

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Draft Minutes
Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Present Board Members: Liz Barlow, Monica Logan, Heather Lombardo, Donna Nolan, David Peling, Karen Richmond-Godard, and Ali Zafar

Absent Board Members: Student Representatives Sofia Brenson and Katie O'Neill

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. She also welcomed Police Chief Sansom and Captain LaFlamme and thanked them for joining us again for the School Resource Officer Program presentation as well as special guest, Sergeant Todd Kushman, from the Simsbury Police Department. Ms. Logan also spoke about all of the changes recently in the news and stated the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent are working within the community and within the state with regard to any information that may impact Granby. Granby is staying the course and will continue to handle things as normal. If anything becomes relevant, appropriate communications will be sent out.

III. Public Comment

Mike Kramarenko, Notch Road, Granby, voiced his concerns regarding student safety and security and thanked the Board for their communication on the recent lockdown incident stating he understands that detailed follow-up communication cannot always be sent regarding an incident. He also shared that the Ellington Board of Education wrote letters to Governor Lamont promoting healthier food options for students in school and suggested that Granby may want to do the same.

Julie Haefner, West Granby, stated she just wanted to comment about healthy foods in schools and informed the Board of local Farm-to-School Grants that can be sought out. She also thanked the Board and Police Department for presenting the SRO Program for Granby.

IV. Student Representative Reports

There were no student representative reports this evening.

V. Reports and Discussion

V.A. FY26 Small Capital Expenditures

Mr. Christopher DeGray, Director of Facilities, provided additional information about the small capital expenditures in the FY26 Budget, specifically indoor air quality (IAQ) and HVAC testing as well as oil tank removal. He informed the Board about the parameters the state has set around the IAQ and HVAC testing. Boards of Education are required to conduct an HVAC assessment for each school building and the original deadline was for last January but this could not be met and the deadline was moved to 2025 which also could not be met. The new deadline is June 30, 2031 and many districts are testing one school per year. IAQ testing needs to be conducted annually. Mr. DeGray stated he has spoken with vendors and started to receive quotes on this work. There is a lot of fluctuation in pricing from \$50K up to \$200K. He stated that the HVAC testing is more extensive. Vendors currently being contacted have availability over the summer to collect the necessary data. Monica Logan shared that the state is mandating this testing and the funding for it is borne by the district. Ali Zafar inquired how long the testing takes and Mr. DeGray stated it would take 3-4 days per school. David Peling inquired if there would be any additional expenses incurred after the testing and Mr. DeGray stated, yes, this is very possible and the district should be strategic to allow for amendments. Heather Lombardo inquired if there was any data available from schools who performed testing this year. Mr. DeGray stated any results would be specific to buildings, i.e., old buildings vs. new

buildings. He stated this process will need to be very transparent and will be a learning process for everyone. Liz Barlow inquired if the Department of Administrative Services was offering grants for this testing as noted in the bill. Superintendent Burke stated no concrete information is available yet as to grants but the district will watch this very closely and take advantage of any potential grants.

With regard to the replacement of the oil tanks at Kelly Lane and Wells Road, the tank removal is approximately \$6K; however, there are many other costs including the need for heavy equipment to remove the tanks; soil testing; temporary fencing; asphalt gravel subgrade; as well as installation of an above-ground tank. This project will be more transparent as we go along. Mr. DeGray emphasized that this project is being done in order to realize energy savings as propane is much cheaper than oil.

VI. Business Requiring Action

VI.A. School Resource Officer Program Presentation and Approval

Superintendent Cheri Burke, along with Police Chief Scott Sansom and Captain Kurt LaFlamme, provided an update to their original presentation regarding a School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

Superintendent Burke stated she would like to take a deeper dive into the program this evening and review the results of the survey. She went on to state there were a number of questions raised in the survey related to the duties of a SRO. The SRO would provide educational presentations on law enforcement, safety and other related topics; conduct investigations into any crimes occurring on school property; and, develop strategies for preventing and managing safety risks. Other questions raised were around an SRO being involved in discipline matters. Superintendent Burke stated an SRO is not responsible for school discipline, enforcing school rules/policies, leading searches of students, etc. A Graduated Response Agreement will be created with regard to the position and this document will be very transparent. She also mentioned training that will occur with staff. Sergeant Todd Kushman from the Simsbury Police Department and former SRO for Simsbury Public Schools shared some of his experiences while employed as an SRO and expressed that he was not involved in discipline; however, encouraged students to follow school rules and policies. He also shared he was not involved in searches of students, lockers or backpacks or investigating bullying incidents. He shared that, unfortunately, results of what an SRO prevents on a daily basis cannot be measured, as much of the prevention work is related to relationships and connections built with students and families. He also shared that an SRO works with Administration to investigate potential crimes. Superintendent Burke inquired about the hiring of one SRO and what can be shared about dividing time across multiple buildings. Sergeant Kushman stated it is not an easy task to cover multiple buildings. As an example, the school year can start out with bus safety programs; internet safety programs; or community service projects. Another good thing to do is to drop in to lunch waves in the cafeteria as well as recess. There is a tremendous value in knowing the elementary kids when they move up to the middle and high schools.

Superintendent Burke continued the presentation and shared results of the survey stating 80% of survey takers were in favor of an SRO; 79% were in favor of an SRO being funded in the budget; and, 81.3% believed an SRO would be beneficial for Granby Public Schools. The remainder of the survey was open-ended feedback, which Mrs. Powell helpfully sorted and organized. Positive feedback included enhanced school safety and security; positive relationships; alignment with surrounding districts; and the long-term benefit for Granby. There were also those who were in favor who had concerns over the cost and budget impacts; the need for additional mental health supports; fears of racial profiling; and having an armed officer in a school setting. Superintendent Burke reviewed some of the questions raised by the survey, such as, funding for the position; if the salary is comparable to an average patrol officer; what other expenses can be trimmed to offset the cost; and, have alternative security measures been considered. With regard to the cost of an SRO, the salary would be approximately \$98K and benefits (including health care, pension, life insurance, long-term disability, and payroll taxes) would be an

additional \$60K for a total cost of \$158K. Other questions were raised around the duties and responsibilities of an SRO; justification and effectiveness; and mental health.

Monica Logan thanked Chief Sansom, Captain LaFlamme and Sergeant Kushman for attending this evening. Donna Nolan inquired if the Plus One Budget will need to be revised and Superintendent Burke stated, no; however, the adjusted cost of the SRO will be present in the Superintendent's proposed budget. David Peling stated as a teacher in a school district that has an SRO, he is in favor of this program. Liz Barlow stated she struggles with the tight budget climate we are currently in and is frustrated the Board is asked to entirely fund this position, potentially cutting other needed positions in the budget.

A motion was made by Heather Lombardo and seconded by David Peling that the Granby Board of Education approve a School Resource Officer Program for Granby Public Schools. This motion passed with one abstention (Liz Barlow) at 8:24 p.m. Superintendent Burke stated she will now get to work on the budget impact to the budget and how to make this work and also make the priorities come to fruition. She thanked the Board stating this is a big decision as well as an important one for Granby Public Schools. Monica Logan stated she initially felt differently about this program and has since been educated about the benefits and how the program can work for Granby and every student.

VI.B. Minutes

A motion was made by Heather Lombardo and seconded by Donna Nolan that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the January 15, 2025 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed with one abstention (Karen Richmond Godard) at 8:27 p.m.

VII. Committee Reports

VII.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

Karen Richmond Godard reported that Assistant Superintendent Jennifer Parsons shared an update on the state's new Teacher Evaluation Plan and the changes this year resulted in more meaningful conversations between administrators and educators; received an update on student assessment data; and, the Wellness Committee organized a wellness day last week for all staff. Also received an update on the Scheduling Committee including a timeline and overview on the middle school/high school scheduling process and shared next steps and received an update on upcoming policy revisions.

VII.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

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

VII.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VII.B.1. CREC/CABE

There was nothing to report for CREC/CABE.

VII.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Liz Barlow shared that the GEF met last week. A substantial grant was awarded for a student-led designed courtyard project at Wells Road. There are two new members of the GEF Board, including Rosemarie Weber. Ms. Barlow also shared that planning for the Granbee is in full swing and the GEF is looking for event sponsors, teams and auction items.

VII.C. Calendar of Events

The calendar of events is as presented.

VII.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VII.E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

- Celebrations for the 100th day of school are ongoing this week.
- Mrs. Bava returned to Kelly Lane on Monday. Thank you to Meghan Mazzei for assisting the district during her absence.
- This week is National School Counselors Week and next week is Random Acts of Kindness Week
- Kindergarten registration is open and parents have begun registering for the fall.
- The CABA Legislative Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, February 11th at the State Capitol. Reach out to Linda Powell if you would like to attend.
- Two Superintendent Community Conversations will be held via Zoom on Thursday, February 20th at 9am and Thursday, February 27th at 6 pm to learn more about the budget process or other educational issues.
- The next Board of Education Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 19th. The Superintendent's Proposed FY26 Budget will be presented at the March 5th Board of Education Meeting.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Ali Zafar that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Granby Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Barlow
Board Secretary