

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes

Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Kristina Gilton, Monica Logan, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Whitney Sanzo, Sarah Thrall, and Tess Bajek (Student Representative)

Absent Board Members: Rosemarie Weber and Chase Alexander (Student Representative)

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

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Chairman's Corner

Sarah Thrall, Board Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Thrall provided an update on the superintendent search and thanked Dr. Mary Broderick from CABA Search Services for leading the search and organizing 9 different focus groups. A survey is also available to the public and is due on March 24th. Ms. Thrall shared that at the April 5th Board of Education Meeting, Dr. Broderick will be present to give feedback from the focus groups and surveys and provide a leadership profile. Applications for a new superintendent are due by April 7th. Ms. Thrall thanked Board members for serving on the Search Committee.

I.B. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman welcomed everyone in attendance, online as well as on GCTV.
- Congratulations to Avery Pradhan for moving on to the state finals for the Daughters of the American Revolution Essay Contest. Also, congratulations to Michaela Ashe as a 3rd place winner.
- The District has used 3 snow days thus far and, currently, the last day of school will be Wednesday, June 14th. Two emergency days remain. As voted on at the last meeting, high school graduation will be held on Friday, June 9th. An updated calendar can be found on the website.
- Dr. Grossman thanked the Board for their participation in last week's budget workshop and stated tonight the budget will continue to be discussed in the hope of voting on it and bringing it to the Board of Finance Meeting on March 27th.
- The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on April 5th.

I.C. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, provided updates from the Assistant Superintendent's office and provided a recap on the professional development day on Friday stating that the day was broken down into 3 sections: 1) building time related to each school's initiatives in their Continuous Improvement Plan, i.e., the high school worked on their professional learning groups on topics such as grading, social/emotional learning, school aesthetics, etc.; 2) choice sessions with more than 10 options for teachers to choose from, i.e., using an equity lens when planning, self-study on executive function, transition workshop, etc. and choices were in the form of presentations, work groups or self-studies; and, 3) the day ended in K-12 vertical teams where all teachers got together to look at science for example. Feedback was collected at the end of day with very positive comments and great suggestions. Sarah Thrall inquired what the most popular session was and Ms. Parsons stated the two most popular sessions were the ones on executive functioning and one where a social worker guest speaker came in to speak about bringing passion to your daily work.

I.D. Student Representative Reports

- Tess Bajek stated tonight is the NHS Volleyball Tournament and Chase Alexander is playing on a team and is not present this evening. She also shared that a Chick-fil-A food truck was there tonight and will be at the play on Friday night as well as other events as a fundraiser for the Class of 2023.
- The high school play, *Little Shop of Horrors* will be held this Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- The NHS Empty Bowls Fundraiser will be held on Friday March 24th.
- A Glow Dance will be held on March 25th
- Students are excited for the Boston field trip on Friday, March 31st.
- Spring break is coming up and Senior Prom will be held on May 19th.
- Winter sports are coming to an end and spring sports have been meeting for the upcoming season with captain practices.

I.E. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the February statement of accounts and stated the full-year forecast shows an overbudget condition of \$789K which is worse than the previous month by \$135K. The favorable forecast for regular education of \$23K is \$12K worse than the previous month. Projected savings in salaries and benefits, transportation, supplies, textbooks, legal services, communications, conference and travel, and library expenses offset the overbudget condition in purchased instructional services, specifically substitutes, electricity and software. The District deadline for purchase orders is today, March 15th, and many adjustments to the FY23 forecast have been calculated based on information already received. Special education is overbudget \$812K which is \$123K worse than last month primarily due to out-of-district tuition and transportation. Revenue to the town is projected to be favorable \$642K which is \$209 better than last month. The full-year forecast shows \$551K favorable in the Special Education Excess Cost Grant and \$91K favorable in revenues to the town including regular and special education tuition. The Excess Cost Grant calculation includes an increase from 72% to 88% based on recent changes in legislation. The Quality & Diversity Fund is stable and trending positive for this year and the five-year forecast. Donna Nolan stated the Finance Subcommittee reviewed the Statement of Accounts for February and approved it this evening.

II. Public Comment

Bill Regan stated according to the Freedom of Information Act, the Board can add an item to its agenda if two-thirds of the Board agrees to do so. Mr. Regan commented on double dipping where 139 Granby students or so attend vo-ag or technical schools and are counted in the overall student population which affects funding. Mr. Regan inquired if the state also pays for those schools, then how does the double funding work and where does that money go. Sarah Thrall informed Mr. Regan that the Board cannot answer that question during public comment; however, will address it during the budget portion of our agenda this evening.

Judy Baum-Baron commented there is a lot of commentary online recently about bullying in the Granby school system. She stated something should be done and perhaps a separate town meeting can be held to discuss why some students are not getting treated fairly and given access to education in a safe atmosphere. She feels things are not being dealt with which is very bothersome to her. She shared that has two children in the middle school.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Whitney Sanzo that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed unanimously at 7:18 p.m.

IV. Old Business

IV.A. FY24 Budget Discussion/Approval

The Board continued to discuss the FY24 Budget and considered a motion to approve the budget. Ms. Thrall stated a budget workshop was held last week where approximately 40 questions were asked and answered by administration. If the Board approves the budget this evening, it will become the Board of Education Budget. Dr. Grossman reminded the Board that the FY24 Administrative Budget is at a 4.88% increase over the FY23 Budget which is down from the Plus One Budget of 5.49%. Dr. Grossman stated the Board of Finance (BOF) challenged the BOE to try to come up with an idea or program and think of things differently and administration came up with the Post-Secondary Transition Program which will be a projected savings of \$127K. Additionally, savings were also found in retirements, out-of-district special education tuition as well as fuel. Dr. Grossman reminded the Board that just to roll over the budget, the increase would be 4.56% and the increase is 4.88% which is a 0.32% increase or approximately \$45K. He stated this budget meets the Board's goals through the strategic plan as well as administrative priorities. Dr. Grossman stated that the question asked by a community member can be answered by Anna Robbins this evening. Ms. Robbins stated that the per pupil expenditure (PPE) is calculated from the Granby Public Schools' expenses with some adjustments (additions/subtractions) that are not considered in the PPE. It is then divided by 1,725 students and comes out to a cost of \$18,897 per student. Some students living in Granby that do not attend the Granby schools, are not taken into consideration in our PPE; however, we do pay magnet school tuition. Granby also has students who attend Oliver Wolcott and Suffield Vo-Ag. We pay for Suffield Vo-ag but not for Oliver Wolcott. Sarah Thrall inquired if the question was answered. Bill Regan inquired if the tuition is paid for Suffield Vo-ag is that funding reimbursable. Dr. Grossman stated there is a bill currently in the legislature that proposes to increase the Education Cost Share to districts because when magnet schools were created, they were meant to be funded by the state but are now being funded by districts. Dr. Grossman stated he

was told that the bill has bi-partisan support and, if passed, this could bring additional revenue to the town of approximately \$200K.

Dr. Grossman stated, overall, he feels very comfortable proposing a 4.88% budget increase to the Board of Education. Ms. Thrall stated in response to Ms. Baum-Baron's questions regarding social/emotional learning (SEL), that this was touched upon at the budget workshop. Dr. Grossman stated he would have Jennifer Parsons speak on this and Ms. Parsons shared that throughout COVID, positions were added utilizing ESSER Grant funding to support SEL and what is being asked for in the FY24 budget is to move these positions to the operating budget, such as, a half-time Social Worker, Board Certified Behavior Analyst to work on behaviors of students; and, a 0.6 FTE Teaching Assistant to support our Counseling and Academic Support Center to help support significant SEL events in their life transition back to the high school after being out for a period of time as well as students who are chronically absent or truant. Ms. Parsons shared the current student support positions in each school are as follows: 1 School Psychologist and 1 Social Worker at each of the elementary schools; 1 School Psychologist, 1 Social Worker and 2 School Counselors at the middle school; and, 2 School Psychologists, 1.5 Social Workers, and 3 School Counselors at the high school. She also shared that a grant was submitted to the State but Granby did not receive funding due to one of the characteristics of staffing levels and Granby was well within the recommended range.

Ms. Thrall opened up a roundtable discussion on the budget for any further questions. Whitney Sanzo stated there have been a lot of questions and discussions and she feels the budget should be supported at this time. David Peling stated he supports the budget as presented. Donna Nolan stated her questions were answered and appreciates the time and effort put into answering the Board's questions. Monica Logan stated she supports the budget and appreciates the time and effort as well. Kristina Gilton stated the Board did their due diligence making sure the students of Granby are supported in a financially responsible way and she supports this budget. Sarah Thrall stated Rosemarie Weber, who is not present this evening, also supports the budget. Mr. Al Wilke, BOF member, commented the BOE has always been supportive of the guidelines set by the BOF and this year is no exception. He complimented Dr. Grossman, Anna Robbins and her support staff as well as the Board and stated he is very pleased to join the BOE in support of the budget. Sarah Thrall stated it is a lean budget which is also fiscally responsible.

A motion was made by Sarah Thrall and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education adopt the FY24 Board of Education Budget which is an increase of 4.88% over the FY23 Budget. This motion passed unanimously at 7:36 p.m.

IV.B. Second Reading and Approval of Policy 5141.4 - Report of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 5141.4, Report of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault, to the Board for a second reading and approval. David Peling stated he received no comments and this policy includes new language around mandated training. A motion was made by David Peling and seconded by Donna Nolan that the Granby Board of Education adopt Policy 5141.4, Report of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault, as recommended by the Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee. This motion passed unanimously at 7:37 p.m.

IV.C. Second Reading and Approval of Policy 5145.511 - Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended new Policy 5145.511, Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program, to the Board for a second reading and approval. David Peling stated he received no comments on this policy. A motion was made by David Peling and seconded by Kristina Gilton that the Granby Board of Education adopt Policy 5145.511, Sexual Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault, as recommended by the Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee. This motion passed unanimously at 7:38p.m.

V. New Business

V.A. First Reading of Policy 5131.911 - Bullying

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended revised Policy 5131.911, Bullying, to the Board for a first reading. David Peling stated this policy is being revised to reflect a single act of bullying constitutes bullying as opposed to multiple acts. Ms. Parsons also shared the revision is due to statutory changes and updates with regard to the definition of bullying where any bullying incident

is comparing an act to this definition. She stated it is a comprehensive policy and is a change in legislative language. This policy will go to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

Approved minutes attached to the packet.

VI.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Donna Nolan stated the statement of accounts was discussed including the overbudget condition in special education as well as the increased cost in electricity and the need to approach the Board of Finance for additional funding at the end of the year. The town will receive a refund from some of the overbudget amount due to the Excess Cost Grant adjustment. Additionally, there was a Building Committee update with regard to the roof and moving forward. Met with the architect and the current plan is to go to bid on March 24th. Also received a Food Service update. Free and reduced lunch began again in March and the program is currently in the black which is good news.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Sarah Thrall stated she attended the CREC meeting and they are in the middle of their budget which was reviewed. The Executive Director of CREC reported that the CREC family has grown and they have gone from 1,000 to 2,500 teachers. The CREC Annual Meeting will be held on May 17th.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Whitney Sanzo reported the GEF will meet on Monday evening and the GranBee will be held on April 28th.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Sarah Thrall stated there is a Middle School PAC Meeting which was rescheduled to March 30th where social/emotional learning will be addressed. Ms. Thrall also shared that there is no need for the BOE Budget Workshop on March 22nd and there are early releases next week for conferences.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

Kristina Gilton stated the Class of 2024 will have Chick-fil-A food truck at the high school prior to the play on Friday night from 4-7 p.m. and will also do a few other high school events. Sarah Thrall also shared the Granby Grunts Robotics team is competing this coming weekend at Westfield State.

VI.E. Action Items

Donna Nolan stated either Jennifer Parsons or Principal Wrye will contact Ms. Baum-Baron concerning her public comment.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Monica Logan that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Donna Nolan
Board Secretary