

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Monica Logan, Heather Lombardo, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Karen Richmond-Godard, Ali Zafar, and Katie O'Neill (Student Representative)

Absent Board Members: Sofia Brenson (Student Representative)

I. Call to Order

Board Chair, Monica Logan, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Chairperson's Report

Ms. Logan welcomed everyone in-person and online this evening and stated there will be an upcoming discussion on the budget this evening. She also stated the agenda should be amended for *Item III. Awards and Recognition* to be switched with *Item IV. Public Comment* due to award recipients not being in attendance yet. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by David Peling to move *Public Comment* to *Item III*. Motion passed.

III. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening (in person or via Zoom).

IV. Awards and Recognition

Superintendent Burke recognized two winners of the 2024 Holiday Greeting Card Contest. Artwork of Avery Burgess, Grade 2, and Isabella Hurczyn, Grade 10, was selected for this year's district holiday cards. Superintendent Burke stated there were 50 submissions this year and it was a very difficult choice!

V. Student Representative Reports

- Katie O'Neill reported that at the HS, winter sports are well underway. Boys' basketball has a game on Thursday; girls' basketball won vs. Bolton and their next game is also on Thursday; wrestling's first match was today at home; hockey's first game is tonight; and indoor track has their first meet on Thursday in Glastonbury.
- The chorus concert will be held tomorrow night in the auditorium.
- Friday is an early release day.
- The NHS stocking drive was a great success.
- Last week, the World Language Honor Society held their induction ceremony.
- Casting decisions are being made for the spring musical.
- Many seniors are learning about their early acceptances. Katie announced she will attend UConn next fall.

VI. Reports and Discussion

VI.A. Director of Finance & Operations Report

Ms. Nickie Stevenson, Director of Operations & Finance, presented the November 2024 Budget Expense Report and stated analysis of both personnel and program accounts suggest that projected expenditures will be covered within budget. Repairs and maintenance have seen an increase due to both preventative and emergency repairs. With regard to personnel, encumbrances have been adjusted to account for expenses associated with substitutes and custodial overtime. Estimated special education expenses for FY25 continue to be within the spending plan. Out-of-district tuition and transportation and purchased services are closely being monitored. Additionally, the district, along with our vendor, were successful in negotiating daily transportation rate savings of approximately \$216K. With regard to the Quality & Diversity Fund, summer school and PreK tuition funds have been

received and booked. Open Choice funds are expected to be received in December. Revenue to the town for FY25 increased to over \$2M due to increased student enrollment from Hartland.

VI.B. FY26 Plus One Budget

Superintendent Cheri Burke presented the FY26 Plus One Budget to the Board and stated this is the start of the process for the budget and that the process begins in September. This is the first opportunity to present priorities for FY26. She shared that the Plus One Budget is unique to Granby and is a snapshot where the district is at this moment in time and what is anticipated for enrollment/staffing for the following school year. She shared that many State mandates and requirements put onto districts are unfunded mandates.

Superintendent Burke shared some facts, such as, enrollment size; number of certified and non-certified staff; and, per pupil expenditure which is calculated by the State of Connecticut and will be updated soon. She also shared the square footage of all of the buildings requiring cleaning by the Facilities Department (257,080 square feet) and district property (55 acres) requiring some oversight and maintenance.

Superintendent Burke stated 72% of the BOE budget is comprised of salaries and benefits. Currently, there is a 4.96% increase in salaries and benefits over this year's budget. In addition to this increase, she shared that there is a high demand for qualified teachers across the State of Connecticut and fewer early career teachers are available. There are currently two teacher retirements expected at the end of the year.

Superintendent Burke shared outside impacts on the budget, such as, inflation is up 2.7% this year; health benefits costs are up 4%; unfunded state mandates; and, a high demand for substitute teachers and contracted services causing higher costs. With regard to unfunded mandates, she shared costs for the K-3 Reading Program (\$66K); required HVAC testing (\$163K); expenses related to the new required teacher evaluation system (\$12K); and, funding a "summer" athletics season (\$72K). New initiatives in the FY26 Plus One Budget include a School Resource Officer (not yet approved by the Board), Certified Reading Interventionist, French textbooks, Leadership Stipends, Groundskeeper, and a Maintenance Technician. The special education budget was discussed and is currently at 1.82% over this year's budget and includes 4 proposed additional Teaching Assistants at the BEAR Transition Academy; 1 Teaching Assistant for the RISE Program at Kelly Lane; and 1 full-time Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst for the Alternative Learning Center at the middle and high school and the RISE Program at Kelly Lane (half of this position will be funded by the Operating Budget and the other half by a Mental Health Grant). All of the aforementioned programs keep students in the district generating savings in tuition and transportation costs.

The Quality & Diversity Fund was reviewed and Superintendent Burke stated this fund supports all school age children in Granby. Examples of some items funded are magnet and agriscience tuition, one-to-one computing and student enrichment opportunities. Next, the fund for small capital items was discussed and some of these items include fire doors and fire panels, an oil phase out study, piano repair, classroom rug replacement and existing lease payments. Priorities for FY26 were reviewed and include oil phase out at Kelly Lane and Wells Road, Wells Road School exterior, classroom rug replacement, mandated HVAC testing, and existing lease payments. CPPAC (large capital needs) includes items, such as, safety and security districtwide, track turf and field replacement; parking lot repairs, HVAC controls and roof top units, as well as sprinkler system upgrades and fire door replacement. Superintendent Burke shared that the Plus One Budget is currently coming in at 5.67% which meets the district's contractual obligations; funds special education requirements; supports unfunded mandates; and maintains curriculum and instruction needs. She shared that if no new initiatives were funded, the budget increase would be 3.49%. If the Board would like to go lower than 5.67% then \$634K would need to be cut to get to 4%; \$825K cut to get to 3.5% and a little over \$1M

cut to get to 3%. Next steps and upcoming important dates in the budget process were shared. Any questions should be sent to Linda Powell by Monday, January 6th. At the next BOE Meeting on January 15th, the Board will need to have a Q&A as well as approve the budget the same evening. Superintendent Burke stated she can answer general questions this evening.

Board Chair Monica Logan thanked the administrative team as well as Nickie Stevenson, Director of Finance & Operations, for their work on the budget. She inquired if there is any savings included for a potential scheduling adjustment with the middle school/high school and Superintendent Burke stated, yes, she does anticipate approximately an 0.8 FTE teacher may be saved with the shared schedule but this is very, very preliminary. Additionally, because of reduced enrollment, there will be one less section in Grade 3 and a reduction of one section in Grade 1. Donna Nolan inquired about the per pupil expenditure comparison with other districts. This will be presented in the budget presentation once the state calculates these numbers. Another question was asked about how many students are anticipated to attend the BEAR academy next year and no contracts have been signed yet; however, 3-4 students from other towns have visited and toured the program. Monica Logan reminded all Board members to submit questions to Linda Powell by January 6th.

VII. Business Requiring Action

VII.A. Minutes

MOTION #1: A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Ali Zafar that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the November 21, 2024 Special Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed with one abstention (Karen Richmond-Godard) at 8:13 p.m.

MOTION #2: A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Ali Zafar that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the December 4, 2024 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:13 p.m.

VII.B. Second Reading and Approval of 2025-2026 School Calendar

The Board discussed the approval of the 2025-2026 school calendar. Superintendent Burke stated data was shared with the Board around questions from the last Board Meeting including start dates for school the last several years as well as other religious holidays during the year. Discussion ensued about adding an additional Jewish holiday; however, the Board decided to leave the calendar as presented. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education adopt the 2025-2026 school calendar as presented. This motion passed with one opposed vote (David Peling) at 8:25 p.m.

VIII. Committee Reports

VIII.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

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

VIII.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Donna Nolan reported this subcommittee met this evening to discuss the Budget Expense Report and approved it; discussed consideration of bussing contract as to whether to continue the process and contract which is up in 2027; thanked Nickie for saving over \$200K in the current bussing contract; received an update on IT services with the Town and reviewed a revised MOU with regard to the sharing of services; and, submission to the State for reimbursement of the middle school roof.

VIII.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VIII.B.1. CREC/CABE

Monica Logan stated nothing to report.

VIII.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Liz Barlow reported GEF has not met but will meet next month.

VIII.C. Calendar of Events

There is no meeting on January 1st due to the holiday. The next Board Meeting is January 15th.

VIII.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VIII.E. Action Items

1) Board members should get any questions on the Plus One Budget emailed to Superintendent Burke and Linda Powell by Monday, January 6th and 2) Data on per pupil expenditure.


IX. Superintendent's Report

- Thank you to all of the schools who participated in the CCMC PJ Day. Over \$2,600 was raised.
- Thank you to the High School Chamber Singers for performing at the Men's and Women's Senior Breakfasts.
- Thank you to the Lions Club for hosting the annual holiday party. Leo Club students volunteered and a few students from Kelly and Wells participated.
- There will be an early release this Friday.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by David Peling and seconded by Donna Nolan that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth H. Barlow".

Elizabeth H. Barlow
Board Secretary