

**Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Town Hall Meeting Room**

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Heather Lombardo, Monica Logan (via Zoom), Donna Nolan, David Peling, Karen Richmond-Godard, and Rosemarie Weber.

Absent Board Members: Chase Alexander and Katie O'Neill (Student Representatives)

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Heather Lombardo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. Public Comment**

Mike Kramarenko read a letter on behalf of a parent who could not attend the meeting. Additionally, he commented on incidents that occurred at the recent dance at the middle school and stated the student handbook needs to be revised with regard to student discipline.

**III. Student Representative Reports**

There were no student representative reports this evening as both students were attending the DECA Conference.

**IV. Reports and Discussion**

**A. FY25 Superintendent's Budget Presentation**

Superintendent Cheri Burke presented the FY25 Superintendent's Budget to the Board. Ms. Burke thanked the administrative team and gave a special thank you to Anna Robbins for her number-crunching and many hours spent on the budget. Ms. Burke stated the budget is the foundation for the work of the district and creates the opportunities and resources to meet the needs of our students for academic excellence, mental health and wellness for students and staff, efforts around community engagement and communication, as well as safe school environments. The budget aligns to the two established priorities for academic achievement for every student in the district as well as a new commitment to high levels of community engagement. She reviewed current and projected enrollment numbers stating there will be a decrease in enrollment by 13 students next year and 27 students the year after. Class sizes were also reviewed for this school year as well as projected class sizes for next year. District Reference Groups (DRGs) were discussed and Granby was recently moved from DRG B to DRG C. Our current per pupil expenditure of \$19,961 is toward the middle of our new DRG. Granby spends less than 17 districts in our DRG. Revenue to the Town of Granby was shared and the different revenue areas discussed, such as, intergovernmental, district-initiated, grants, and the Quality and Diversity Fund.

Ms. Burke explained how she arrived at the current budget increase of 5.67% after presenting a 6.43% Plus One Budget in December stating, at that time, the budget was driven by contractual obligations and special education costs and offset by a very small increase in other areas as well as some staff reductions. Since the time of the Plus One Budget, given newly identified special education students, new out of district placements, as well as new students moving into the district, the special education budget rose by \$200K. In addition, the health care premium budgeted for 17% is now estimated to go up by 19%. The Board of Finance guideline for budget increase is 5.43% and Ms. Burke stated she was unable to meet that guideline; however, the Plus One Budget was reduced by almost \$500K and is coming in at a 5.67% budget. Significant reductions were made to personnel and many line items such as supplies, texts, workbooks, etc. Ms. Burke reviewed the list of staff reductions including a Math Tutor; Kindergarten and Grade 2 Teacher; 2 additional teachers through attrition; 2 World Language positions (eliminating Spanish at Kelly Lane and Wells Road and Mandarin at the middle school); 2 Library TAs; 3 regular education TAs; and positions which were proposed in the Plus One but are not included in this budget (0.5 Groundskeeper and 0.2 Strings Teacher). With regard to positions added to the budget Ms. Burke is proposing an 0.2 increase Physical Education Teacher position for a new course, Strength and Conditioning; a 1.0 Board Certified Behavior Analyst; 4 Teaching Assistants; 1.08 Lunch Monitors; 1.0 Math Intervention Teacher; and, an 0.4 increase Counseling & Academic Support Teaching Assistant.

Ms. Burke reviewed the small capital expenditures: Transportation & Equipment; Building & Maintenance; Safety & Security; Furniture & Equipment; and Technology which totals \$1,050,000. The FY25 total appropriation request is \$40,325,034 which includes small capital expenditures and the Quality & Diversity Budget. Ms. Burke informed the Board that questions should be emailed to her, Anna Robbins and Linda Powell by Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. The Budget Workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. Liz Barlow inquired if the reduction of Spanish at Kelly Lane and Wells Road is a reduction or a total elimination. Ms. Burke stated the current proposal is a complete removal of Spanish instruction at the elementary level as well as Mandarin at the middle school level, phasing it out for current 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students taking the course; however, it would not be offered next year in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade.

## **V. Business Requiring Action**

### **A. Minutes**

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes of the February 21, 2024 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed at 7:50 p.m. with one abstention (Donna Nolan).

### **B. Approval of Increasing Educator Diversity Plan**

The Board considered the approval of the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Jennifer Parsons stated recent legislation requires that all districts across the state submit their plans for how they plan to increase their diversity within their educator population as defined as racially, culturally and linguistically diverse candidates and educators. This is an opportunity to document some of the great work Granby does with recruiting, hiring and retaining educators overall as well as how we identify candidates who are diverse. A Theory of Action document was shared with regard to certain tasks which fall under the responsibility of the Human Resources Coordinator and the Assistant Superintendent in the areas of Recruitment, Hiring & Selection and Retention. Rosemarie Weber inquired if the Granby Equity Team should be added because educators are part of the team and it is a valuable resource. Ms. Parsons stated this is a great idea and she will make that addition. Liz Barlow also had a suggestion of using the Granby Equity Team to evaluate the experiences of our candidates of color with regard to any struggles or recommendations for the district. A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Donna Nolan that the Granby Board of Education approve the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan as amended to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to subsection (a) of Section 10-220 of the General Statutes. This motion passed unanimously at 7:58 p.m.

## **VI. Committee Reports**

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

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

Karen Richmond-Godard reported this subcommittee met this evening to discuss the Assistant Superintendent's monthly report including mid-year assessments with staff, the early entry process for Kindergarten students and an update on the K-3 Reading Waiver. The Increasing Educator Diversity Plan was also reviewed as well as a Food Service Charging Policy.

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

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

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

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

Heather Lombardo stated CREC/CABE did not meet.

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

Heather Lombardo stated a Board representative is still needed for the Granby Education Foundation.

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

Heather Lombardo highlighted the play on March 15-17, *Footloose* and the March 13<sup>th</sup> Budget Workshop.

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

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

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

- 1) Ms. Burke will share information on the First Responder Dinner on March 21<sup>st</sup>.
- 2) Questions due to Cheri Burke, Anna Robbins and Linda Powell by March 11<sup>th</sup> for the budget workshop.
- 3) Amendment to the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan.

#### **VII. Superintendent's Report**

- Superintendent Burke shared that March is Board Appreciation Month and she thanked Board members for their tireless work and dedication to Granby students, families and staff.
- There are currently around 85 students enrolled in Kindergarten which includes 10 spots for Open Choice students.
- Congratulations to Lauren de Los Reyes who received second place in the statewide Poetry Out Loud contest.
- Most of the winter sports seasons have come to an end except for swimming and diving and boys' ice hockey, which are champions of the Nutmeg Conference and won the first round of the state tournament in overtime.
- There will be an NHS volleyball tournament tomorrow evening.
- A joint middle school/high school PAC Meeting will be held on Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the high school cafeteria to discuss the budget.
- A Superintendent Community Conversation will be held via Zoom on April 4<sup>th</sup> from 6-7 p.m.
- A reminder there is school this Friday. The Board approved a change to the calendar due to the Presidential Primary on April 2<sup>nd</sup> which will now be a professional development day.
- Ms. Burke thanked all administrators as well as Board of Finance members who were in attendance this evening.
- Ms. Burke introduced Jennifer Brown, Human Resources Coordinator; Kate Weingartner, Director of Pupil Services; and Mike Walsh, the new Town Manager, who were all in attendance.

#### **VIII. Chairperson's Report**

Monica Logan joined the meeting via Zoom and thanked Superintendent Burke as well as her administrative team for all of the hard work on the budget.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Rosemarie Weber to adjourn the regular Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Barlow  
Board Secretary