

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Kristina Gilton, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Whitney Sanzo, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, and Chase Alexander and Tess Bajek (Student Representatives)

Absent Board Members: N/A

Sarah Thrall called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Chairman's Corner

Sarah Thrall, Board Chair, welcomed Senator Lisa Seminara, Senator John Kissel (who attended via Zoom) and State Representative Mark Anderson. She also welcomed Madame Godard who was present for Schools in the Spotlight. Ms. Thrall thanked Colleen Bava, Principal at Kelly Lane, for providing a mid-year update on student achievement to the Curriculum Subcommittee this evening. Ms. Thrall shared that the Board appointed itself as the Search Committee at the last meeting and have started the process recruiting a search firm with the hopes of having an engagement letter by the beginning of March. The search firm selected will conduct focus group discussions, conduct a survey, etc. Ms. Thrall anticipates having a new Superintendent in place by July 1st. Updates on the process will be communicated via the website, eblast and *The Granby Drummer*.

I.B. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman welcomed everyone in attendance as well as on Zoom and extended a special welcome to State Senators John Kissel and Lisa Seminara as well as State Representative Mark Anderson. He also welcomed Mrs. Karen Richmond-Godard, French Teacher at the High School, and Chase Alexander, our student representative, who will be presenting for Schools in the Spotlight this evening.
- A Superintendent's Community Conversation was held this morning and approximately 40 people were in attendance. Updates were provided on school safety and security and a few questions were asked but everything was held in a professional manner and the community was informed to contact Dr. Grossman's office or any of the principals at schools with any concerns.
- The Wells Road band and choral concert was held last week and was very well attended with no seats left in the audience.
- Met with Granby Racial Team members last week and discussed Black History Month as well as Juneteenth which looks very exciting this year. This group meets once per month.
- Receiving many GEF grant applications and looking forward to receiving acceptances in the near future.
- The district will assist the Granby Police Department with their re-accreditation process in March.
- The CREC/HASA/CABE Legislative Forum will be held tomorrow at the State Capitol from 8:45-10:00 a.m.
- There will be no school on Monday, February 20th and February 21st.
- The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on March 1st when the FY24 Administrative Budget will be presented.

I.C. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, provided updates from the Assistant Superintendent's office and updated the Board on the Wellness Committee which met last week. She stated the district is required to have a wellness policy in conjunction with a food service policy. Ms. Parsons informed the Board that the Committee is looking to expand and to send any interested parties to her. The group reviews the Wellness Policy and discusses full implementation of it and Granby is almost in full compliance with the policy at this point. Ms. Parsons shared that with the new kitchen at the high school, it brings the district in compliance with food preparation stations. She shared the group also discusses how to promote wellness, i.e., the middle school is kicking off heart healthy month.

I.C. Student Representative Reports

- Tess Bajek stated that the mattress fundraiser is coming up on February 25th from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
- The Winter Coffeehouse will also be held on February 25th from 7-9 p.m.
- The Senior Class will be holding a movie night on February 22nd at 6 p.m.
- NHS will hold their annual Empty Bowls fundraiser on March 24th.

- Random Acts of Kindness are being held this week through NHS.
- Senior Prom will be held on May 19th.
- The school musical, *Little Shop of Horrors* will be held on March 12th and 13th.
- The tables are great in the new cafeteria with some high-top tables mixed in.
- Overall it has been a competitive winter sports season. Girls' basketball has a bye for the NCCC Tournament and will host Coventry this Friday; boys' basketball is 3-16 with their final game at vs. Wethersfield; boys' hockey remains winless; girls' ice hockey is 10-9 and playing against Avon tonight; wrestling meets Friday in Killingly for the CIAC Class S Championship; indoor track is preparing for the CIAC State Open this Saturday; and swimming & diving have a meet this Friday.

I.E. Schools in the Spotlight

World Language Content Area Specialist, Karen Richmond-Godard, and Chase Alexander, Junior, from her French IV Honors Class, highlighted the high school's Virtual Exchange Program with students from Caen, France, which recently changed in 2018. Granby now partners with Simsbury. She stated that the last time the group traveled to France was in 2019. Since that time, Granby students have conversed with French students virtually and also began writing in French and English with pen pals in France. Chase shared his experiences of being a pen pal and stated he learned a lot from this process and felt he grew in his French skills and became friends with his pen pal. Ms. Godard shared that their sister school is located in Normandie which is much closer to Paris. She shared that the students in Caen recently presented virtually to Granby students in English and the Granby students presented in French regarding the food service program and new cafeteria as well as on the history of Granby.

I.F. Guest Legislators

Guest legislators Senator Lisa Seminara, Senator John Kissel and State Representative, Mark Anderson, discussed upcoming legislative issues as they relate to education. Senator Kissel stated he is always incredibly impressed with everything in Granby. He shared the Governor came out with his budget proposal last week and it is a stable budget and might have some growth. He stated there is always an open line of communication to his office and he is always happy to learn about the great town of Granby.

Senator Lisa Seminar stated that she was thrilled to attend this evening and that she serves on the Education Committee which is huge this year with 48 members. She shared the biggest thing happening is HB5003 with regard to Education Cost Sharing (ECS) and stated she will defer this topic to Representative Anderson as he was planning to speak about it. Senator Seminara stated she represents 11 towns, all of which approached her on the reading curriculum issue, and she hopes that some adjustments are made on it. She stated she believes the purpose of the bill is to address districts who are not doing as well as other districts and there is a huge expense to many districts. She shared that she put a bill in on this especially with regard to the waiver process. She also put a bill in with regard to the Excess Cost Grant for full 100% reimbursement to each town. She stated the focus of the Education Committee is on the retention of the workforce; school nursing; school resource officers (to further define their role – not to remove them); and, civics education, media literacy, and financial literacy for high school students.

State Representative Mark Anderson stated he attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new cafeteria and thought it was terrific. He spoke about two bills related to schools: HB5003 for \$80K/year in ECS and HB6606. The controversial part of HB5003 is double funding, i.e., Hartford Public Schools has 18,000 students; however, only half attend with the other half attending magnet schools, charter schools, etc. Hartford retains the money for all 18,000 students. Representative Anderson stated this bill is in competition with the Governor's bill. With regard to Senate Bill 961 and HB6606, Representative Anderson shared that CABE testified against both of these bills. The first bill is an act concerning carbon-free requirements for new school construction. This bill would make it very difficult for any new school construction and HB6606 would stop the use of polystyrene in schools.

The Board asked questions of the legislators. David Peling inquired when all of the decisions regarding bills get made. Senator Seminara stated, unfortunately, she does not believe the decisions would be made in time for this year's budget cycle and the process will take a while as there is a lot to unpack with it. Senator Kissel stated a good rule of thumb is if you use the Governor's proposed numbers, that the legislators will generally add to that figure. Representative Anderson stated he did not think there would be much discussion against

HB5003 and, in the end, Granby should receive more money. Senator Kissel stated he will look into bills that would be beneficial to Granby and have his aide send information to the Board by the middle of next week. Rosemarie Weber commented on the reading curriculum bill stating Granby implemented a program that they would like to stay the course with and continue the work in the district. She would like to see support on the waiver. Senator Seminara stated she will definitely give her support on this as not all districts need the guidance. Dr. Grossman inquired regarding one bill at the end of the legislative session that lumps everything in at the last minute and Senator Kissel stated, yes, this is called the implementer bill and that is a difficult one because some things are put into this bill that are not fair to legislators or school districts. He stated there have been some things passed in that implementer bill that if they knew how districts felt, they may vote differently. Sarah Thrall inquired regarding the financial literacy piece at the high school level and stated she believes this serves Granby students well. Senator Seminara stated they are talking about coupling financial literacy with civics.

Dr. Grossman stated he will have Linda Powell send the legislators contact information for all of the Board members so they can get in touch with them directly if necessary regarding important legislation. Ms. Thrall thanked the legislators for attending this evening and informed them that they have a standing invitation to attend any school events in Granby.

I.G. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the January 2023 statement of accounts stating the full-year forecast shows an anticipated overbudget condition of \$64K which is better than the previous month by \$43K. The favorable forecast for regular education of \$35K is \$36K worse than the previous month. Purchased instructional services, specifically substitutes, continues to contribute to that overbudget condition. Special education is overbudget \$689K which is \$78K better than last month. The shift is primarily due to changes in out-of-district tuition and transportation. Revenue to the town is projected to be favorable \$433K. The special education Excess Cost Grant continues to be favorable. Ms. Robbins shared the new PPE rate for FY22 was received and is \$18,897 which is a slight change from the prior year. She stated all of this information will be seen in the budget book. The Q&D fund is trending the same as last month and is \$35K better than planned and continues to trend positively for this year and the five-year forecast. Rosemarie Weber stated the statement of accounts was reviewed and accepted in the Finance Subcommittee Meeting this evening.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Kristina Gilton that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed with one abstention (Whitney Sanzo) at 8:21 p.m.

IV. Old Business

IV.A. FY24 Budget Update

Dr. Grossman provided an update on the FY24 Budget stating the Board of Finance set the guideline at 4.99%. He stated his number as of today will be below this guideline. The budget workshop will be held on March 8th where the Board will go into the budget in-depth. On March 15th the Board will vote on the budget to make it their own and then present it at the Board of Finance Meeting on March 27th.

V. New Business

V.A. Graduation Date

The Board discussed setting the date for the high school graduation ceremony to be held on Friday, June 9, 2023 (rain or shine). A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education set the date for the high school graduation ceremony to be held on Friday, June 9, 2023 (rain or shine). This motion passed unanimously at 8:26 p.m.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

David Peling reported Principal Colleen Bava presented on Kelly Lane mid-year student achievement data which were very impressive regarding student growth. Reviewed the Assistant Superintendent's Monthly Report as follows: Continuing to work with instructional coaches for Tier 1 support for students; changes for Math and World Language course progression; a couple of new data platforms for next year (student achievement tracking K-12); reading waiver for state in process; presentation on counterfeit drugs; switch to TalentEd applicant tracking; revising advisory structure; recruiting third teacher in residence; Choice Program recruitment fairs; and, changed leadership and how to implement that. Also discussed a revised bullying policy where a single act of bullying can now constitute bullying. This policy will stay in subcommittee for further review. Two policies will be coming to the Board for a first reading at the next meeting on child abuse and sexual abuse prevention.

VI.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Rosemarie Weber stated the statement of accounts and budget were discussed. Also discussed a fuel price of \$3.26/gallon for fuel which was locked in. Donna Nolan provided a Building Committee update and the Committee is meeting next week to review a couple of punch list items. Also reviewed the Indoor Air Quality Report. Shannon Sullivan, Director of Facilities, and our district consultant, Kevin Bogue, participated in the conversation. Overall, our district does a very good job and the maintenance crew takes great pride in the work they do making sure maintenance calls are responded to. Out of over 300 faculty and staff, there were only 36 responses to the survey.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Kristina Gilton stated CREC has not met. Sarah Thrall stated she will report out on tomorrow's legislative forum at the next meeting.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Whitney Sanzo stated the GEF met on Monday evening but she was not able to attend. She informed the Board that they can sponsor a team if they would like to. The GranBee will be held on April 28th at 6:30 p.m. and Mr. Whitten will be the Emcee. GEF uses the funds raised from this fundraiser for many GEF grants given to the school and community. She shared a grant was just accepted for \$4,101 for a Blues and Beyond Music Concert at the high school.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Sarah Thrall stated there is a lot going on as always and mentioned the mattress fundraiser and winter coffeehouse on February 25th as well as the Empty Bowls fundraiser on March 24th.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VI.E. Action Items

Linda Powell will send contact information of Board members to the state legislators.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Rosemarie Weber that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the regular Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Nolan
Board Secretary