

**Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 19, 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, Ali Zafar, and Katie O'Neill (Student Representative)

Absent Board Members: Sofia Brenson (Student Representative)

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

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

**II. Chairperson's Report**

Board Chair Logan stated there is a change in the order of the agenda tonight with Public Comment being moved to after the budget presentation. She thanked all who attended the budget workshop last week on Zoom and in person stating people were very engaged, involved and thoughtful and she appreciated the dialogue and to hear insights. She also shared that *Legally Blonde* was this past weekend and, although she was not able to attend, she heard it went very well. Heather Lombardo stated she attended the play and it was truly amazing and everyone did a great job.

**III. Student Representative Reports**

- Katie O'Neill stated an attendance record was set on Saturday night for all the musicals.
- Spring voter registration for seniors was held during Advisory this week.
- A Jon-A-Thon club held a Leprechaun Trot during Advisory to raise money for CCMC.
- A blood drive will be held tomorrow in the Community Gym.
- The spring fling dance will be held on Friday night.
- Quarter 4 begins on March 25<sup>th</sup>.
- SAT Day will be held next Wednesday.
- Next Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Empty Bowls fundraiser to benefit Granby and Hartland food banks will be held in the cafeteria from 5-8.
- Spring sports have not officially started but scrimmages are being held for most teams.

**IV. Reports and Discussion**

**IV.A. Director of Finance & Operations Report**

Ms. Nickie Stevenson, Director of Operations & Finance, presented the February 2025 Budget Expense Report and stated personnel and program account expenditures remain stable. The available balance in the technology support personnel is due to the anticipated receipt of ARPA Grant funds from the Town to offset shared expenditures. Special education expenses continue to fluctuate and will continue to be monitored for potential shifts and changes. The Q&D Fund remains consistent and the expectation is to end the year with a positive balance. Revenue to the town is anticipated to increase by \$183,730 due to the additional \$40M investment by the State of Connecticut for special education expenses incurred by school districts for the FY25 school year. Donna Nolan stated the Finance Subcommittee reviewed and approved the Budget Expense Report this evening. A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Karen Richmond-Godard that the Granby Board of Education approve the February 2025 Budget Expense Report. This motion passed unanimously at 7:08 p.m.

**IV.B. First Reading of Revised Policy 4112.5/4212.5 - Security Check/Fingerprinting/Criminal Justice Information**

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended Revised Policy 4112.5/4212.5, Security Check/Fingerprinting/Criminal Justice Information, to the Board for a first reading. Assistant Superintendent, Jennifer Parsons, stated this policy addresses the obligation and responsibility to ensure background checks for staff and volunteers and following up with fingerprinting and background checks. It was a general cleanup of the language. Superintendent Burke added that

everyone employed by the District or volunteers in the District must go through this process. This policy will return to the Board for a second reading and approval at the next meeting.

## **V. Business Requiring Action**

### **V.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 March 5, 2025 Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 7:10 p.m.

**MOTION #2:** A motion was made by Donna Nolan and seconded by Karen Richmond-Godard that the Granby Board of Education approve the minutes from the March 12, 2025 Board of Education Budget Workshop. This motion passed at 7:11 p.m. with one abstention (A. Zafar).

## **V. Business Requiring Action**

### **V.B. FY26 Budget Discussion/Approval**

The Board continued its discussion on the FY26 Superintendent's Proposed Budget, which reflected changes presented at the BOE Budget Workshop on March 12, 2025. Superintendent Burke stated she will give a high-level view of the budget in order to move the budget to the next phase to the Board of Finance on Monday evening. The goals for tonight's meeting are to answer additional questions from the Board; review capital requests; discuss how to add back in a 1.0 FTE for a potential Kindergarten Teacher and maintain the budget at a 3.41% increase. She reviewed a graphic from the Budget Workshop which showed shifts in funding sources to allow for the SRO position as well as the Library Media Specialist. Although the percentage of the budget increased slightly, there is no impact to taxpayers. Questions from the Board were reviewed. Director of Finance & Operations, Nickie Stevenson, fielded a question regarding the status of Granby's health insurance fund and if the balance of the fund was in a good place. She explained that the BOE expenditures/rates were in good standing and the health insurance allocation rates only went up 2.9% for FY26. Another question regarding federal funding was raised and what is the strategy if funds are lost in FY26. Ms. Stevenson stated the District's projected revenue from Federal Grants for FY26 is \$627,204 and there is currently no strategy by the BOE to offset these reductions. Board Chair Logan also shared it is a "wait and see" type of situation and that she attends meetings with other Board Chairs around the State and no one is strategizing at this point. Superintendent Burke reviewed a question raised regarding the impact of postponing the laptop purchases. She shared the impact would be that teachers will be using 5-6-year-old laptops which are out of warranty; there will be an increased cost of repair; devices will need to be replaced in FY27; and the replacement schedule for others will also be extended.

Next, Superintendent Burke reviewed Capital Funding for Transportation and Equipment; Building and Maintenance Projects; and Technology totaling \$1,000,000 stating there is nothing new being purchased in transportation and equipment and the \$117,431 is to pay existing lease payments. For Technology, the \$174K for teacher laptops was removed and \$120K for existing lease payments was reallocated from Q&D to Technology Small Capital. She stated expenditures for repairs and emergency replacement remain intact. For the Building Maintenance & Improvements Projects, Mr. Chris DeGray, Director of Facilities, explained the unfunded state mandates for the HVAC Assessment and the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Testing. With regard to the IAQ testing, further conversations were held with vendors and questions asked as to what is entailed and the cost. Mr. DeGray informed the Board that he has the qualifications to oversee the IAQ testing which will save the district \$30K annually. With regard to the HVAC state mandate, a firm will be hired to provide an assessment, put information on the website, and provide a list of recommendations. There will be costs incurred after the assessment; however, companies are coming forward who are far less than the original quote provided. Mr. DeGray stated he is seeking additional quotes and will also seek out grants. One school per year will need to be done and the order of the schools will be discussed and done with common sense and keeping staff and students safe. The next capital project Mr. DeGray spoke about is the oil tank removal and conversion to propane at Kelly Lane and Wells Road at a cost of \$330K. This cost includes heavy machinery and labor. The other item discussed was the Wells Road Buttress at a cost of \$165,000. Next, Mr. DeGray spoke about the sinkholes on the track and shared that work was previously done on the track and that he took a deep dive into the report. He showed examples of a perfectly

compacted foundation for a track and then shared what is most likely currently under the track (possibly tree stumps, clay, specs of bricks, etc.) which is causing an imperfect foundation. He stated no contaminants were found and that all of the materials are organic and are degrading over time. The next capital project discussed was the middle school building. Mr. DeGray stated the building is over 30 years old and he has engaged with companies and has scheduled a visit with a team to examine the entire building and prepare a report. The report will indicate what needs to be replaced and when as well as items/areas out of code. Lastly, Safety and Security was discussed and Mr. DeGray stated there are a lot of initiatives for safety and security. He shared that CIRMA as well as the Police Department have walked through the buildings. The District continues to look at security and is looking to see what makes sense going forward. Karen Richmond-Godard inquired if the track would need to be dug up and redone and Mr. DeGray stated it would most likely be compacted then topped with top soil. Ali Zafar inquired if only a section was done would that possibly disturb another area and Mr. DeGray stated they would compact, wait a couple of days, compact some more, as well as run heavy machinery over it. A team is coming out on Tuesday free of charge to inspect the track and many of these questions will be asked.

Superintendent Burke presented a potential problem and solution to the budget. The initial proposal was to not fill 3.0 FTEs due to retirement. Trying to figure out how to find funds to support the important critical roles of the district. The budget will move forward and hopefully be accepted by the taxpayers on April 21<sup>st</sup>. She shared that the District is keeping a careful eye on Kindergarten numbers. Parents will be registering their children for Kindergarten over the next couple of months as well as into the summer. The BOE uses guidelines for class sizes. Superintendent Burke also spoke about the commitment to students at the high school wanting tech ed courses and she explained how she will be able to make up 0.6 FTE by using 0.4 FTE in Art and 0.2 in the Business Department. She concluded the presentation by sharing the slide containing the FY26 budget numbers showing the 3.41% increase.

Board Chair Logan stated prior to making a motion on the budget she will open up public comment but first opened up questions from the Board. Karen Richmond-Godard inquired if Granby's buses are leased and it was stated that buses are owned by Granby Public Schools; however, the service to run the buses is contracted out. Donna Nolan stated it is a delicate balance to come up with the best budget and she appreciates the effort. David Peling shared that he appreciates efforts to maintain the tech ed program stating it is an important piece as not every student intends to go to college.

## **VI. Public Comment**

Kevin Hobson stated he had no additional questions; however, he appreciates all the work done on the budget with the focus on the students. There is a need for the tech ed program and creative ways were found to come up with keeping the staffing as well as the challenging HVAC mandate.

KC Petruzzi, Science Teacher at the high school and President of the Granby Education Association (GEA) stated Superintendent Burke's Plus One Budget presented was forward-thinking for students, staff and the facilities. She went on to state that the Board of Finance funding guideline does not support the District's goals. As President of the GEA, she has negotiated three (3) teacher contracts and realizes the difficulty in funding services especially with less confidence in state and grant funding. She shared that regular education classroom teachers are very visible; however, it is impossible to do the job without specialists such as paraprofessionals, social workers, special education teachers. Teachers would not be able to deliver differentiated instruction to students without these specialists. Specials and elective teachers are also critical to help students find their passion. She stated that reducing these positions or programs would have a detrimental effect on all students. Going forward, investment in our schools is a shared responsibility of the community and if the community wants to pay off, long-term strategic planning is necessary. She concluded by stating that the GEA will continue to lobby for funding and she encouraged everyone in the audience to attend meetings and to vote.

Board Chair Logan stated this is a very complicated year for the budget and the Board and Administration have tried to think of creative ways going forward to solve the issues; however, she feels the budget is a

good balance between serving student needs and the financial capability at this time. A motion was made by Heather Lombardo and seconded by Liz Barlow that the Granby Board of Education adopt the FY26 Board of Education Budget as presented at 3.41%. This motion passed unanimously at 8:15 p.m. Board Chair Logan thanked the Board and feels that they came to the best solution possible.

## **VII. Committee Reports (20 min.)**

### **VII.A. Board Standing Committee Reports**

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

The approved minutes are included in the packet.

#### **VII.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities**

Donna Nolan reported this subcommittee met this evening and approved the February Budget Expense Report as well as received an update on the budget presented this evening.

### **VII.B. Other Board-Related Reports**

#### **VII.B.1. CREC/CABE**

#### **VII.B.2. Granby Education Foundation**

Liz Barlow reported the GEF met this week and GranBee planning is still underway. GEF inquired if the Board would like to sponsor a team or two either individually or as a group. She shared that GEF has given approximately \$22K this year in grants to educators and that a new grant was approved this week for a CREW Lending Library at the middle school.

### **VII.C. Calendar of Events**

Board Chair Logan highlighted the Empty Bowls fundraiser on March 28<sup>th</sup>; the Public Hearing on April 7<sup>th</sup> and the showing of *Screenagers: Growing Up in the Digital Age* from 6-8 pm on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **VII.D. Board Member Announcements**

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

### **VII.E. Action Items**

There were no action items to report.

## **VIII. Superintendent's Report**

- Superintendent Burke thanked everyone engaged in the budget process stating it is a team effort with the Boards across the town as well as the Central Office leadership team, department leaders, union leaders, and building leadership. She is proud of the work done.
- She congratulated the cast and crew of *Legally Blonde*. They did a great job.
- The budget edition of the *Vision* will be mailed to homes prior to the April 7<sup>th</sup> public hearing.
- She thanked Family & Consumer Science Teacher, Joelle Gilbert, and her Culinary Arts students who served homemade breakfast treats at the Senior Men's Breakfast last week and will serve them again at the Senior Women's Breakfast in 2 weeks.

## **IX. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Karen Richmond-Godard and seconded by Ali Zafar that the Granby Board of Education adjourn the Board of Education Meeting. This motion passed unanimously at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Barlow  
Board Secretary