

Budget Workshop – Draft Minutes
Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Central Services

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

Sarah wished her fellow Board members Happy International Women’s Day and she thanked them for their service on the Board stating her enjoyment working with them.

I. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

II. FY24 Administrative Budget Discussion

The Board continued to discuss the FY24 Administrative Budget in a workshop setting. Sarah Thrall stated the Board received a presentation from the Superintendent at the last Board Meeting. The Board submitted about 40 questions which Dr. Grossman will review this evening.

Dr. Grossman thanked the Board for their great questions. He reviewed the administrative budget priorities; shared how the budget dropped from a 5.94% Plus One Budget to a 4.88% Administrative Budget as well as shared an Operating Budget Summary and the FY24 Appropriation Request of \$38,171,002.

Dr. Grossman reviewed all of the questions from the Board which included topics on staffing for FY24; staffing numbers pre- and post-pandemic; staffing related to intervention support for students; Instructional Coaching model as it relates to interventions for students; costs for library resources as well as football; class sizes at the high school; Per Pupil Expenditures (ppe) for Hartford area districts and how PPE is calculated; legislation regarding Education Cost Sharing and/or Excess Cost Grant impact; costs related to the Post-Secondary Transition Program; special education costs; and, social/emotional learning as well as intervention/tutoring supports.

Sarah Thrall asked the Board if they had any additional questions. Monica Logan inquired about social/emotional learning and if the District will have the flexibility to add additional supports, if necessary. Dr. Grossman stated at a safety meeting today, that exact question came up as to what the District ratio should be per student, Granby is fine in this regard; however, that does not mean that support staff is not seeing an increase in students needing support. He shared the State of Connecticut recently offered a Mental Health Grant; however, Granby did not receive any funds in the first round but will certainly apply again. He stated this needs to be monitored closely. Jennifer Parsons stated, with regard to the DESSA, that students who were already identified are being identified with DESSA. Monica Logan commented if there was more that the Granby community could do to support the mental health of students. Additionally, Rosemarie Weber inquired if the District collaborates with Social Services in town and Dr. Grossman stated, yes, they do. Ms. Weber also inquired about the football program and if the District still contributes \$5,000 to the program and Dr. Grossman stated the District has not given additional funding to the program for the last couple of years. David Peling inquired what the Courtyard at Wells Road needs and Dr. Grossman stated benches would be added for learning center spaces for students. Mr. Peling also inquired how salaries can be projected out five years and Anna Robbins stated it is an estimate. Sarah Thrall commented that she has only heard one comment from a community member regarding replacement of the scoreboard at the middle school.

Sarah Thrall asked Dr. Grossman what is not in this budget and Dr. Grossman stated this was a very difficult budget to put together especially as it related to the sunseting of the ESSER grants. He stated to move this District forward, the budget aligns with the Strategic Plan and is where the District needs to be. The administrators are pleased with the requests they put forward and he feels very comfortable with the budget presented. Ms. Thrall commented that it is certainly a very lean budget and stated there are a couple of questions she has for next week with regard to enrollment numbers for some programming areas, such as, Strings and Mandarin Chinese. Ms. Parsons stated she can answer this question now. Grade 3 has 40+ students and Grades 4-6 have approximately 15-20 students. She shared that in 3rd Grade, the option of cello is added and in 6th Grade, the options of viola and bass are added. With regard to class sizes for Mandarin, Ms. Parsons shared the middle school has two (2) sections in Grade 8; one (1) section in Grade 7; and, one (1) section in Grade 6 with class sizes ranging approximately 17-18 students.

Bill Kennedy, Board of Finance, stated he never misses an opportunity when he meets a new resident in town to ask them what brings them to Granby and they always state the school system, quietness and open space.

Kevin Hobson, also a Board of Finance member, stated he liked the format this year of the questions and answers for the Budget Workshop. He inquired about the definition of tutors/interventionists/coaches. Dr. Grossman stated that Jenn Parsons will send an email with these definitions. He also inquired about the enrollment study and Dr. Grossman stated the Board had two independent consultants look at the enrollment projections. With regard to a question about out-of-district tutors, Dr. Grossman stated they are for Individualized Education Plan placements out-of-district. Additionally, Mr. Hobson inquired about the reduction in out-of-district tuition and Dr. Grossman stated this is due to bringing the 18- to 22- year-old program in-house. Mr. Hobson also inquired about the projection of 10 Open Choice students and Dr. Grossman stated this is based upon the Board's goal and that our new Family Engagement Specialist will assist in recruiting students. And, lastly, Mr. Hobson inquired about the Wells Road playscape for \$25K. Dr. Grossman stated the projected \$25K for the Wells playscape is to make it age appropriate. The current playscape was moved to Wells from Kelly Lane.

Sarah Thrall thanked the Board of Finance for attending tonight's meeting and made a last call for questions. The Board will continue to review the budget and will bring any additional questions to the Board Meeting next week.

III. Adjournment

A motion was made by Monica Logan and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Budget Workshop. This motion passed unanimously at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna Nolan
Board Secretary