

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
January 20, 2021 7:00 p.m.
High School Auditorium

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

Absent Board Members: Jack DeGray and Jacob Scotto (Student Representatives)

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

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Chairman's Corner

Ms. Thrall shared opening remarks and stated she is super excited to have visitors from Kelly Lane Primary School present this evening. Ms. Thrall thanked Brandon Webster and Mark Fiorentino for their attendance in the *Waking Up White* book club. She also acknowledged continued thanks and appreciation to teachers, staff, support staff, and administrators working in the district and stated she is very proud to be a member of the Board of Education.

I.B. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman welcomed Kelly Lane staff and students for Schools in the Spotlight.
- Over 100 people joined the virtual conversation for *Waking up White* last week and also thanked Brandon Webster and Mark Fiorentino for working with Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Parsons, to make the event happen.
- Congratulations to Lily Vincento, Grade 6 second place recipient, and to Sierra Ashe, Grade 8, third place recipient in the Daughters of the American Revolution Essay Contest.
- Congratulations to Jody Bascetta and Gina Magennis who will retire at the end of this school year. Mrs. Bascetta has also announced that she will be retiring from coaching field hockey as well.
- Spirit day will be held at Kelly Lane and Wells Road this Friday.
- There will be a Superintendent Community Conversation held on Wednesday, February 24th from 8:30-9:30 a.m. to discuss various items including the budget. Dr. Grossman stated he will also be discussing the budget at PTO and PAC meetings and recently attended a budget discussion at a SEPTO meeting this month.
- It is an exciting time at GMHS. Athletics started yesterday and he thanked Brian Maltese, Athletic Director, for following guidelines from the CIAC and DPH. Student athletes are doing a great job.
- Work is almost complete on the middle school vestibule project. Dr. Grossman encouraged Board members to let him know if they would like to set up a visit to see it.
- The Legislative Breakfast will be held virtually on Thursday, February 11th from 8:30-9:30 a.m.
- The high school was recently awarded the Michaels Cup for athletics. Dr. Grossman stated Mr. Maltese will explain exactly what the reward is and stated it is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed on a school district.
- Conversations are continuing with East Granby Public Schools regarding the collaboration with them on our food service program. There is a potential start date of February 1st.
- The next Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

Ms. Thrall extended her congratulations to the retirees, Mrs. Bascetta and Mrs. Magennis.

I.C. Schools in the Spotlight

Kelly Lane Primary School teachers Lindsay Sessions (Grade 1) and Ingrid Budlong (Grade 2), presented "Writing Instruction in the Primary Grades" sharing how students are empowering their learning through the writing process by using rubrics, mentor examples, and goal setting to develop a final piece of writing. Ms. Sessions informed the Board that Kelly Lane teachers are working with Teachers College in New York in using different resources for our students. She stated the art of writing is complex and the art of teaching writing more so. First grade and second grade student authors were introduced and a video was shown sharing their writing and showing how students take ownership of their writing with various tools, such as, goal setting, editing checklists, transition words, etc.

I.D. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, provided updates from the Assistant Superintendent's office and stated while there was a slight uptick over the holidays in positive cases, there is a very minimal impact at the schools. She reiterated if anyone in your home is testing or quarantining, all members of the household should stay home. School nurses have been vaccinated and Granby Public Schools is prepared to upload our list of employees for the vaccine when the Governor's Order and State Department of Health determines it is time to do so. In other news, she stated a meeting was held today for the vision of the graduate and the committee is working to determine what the essential skills our students need to graduate. These essential skills will be broken down into sub-skills and statements as to what it looks like for students to be effective collaborators in 2nd grade, 5th grade, 8th grade, 12th grade and connecting to capstone projects. Additionally, Ms. Parsons met with Mr. Wrye, Middle School Principal, regarding the schedule stating the biggest impact will be on world language and math. Mr. Wrye will attend a subcommittee meeting in the near future to discuss this.

II.E. Student Representative Reports

There were no student representative reports this evening due to high school mid-term exams.

I.F. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the December statement of accounts and stated it continues to reflect the costs of reopening schools during the pandemic. After receipt of the grant funds, the general forecast is negative \$62K which is better than the previous month by \$118. Special education is over-budget \$121K which also better than the previous month by \$84K. Regular education has a positive forecast of \$59K and is better by the previous month by \$34K. Out-of-district transportation and tuition are the major contributors to the favorable forecast for special education and the line item for Bus Monitor wages is attributable to the favorable forecast in regular education. The Quality & Diversity Fund forecast is better than budgeted by \$52K. Expenses are expected to be \$118K lower than budgeted and revenues are projected to be \$66K lower than budgeted due to the change of activities related to the pandemic. Revenue to the town is unfavorable \$97K. Although special education revenue from other towns has a positive forecast, all other line items are unfavorable at this time. The forecast for the Excess Cost Grant is under budget \$77K due to savings on out-of-district tuition and transportation and continues to fluctuate. Jenny Emery stated the statement of accounts was reviewed this evening.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Jenny Emery to adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed at 7:32 p.m. with one abstention (Melissa Migliaccio).

IV. Old Business

IV.A. Athletic Update

Mr. Brian Maltese, Athletic Director, shared an update with the Board regarding the fall and upcoming winter sports seasons. Mr. Maltese reviewed the success of the fall athletic teams as follows: the cross country teams did extremely well with the girls' team placing 4th overall and the boys' team placing second; volleyball won the regional regular season and the regional tournament.; boys' soccer won the regional tournament and girls' soccer won the regular season regional championship and the regional tournament and finished the season with a perfect record 13-0; field hockey had a great season – and advanced to the finals of their regional tournament and had an overall record of 11-3; Cheerleading stepped up to the plate when they were needed most for teams and attended many of the soccer and field hockey games; the football team unfortunately did not play in the fall and it was hopeful for a winter season or an alternative season; however, after the CIAC met they made a decision that football was a high-risk sport and would not be played this school year. Mr. Maltese informed the Board that one nice thing that has come out of COVID is live-streaming home events. The goal of the winter is to continue this during basketball season and maybe also ice hockey. Granby is working with other schools in our league to offer those options and will communicate with parents to see if we can get one of our parents or students to attend away games and live-stream them.

Mr. Maltese stated winter sports officially started yesterday and the primary focus is on health and safety. The first games will be played the week of February 7th. There is one change from the fall season which is that students are now required to wear masks at all times during practices and games. Mask breaks are given to athletes. Equipment is sanitized after each use and each level of sports team (Freshman, JV, Varsity) will have their own bus to and from events. Mr. Maltese stated wrestlers are allowed to condition and do skill-specific non-contact drills; however, there will be no competitions. Cheerleading is permitted to do sideline cheers only. The start date for spring sports is Monday March 29th. Lastly, Mr. Maltese announced that GMHS received the CIAC Michaels Cup Award. This award recognizes exemplary athletic programs for their willingness to subscribe to the Class Act Sportsmanship standards, empowering students to take an active role in their school climate and their continued support for community service. GMHS will be formally recognized during the CIAC's virtual Sportsmanship Conference on February 10th.

Sarah Thrall inquired about middle school sports and Mr. Maltese stated, yes, intramurals have begun with games beginning February. Ms. Thrall also inquired about the Unified Sports Program and Mr. Maltese stated that hopefully this will occur in the spring due to minimal gym space this winter.

IV.B. FY22 Plus One Budget

The Board continued to discuss and consider the approval of the FY22 Plus One Budget. Dr. Grossman reminded the Board and community that the Plus One Budget is just a snapshot of where we are today. He reviewed the current budget increases at 3.71% without OPEB (Other post-employment contributions) or 4.5% with the OPEB contribution. He explained if all of our current expenses were rolled over to next year, it is a 2.24% increase and adding in the special education increase it comes to 3.24%. Dr. Grossman reviewed all of the questions from the Board. There were a few questions with regard to enrollment increases and class sizes and Dr. Grossman stated that, yes, enrollment will increase over the next 5 years. Other questions were asked with regard to health benefits; teacher turnover rates; salary rates for regular education vs. special education over the past 5 years; number of Social Worker positions in the Q&D budget; annual percentage increase in general education vs. special education budgets over the past 5 years; and, remote learning spending/savings; and, football program expense (football supporters have recommended that they forego the \$5,000 in the budget). Mark Fiorentino inquired how many FTEs are for social workers and how many are left in Q&D. Anna Robbins will get back to him on that question. Melissa Migliaccio felt it was important to note that \$1M was returned to the town last year and inquired if we ever calculated what the budget increase was after that fact. Dr. Grossman stated he would get

that number. Ms. Migliaccio also stated she supports the budget but is concerned about remediation for students on many levels. David Peling stated he supports the budget and thanked Jordan and his team for their hard work. Rosemarie Weber and Jenny Emery both stated, given the standing still number, that the Plus One budget is reasonable and they also support it. Brandon Webster thanked Dr. Grossman, administration and teachers for their work on the budget especially during this climate and knows that Dr. Grossman will bring the budget down within reason where possible without hurting education. Mark Fiorentino stated the budget has no shock factors in it and stated there is some work that needs to be done; however, he supports sending this budget on to the BOF. A motion was made by Mark Fiorentino and seconded by Jenny Emery that the Granby Board of Education approve the FY22 Plus One Budget to be forwarded to the Board of Finance. This motion passed unanimously at 8:33 p.m.

V. New Business

There was no New Business to report.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

VI.A.1. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Jenny Emery reported this Subcommittee met this evening to discuss the statement of accounts, food service program, building committee update, changes and assumptions in the town pension plan, and IBAC.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Mark Fiorentino reported CREC met briefly today and discussed the Legislative Breakfast; a comprehensive financial report for CREC which he passed on to Jordan and Anna; and, an approved extension on collective bargaining for bus drivers which he also passed on to Jordan and Anna.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Dr. Grossman stated he attended the meeting and they discussed marketing. He will attend the next meeting with regard to a news studio at the high school. Jenny Emery stated a grant came up from the lower grades to augment money at the library for kids to be able to get access at home.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Sarah Thrall stated Friday is Granby Spirit Day; middle school PAC Meeting next month; and, the CABE legislative breakfast. Linda will send separate emails for future PAC/SEPTO meetings.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VI.E. Action Items

Plus One Budget questions on Page 4 General Education vs. Special Education budget numbers and on Page 12 regarding the number of Social Workers in the Q&D Budget.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

There was no need for an Executive Session. A motion was made by Jenny Emery and seconded by Melissa Migliaccio to adjourn the meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber
Board Secretary