

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
February 17, 2021, 7:00 p.m.
High School Auditorium/Zoom

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

Absent Board Members: Brandon Webster

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 welcomed Senators Kissel and Witkos and Representative Anderson to the Board Meeting and to high school staff and students here to present for Schools in the Spotlight.

I.B. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman also welcomed Senators Kissel and Witkos who joined the meeting via Zoom and Representative Mark Anderson who attended in person. He also welcomed high school administration, staff and students who were in attendance for Schools in the Spotlight.
- The collaborative effort of providing meals to East Granby Public Schools is going very well. So far, Granby has provided 1,046 breakfasts and 1,006 lunches to East Granby students.
- In Board member packets this evening there is a publication from the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents entitled, "CAPSS Blueprint to Transform Connecticut's Public Schools".
- Kelly Lane and Wells Road students celebrated the 100th day of school last week.
- Congratulations to the middle school Student Council for filling Mr. Pickhardt's pickup truck for the Granby Food Bank.
- Dr. Grossman stated he met with Sandy Yost and Ann Marie Cox from Youth Services. Granby Public Schools will be strengthening our partnership with them and Kim Calcasola and Heather Tanis will serve as members of the Youth Services Board.
- Interviews for a new Director of Pupil Personnel Services will be held next week.
- The Superintendent Communication Conversation on Wednesday, February 24th has been changed from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. to better accommodate elementary parents.
- Dr. Grossman will attend a PTO Meeting in March and a combined middle school/high school PAC Meeting in April to discuss the budget with parents.
- On tonight's agenda is the approval of a graduation date. The Governor is loosening some restrictions on outdoor and indoor events. On March 19th the outside rate will be up to 200 so it is hoped more can be done than last year with this year's graduation.
- There have been some remote school days due to inclement weather and there may be more this week as well. Not every day is guaranteed to be a remote day as there are other options such as early dismissal or late arrival.
- There will be a Board of Finance meeting on Monday, February 22nd.
- The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 3rd. Please note the Administrative Budget will be presented at that meeting.

I.C. Schools in the Spotlight

Mr. Brian Maltese, Athletic Director, and Ms. Lauren Shafer, English Teacher at the high school as well as The Bears Broadcast Crew (Nick Boyd and Owen Danke) and Poetry Out Loud winners (Chase McGee, Prior Waskan and Linus Waskan) showcased "Virtual Events "At" GMHS". Mr. Maltese stated the spring season was lost last year; however, Granby was able to have a fall and now a winter season. This year, two students, Nick Boyd and Owen Danke, approached Mr. Maltese to stream the sporting events live. With funding from the Athletic Boosters Club and the Granby Education Foundation, equipment was purchased to make this happen. Nick stated when he got this started, he found that there were many other students interested in streaming the events. All home games in the fall were

live streamed except on rainy days. There has been an incredible reaction from students and families. The equipment was also used for performing arts events. Owen shared a clip of a basketball game and also informed the Board about streaming coffeehouse which is very different as the audio for these events is very important. Students would mix the video and send it out on the YouTube video channel. Linus shared his experiences with Coffeehouse and the Broadcast Club.

Lauren Shafer stated Poetry Out Loud is a nationally recognized competition and GMHS has been involved since 2016. The program encourages students to develop their public speaking skills as well as their poetry. Chase MGee stated he has been part of this competition for the past 4 years. The competition starts with classroom competitions then moves on to grade competitions and the finals which are usually held in the auditorium in front of the whole school. The winner moves on to a state competition and, if successful, to the national competition in Washington, DC. Prior Waskan stated a smaller virtual school-wide competition was held run through the poetry club and he was runner-up in the competition and shared his poem which was submitted via video. Chase, the winner of the contest, shared his winning poem which was recited and taped live. Rosemarie Weber suggested the Broadcast Club try to grow the audience and include senior citizens in town. David Peling commented that even post-COVID, this should continue for families who cannot otherwise attend events.

I.D. Guest Legislators

Senator John Kissel, Senator Kevin Witkos and State Representative Mark Anderson discussed educational issues as they relate to the State budget with the Board. Mark Anderson stated he was able to see the music performance this past weekend and also enjoyed tonight's performance. He stated the Governor presented his budget and it appears he wants to level fund ECS funding at \$5.28M and that the budget may not come out until the second week of June. He informed the Board that he took a look at the pending education bills and there are 184 bills of which 24 have been raised by the committee to be drafted into legal language for public hearing. Some highlighted topics are as follows: Education Cost Sharing Grant and funding for small towns; minimum budget requirement; educator preparation - special education; virtual learning; development of K-12 model curriculum; graduation requirements; school security; emergency action plan for interscholastic and intramural athletic events; and, the most controversial regional cooperation among school districts.

Senator Kissel stated he is very proud of all the students as well as teachers and administrators and that Granby has a great school system. He informed the Board that he sits on judiciary, general law and transportation as well as regulations review committees.

Senator Witkos extended his congratulations to the Bears Broadcast Club in bringing events to the community. He stated Representative Anderson mentioned most of the education bills. Senator Witkos stated there is no change in the ECS formula of funding being received by districts. The Education Committee follows the pattern of following committee concepts. In the next 10 days, the Governor should announce teachers can be in the next round of vaccinations. He also mentioned the possible removal of the religious exemption for vaccinations which states that public schools do not need to admit a student if they are not vaccinated.

Mark Fiorentino thanked all of the legislators for being very accessible to the Board of Education and stated he is grateful what the legislature does but what Granby does not need is any more unfunded mandates. He stated it is rare that a committee would introduce something that we have not already discussed. Kevin Witkos stated it is very easy now to sign up and give testimony to the legislators. David Peling inquired what attributes should be sought in the new State Commissioner of Education. Senator Witkos stated it is the Governor's pick and he believed he is going to look for a minority and stated if he had his choice he would choose Superintendent Rodriguez from the Hartford Public Schools as she has a vision that can move the state forward as a whole. Jenny Emery informed the legislators how well Granby has done during COVID and that Granby has held in-person learning since August. She stated she is a big believer in regionalization; however, if proposals target well-run districts like Granby with financial penalties it totally misses the mark. Hopefully better ideas come along as to how the State can incentivize this process to have school districts work together. Senator Witkos stated Granby is one of the shining stars in the valley.

I.E. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, provided updates from the Assistant Superintendent's office and stated Granby is in a great place with minimal to no cases the past couple of weeks. She thanked the community for being vigilant. Students continue to enter back into school from their remote learning setting and the district continues to prepare for vaccine distribution. Ms. Parsons updated the Board on the Teacher in Residence Program and stated this program involves minority teacher candidates with a Bachelor's Degree. A candidate would spend 18 months in Granby in a teacher's classroom and in the second full school year, the district could hopefully offer a position. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be created for a 3-year mutual commitment but would be non-binding and would involve CREC as they would be supporting the teacher. The teacher would receive \$47K while they are in the classroom as well as \$9K for tuition fees. Melissa Migliaccio inquired if the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD) is going to coordinate the vaccinations. Ms. Parsons stated the district will upload our list into VAMS system. Teachers will need to set up an account and appointment. When the FVHD has the vaccines to go to education staff, we may be able to coordinate with them directly as opposed to going through the VAMS system. David Peling inquired if the MOU for the Teacher in Residence Program is a model shared with other districts. Ms. Parsons stated there is nothing binding the delineation of responsibilities. CREC will provide a sample and she believes it can be customized. Mr. Peling inquired about the job offer and if the candidate can choose to go to another district. Ms. Parsons stated she is not sure about this but will check.

I.F. Student Representative Reports

- Jacob Scotto reported students and staff energized after the February break.
- Over 100 singing valentines were sold to faculty members, students, and family members.
- Choir performed for the Senior Men's Breakfast and can be found on the GMHS YouTube Channel.
- NHS is doing a food drive to help support the Granby Food Bank.
- Today was Random Acts of Kindness Day.
- The boys' and girls' basketball teams were victorious over HMTCA. A player on the boys' HMTCA team tested positive for the coronavirus and all the Granby players in the game are quarantined until February 27th, pushing back the varsity schedule as 9 out of 10 players will miss five games.
- The Cheer Team performed at the first home game for the boys' basketball team and will continue to practice during the week and perform at boys' and girls' home games.
- Track and field is practicing all week after school.

Melissa Migliaccio stated the Wildcats hockey team was victorious this evening as she saw them coming off the bus when she arrived to the meeting.

I.G. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the January statement of accounts and stated the general fund forecast is negative \$71K which is \$9K worse than the previous month. Special education is over-budget \$139K which is \$18K worse than the previous month. Regular education is positive \$67K and better than the previous month by \$9K. General education changes are due to adjustments to certified staff as we continue to monitor leaves of absence and personnel changes. These changes are offset by anticipated savings in supplies, conferences and travel, as well as dues and fees. With five months remaining to the school year, the district will require all funds to be encumbered by March 15th. The balance of the Q&D fund holding steady at \$62K unfavorable. Special education revenue from other towns continues with a positive forecast. The per pupil expense used to calculate regular education tuition from other towns has been updated to \$17,068 which factors into the increase in the amounts currently anticipated thereby generating a positive forecast of \$17K. Jenny Emery stated the statement of accounts was reviewed this evening and thanks to some very creative work with grants, despite the extra expenses of opening with COVID, the district is \$67K ahead in general education and that administration is doing a great job.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Melissa Migliaccio and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed unanimously at 8:15 p.m.

IV. Old Business

IV.A. FY22 Budget Update

Dr. Jordan Grossman, Superintendent of Schools, shared an update on the development of the FY22 Budget with the Board. He informed the Board his office and the administrative team is working diligently on the FY22 budget and has been working with the BOF looking at the unofficial guideline and will look at official guideline at Monday's Board of Finance meeting. He stated he looks forward to presenting the budget at the next Board Meeting.

V. New Business

V.A. Graduation Date

The Board discussed setting the date for high school graduation on Friday, June 11, 2021, as recommended by the Superintendent. A motion was made by Sarah Thrall and seconded by Melissa Migliaccio that the Granby Board of Education approve setting the date for graduation on Friday, June 11, 2021, as recommended by the Superintendent. Dr. Grossman stated the State set guidelines that graduation can be set once the calendar is created and his recommendation is to get this date on the books so students and families can plan accordingly. This motion passed unanimously at 8:21 p.m.

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 indoor air quality report and were joined by Shannon Sullivan and Kevin Rogue for this report; statement of accounts; fuel bid results for oil are in and Stateline Oil had the winning bid by a big margin (\$1.89/gallon next year). The Building Committee meets tomorrow. Also discussed a leak in the high school vestibule which was related to draining on the main roof and an ice blockage. This is not a design flaw of the vestibule.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Mark Fiorentino reported CREC met today and CREC is doing a 21-day equity challenge and invited board members to join. CABE will be hosting a virtual Day on the Hill in March.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Dr. Grossman stated the school system was the highlight of the meeting. A grant was proposed of a television broadcast system for their information to get their feedback and thoughts. Awaiting feedback to see if this is something they want to hear more about.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Sarah Thrall reported there are many sports listed so please try to view via livestreaming.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

Sarah Thrall gave a special thanks to the legislators, students, and to Jon Lambert and John Kroninger.

VI.E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

There was no need to enter into an Executive Session/Non-Meeting this evening. A motion was made by David Peling and seconded by Rosemarie Weber to adjourn the meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemarie Weber
Board Secretary