for their final meeting of the year but there was nothing significant to report. CABE recommended a webinar on racial bias. Melissa Migliaccio stated she would send the link to Dr. Grossman and Linda Powell to forward to the Board.

##### **VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation**

Jenny Emery stated there was a meeting on Monday but she did not make it. She also stated she has not seen much on this but the GEF tribute program is running this year and it is a nice way to honor a staff member.

#### **VI.C. Calendar of Events**

Ms. Migliaccio mentioned the Reopening Task Force meetings held weekly and noted there will be Special Board of Education Meetings on July 6 and July 13, 2020 to discuss the launching of reopening plans.

#### **VI.D. Board Member Announcements**

Melissa Migliaccio stated it was great to see everyone in person and was glad the meeting was held outside tonight.

#### **VI.E. Action Items**

1) Equity Plan: Increased participation in host families; alumni relationships with post-graduates; adult education in the community; minority recruitment; and, training for media specialists for World Book Club discussions.

### **VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting**

A motion was made by Melissa Migliaccio and seconded by Jenny Emery to enter into an Executive Session this evening to discuss a personnel matter and a contractual issue. Ms. Migliaccio stated she is inviting Anna Robbins and Dr. Grossman into Executive Session. This motion passed unanimously at 8:28 p.m.

The Executive Session adjourned at approximately 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber  
Board Secretary