

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes

April 1, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Via Teleconference/Videoconference

Present Board Members: Jenny Emery, Mark Fiorentino, Melissa Migliaccio, David Peling, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, and Brandon Webster.

Absent Board Members: Jack DeGray and Dwaritha Ramesh (Student Representatives)

Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She thanked the Board for their flexibility in this environment. She also stated, there was something that went viral about our school and students having to repeat school next year. Dr. Grossman sent out a notice that this was not a real communication. Ms. Migliaccio stated she received a call from a father who was beside himself and said he did it as a joke to his kids and that he feels sick about it. He stated he teaches his kids that when they do something wrong and they know it's wrong, they need to apologize. He said it was meant to stay in the four walls of his home and to please relay his apologies to the Board and to Dr. Grossman. Melissa stated he was an honest, upstanding person and this is a lesson for our kids too.

I. Administrative Reports

I.A. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman introduced Marian Hourigan, the new Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools.
- The district is doing distance learning and is very cognizant of the needs this is having on our families and students and is keeping a close eye on what is happening.
- The Washington, DC and Nature's Classroom trips were cancelled. These were very tough decisions.
- For high school seniors, there are many momentous occasions which are very important to them, such as, graduation, prom and the senior outing. Dr. Grossman has asked Mr. Dunn to put a committee together to talk about senior activities and work with the senior class and advisors. A message went out to senior class in hopes to have these activities. Prom was moved to the latest possible date in June (Monday, June 15th) and the senior outing will be moved as well. It is Dr. Grossman's hope that we will get back into school but also mark these moments as important.
- In constant communication with the Town Manager and Emergency Management Director
- The district will observe the April Break (April 10-17).
- All testing is waived including SATs by the Commissioner of Education. In the future, testing calendars will have to be adjusted. Dr. Grossman stated that *any* school closure communication will be sent out by his office. Please do not always believe the media. Currently, through the Governor's Executive Order, schools will be closed through at least April 20th.
- Congratulations to student Brian Rooney, 8th grade, who placed Top 3 in future problem solving.
- Middle School Principal search second round interviews were completed yesterday. A candidate will be introduced to the Board on April 22nd as the next principal of GMMS.
- Completed the Vision which will be delivered next week with the town budget edition.
- Dr. Grossman stated he appreciates all of the hard work that everyone has done for the budget. The BOF approved budget for 2.92% which will mean a 0% tax increase to the tax payers of Granby as the town will use the general fund balance to accomplish this. This will go to the Town Public Hearing on April 13th.
- Thank you to Anna Robbins for all of her work as we received communication from the state granting the approval for funding the referendum project of the middle school roof.
- Thank you to the Board and community for being very supportive of the of the teachers and the administrations during this difficult time.

Jenny Emery echoed the positive feedback stating she has been in touch with parents for a number of reasons and parents have stated how seamless the move was to distance learning.

I.B. Student Representative Reports

There were no student representative reports this evening.

I.C. Teaching & Learning

Ms. Marian Hourigan, Interim Assistant Superintendent, reviewed highlights of the District Learning Plan for Granby Public School with the Board. She stated in the 2-1/2 weeks she has been in Granby, she has primarily focused on implementing Distance Learning and has worked hard with the administrative team and teachers. For PK-5 students who have not had Chromebooks, a lesson template was created for them as well as posted on the parent resource page. She stated Coaches were instrumental in getting this up and running. Ms. Hourigan stated she has also worked with the Summer School Director to talk about what summer school might look like this year. Students may need more intensive summer school this year. She has attended faculty meetings on distance learning for troubleshooting issues and stated a policy will need to be created for distance learning and thus far a resource site for parents, a survey about distance learning and a FAQ document for parents have been created.

Melissa Migliaccio inquired specifically about how K-5 students and teachers are doing with Distance Learning. Ms. Hourigan stated they are doing very well and in Grades 3-5 she has received a lot of positive comments as students are more comfortable with technology and able to access the lessons. PK-2 is moving along and parents are assisting students get on to the SeeSaw platform. Ms. Hourigan stated it is certainly a learning curve for teachers as well; however, teachers have been phenomenal and rising to the occasion to engage students and keep them learning the curriculum.

Rosemarie Weber inquired about the different scenarios for summer school and different levels of remediation that may be needed. She stated summer school is fee-based for most students who attend but if summer school will be used for remediation the district would have to make sure it is not essentially charging for public education. Ms. Hourigan stated the district is looking at not having it be fee-based if it will be a remedial program. Dr. Grossman stated this can be one of those instances where we will go over budget. The district wants to continue with the enrichment program for summer school; however, there may be a need to have 2 and 3 sections for regular summer school and this could be a funding issue. He stated meetings about summer school have begun early and the district is looking at different scenarios for this year.

Jenny Emery inquired about how students who take advantage of off-campus like Asnuntuck and magnet schools and how that is being filled at this time as well as any feedback he has received from the PTO especially after their specific outreach to parents. Dr. Grossman stated with regard to the magnet schools, that is CREC's responsibility. As far as Asnuntuck students, he stated since it is a college course, he assumes they are still working with the students and students have already said they spoke to their teachers and they would have work to do. With regard to K-5 parents, Dr. Grossman stated it is a difficult situation for them right now and that a survey about Distance Learning will be sent to all parents tomorrow. He informed the Board the PTO is doing exciting morale boosters for teachers and for students and families. Dr. Grossman stated he will continue discussions with the PTO Board to make sure the district is servicing children to the highest level. He stated he will also be reaching out to SEPTO (Special Education PTO) Board. Brandon Webster inquired if there has been any feedback from the Special Education Department and Dr. Grossman stated there are cases where parents are very excited with the services they are receiving because case managers have reached out to them via phone and Google Hangout.

II. Public Comment

There were no public comments this evening.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Jenny Emery to adopt the minutes from the March 18, 2020 Board of Education Meeting. An amendment to add Mark Fiorentino as present will be made. This motion passed with the noted amendment unanimously at 7:32 p.m.

IV. Old Business

IV.A. FY21 Budget Update

Dr. Jordan Grossman provided an update on the FY21 Board of Education Budget stating the BOF held a Special Meeting on Monday night and all members from the BOE attended virtually. Melissa Migliaccio stated she was pleased with comments from BOF to the BOE and that the standing still number was close to the actual budget moved forward. She stated it is still unclear to her given the Governor's Executive Order whether there will be a refer vote because the Governor has empowered towns with the abilities to pass their budgets without a vote. Dr. Grossman stated Melissa Migliaccio did a phenomenal job presenting the budget. He stated it is a fiscally responsible budget and he wished the entire Board could have been but feels that virtually there was a united front. The Town Public Hearing will be held virtually via Zoom and Ms. Migliaccio will be present virtually on Monday, April 13th.

V. New Business

V.A. Policy 6172.6 - Distance Learning

Sarah Thrall stated the Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee met this evening and reviewed this policy and, given the nature of everything changing day-to-day may and other things which may need to be added, it was decided to keep this policy in Subcommittee and discuss it at the next meeting in May. Ms. Thrall stated there were great questions on the policy and there is no rush to adopt it at this time as the Governor's waiver is in place.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

Sarah Thrall stated this Subcommittee met this evening and had a pretty robust agenda. Marian Hourigan was introduced to the Subcommittee and started her position as Interim Assistant Superintendent with no school in session on her first day. Ms. Hourigan presented her monthly report which mostly highlighted Distance Learning, preparing teachers and getting curriculum ready; summer school; Teacher of the Year; two policies were reviewed and sent to the full Board for approval; a policy on Distance Learning was reviewed but will stay in Subcommittee; approved a new online vocabulary text; update on the work of the Granby Equity Team who has not been able to meet in person but they are putting a plan in place so they can continue to meet.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Mark Fiorentino stated CREC is not meeting virtually yet. Melissa Migliaccio stated she has been so impressed with CABE's communications thus far. Their staff attorney has been on top of every Executive Order and it is very valuable to be a member of CABE. She will forward this communication to the Board.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

Melissa Migliaccio stated the Granbee was cancelled which was reported at the last meeting. Kim Becker reached out to Jenny Emey and herself offering the foundation's help in other areas especially with regard to distance learning. Ms. Migliaccio stated she did a PayPal to GEF as they are huge part of what we do and she encouraged all Board members to do the same.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Melissa Migliaccio stated everything is cancelled and to stay home. She stated the Board is conducting business and doing it safely and she asked the Board to encourage attendance to the virtual meetings as best as possible.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

Dave Peling inquired how the Board Zoom meetings are advertised. Ms. Migliaccio stated directions are posted on the website as well as on the invite when the agenda is sent out. With regard to the Town Public Hearing, the BOE will reach out to the town and BOF to see if they need assistance.

Melissa Migliaccio thanked Dr. Grossman for his videos to the students stating they have been well received. She also asked Dr. Grossman to pass on to the technology team how grateful the Board is for their service during this time.

VI.E. Action Items

1) Request CABA e-mails for Brandon Webster and David Peling.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

A motion was made by Melissa Migliaccio and seconded by David Peling to adjourn the meeting and enter into an executive session to discuss a collective bargaining agreement. This motion passed unanimously at 7:54 p.m.

The Executive Session adjourned at approximately 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber
Board Secretary