

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Approved Minutes
September 16, 2020 7:00 p.m.
High School Auditorium

Present Board Members: Jenny Emery (via Zoom), Mark Fiorentino, Melissa Migliaccio, David Peling, Sarah Thrall, Rosemarie Weber, Brandon Webster (via Zoom), and Jack DeGray and Jacob Scotto (Student Representatives)

Absent Board Members: N/A

Melissa Migliaccio called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

I.A. Chairman's Corner

Melissa Migliaccio, Board Chair, shared opening remarks and stated there has been a tremendous amount of resources devoted to the safe reopening of our schools. Thank you to custodians, secretaries, teaching assistants, nurses, and Central Services' staff who have performed the impossible. The culmination of that and our website *Stronger Together* says everything.

I.B. Superintendent's Announcements

- Dr. Grossman thanked the public in-person and on-line for attending the meeting tonight.
- The first 11 days of school have gone extremely well. Today's first full in-person day for Kelly Lane and Wells Road also went very well. It was the first full in-person day since March 13th. On September 21st we will welcome back our middle and high school students.
- Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, will take the Board through the metrics from the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD) which will be involved in any decisions we make for school, school closures, etc.
- Attendance for the full reopening today for Kelly and Wells were as follows: Kelly Lane had a 98.4% (5/311) attendance rate for in-person students and a 94.8% rate (3/58) for remote students; Wells Road had 97.8% (6/279) for in-person and 97% (2/66) for remote students.
- The State of Connecticut is requiring school districts to have an in-person and remote option.
- Last week the final Reopening Task Force Meeting was held. A special thank you to Rosemarie Weber who was a Chair of the Committee.
- Also, a special thank you to the YMCA child care program.
- This evening our Athletic Director, Brian Maltese, will speak about where the district is with athletics and football.
- Open houses will start next week and will run through October 1st.
- A reminder that the BOE retreat will be held on September 30th from 4-7:30 p.m. Kindly complete two surveys (on Board goals and self-evaluation) by this Friday.
- There will be no school on September 28th in observance of the Yom Kippur holiday.
- The next BOE Meeting will be held on October 7th.

I.B. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Jennifer Parsons, Assistant Superintendent, stated she collaborates with the FVHD and has a direct line with them on a weekly basis. A document provided by the FVHD was presented and showed the leading indicator in making decisions around school models. The leading indicator is new COVID-19 cases on a 7-day average/100,000 people. This document comes out every Thursday or Friday and states how Granby is doing week-to-week. A low risk level and full reopening is less than 10 cases/100,000 on a 7-day rolling average and currently there are 1.4 cases per 100,000 in the Farmington Valley; there are 3.9 cases in Hartford County; and 3.2 cases in the State of CT for the period August 30-September 5. If the rates creep toward the orange category (10-25 cases/100,000), Granby would be in a true hybrid category. Over 25 cases would indicate full remote learning. The metrics will be reviewed on a weekly basis but the FVHD will be in touch with us on any given day if there are any changes.

Ms. Parsons stated she has also been working with teachers and administrators on the various working models as we may need to pivot at any time into a different model. All learners across the district before coming back to school in-person have had the ability to participate in live synchronous meetings. Additionally, Ms. Parsons has been working with remote teachers and the remote learning coach on scheduling. Technology-wise, work is being done on a suite of tools to offer teachers to support them if they need to move into hybrid or remote learning. Ms. Parsons stated another focus of her work has been policies; meeting with the Wellness Committee around the new food service program; and, meeting with Professional Development and Education Committee to make a recommendation on flexibility provided around teacher evaluation for more informal observations.

I.D. Student Representative Report

- Ms. Migliaccio extended a warm welcome to Jacob Scotto as our new student BOE representative. Jacob stated he is involved in football, tennis, drama club, and chamber singers.
- Jack DeGray stated his experience is going well at the high school thus far.
- Football, soccer and field hockey are practicing and are happy to be doing so.
- Today in advisory there was a class vote to see if students were happy to go back to school and the consensus was that many students fear going forward in full could put them back to full remote; however, speaking for everyone, Jack stated students are happy to be back in full.

Brandon Webster inquired how the buses are running for students. Dr. Grossman stated some buses have 1-2 students on them, there are others that have up to 7 and today some had 15. We will get a better handle on this by the end of the week for Kelly Lane and Wells Road.

I.E. Business Manager's Report

Ms. Anna Robbins, Business Manager, presented the June 2020 and July/August 2020 statement of accounts. For FY20, financial results show a return to the town of \$902K. Special education expenses were unfavorable \$106K and regular education expenses were favorable just over \$1M. Salaries and benefits made up 75.93% of the total budget for FY20. Due to the pandemic and the unprecedented move to remote learning in mid-March, nearly every line item showed budgetary savings except for special education out-of-district tuition and general supplies. The over-budget condition in general supplies reflects spending on PPE and other COVID-related expenses which were submitted for the FEMA claim. The Quality and Diversity Fund was favorable \$164K due to savings on magnet school tuitions, after-school activities, transportation, and professional development. Revenue to the town showed a shortfall of \$55K for FY20 which was offset by unfavorable results in the Excess Cost Reimbursement, rental fees and pay-for-participation fees.

For FY21, as of August 31st, the BOE shows a negative forecast of \$325K. Special education expenditures were unfavorable \$60K and regular education expenses were unfavorable \$265K. The driving factor for special education is the net change for out-of-district placements. The forecast for regular education is related directly to the return to schoolhouse learning. The personnel line items include the forecast for additional custodial support and bus monitors. There are also projected increases for software, transportation and general supplies. The district received a Care Grant for \$47K which will offset some of the over-budget conditions and there could also be some additional funds to help offset the additional unbudgeted costs associated with reopening; however, the district has not received an application yet. Revenue for the town reflects a projection of additional revenue from regular tuition from other towns; however, Excess Cost Funding from the state is lower than budgeted. Although out-of-district costs for special education are higher than budgeted, fewer students are meeting the stop loss limits. Projections for rental fees and pay-for-participation are uncertain at this time. The overall projection for revenue to the town is unfavorable \$146K.

Jenny Emery stated the Board will deal with budget transfers later in the agenda and stated the net is less than anticipated revenue and that \$900K returned to the town is unprecedented. Expenditures in this year certainly would be outside of the budget. Purchased some PPE and other items out of last year's budget (almost \$200K) and still turned over \$900K to the town. Ms. Emery

stated this year's situation does not concern her yet. Major things are the temporary custodians and bus monitors and both are related to safety. Anna Robbins has been very proactive in seeking other grants and is hoping to receive more relief.

II. Public Comment

Grace Matthews, 1 Quail Lane, North Granby. Ms. Matthews thanked the Board for allowing her to express her concerns stating that she has brought her concerns to leadership and the Association prior to speaking. She stated it is a shared common goal of acting in the best interest of children and wanting students back in the classroom. She stated she feels that every measure must be checked and rechecked prior to a full reopening and it is clear the Stronger Together Plan is intended to be refined based on new knowledge and feedback. Her personal concerns are that, according to students, the self-assessment is not being used and better systems should be implemented since we are not proactively checking temperatures or requiring testing. Student workstations spaced 3' apart up to 6' apart will not be the reality for some teachers in her building upon full entry; desk shields will not work unless students stay faced forward; and, the masks distributed to students are not of high quality. Ms. Matthews stated fully reopening schools might dissuade families of remote students from sending their students back to school since they chose to keep their children home during the staggered transitional opening. She would like to ensure the district can say everything has been done to protect staff and students.

Karl Kampfmann, Granby, stated his reasons for speaking are twofold: 1) He feels this in-person meeting sends a powerful message that we are back on the road to recovery; and, 2) He thanked the BOE, educators and administrators for all they did during Phase I of the pandemic. The distance learning plan was not perfect; however, it kept students engaged and also put a plan together to get students back to school, not only for education but also for social reasons as well as the mental health of students to get back to a normal way of life. It gives students hope.

Danieka Janski, Granby, stated she is a parent with two children at the high school and she is happy that all students will be back in school on Monday and that keeping our kids in the best learning environment is the best thing for them and their education.

Sarah Scotto, West Granby, stated she is a parent of a Class of 2020 graduate and as well as two high school students. She thanked the Board for all they have done to get students back to school and is happy students will be back full-time and in-person on Monday. She stated she is a dentist so she feels confident sending her children to school in a mask. Her children have told her students do keep their masks on. She stated there are challenges with remote days with her students feeling they are not part of the class. Today a teacher was having an issue with technology and got frustrated. There is no substitute for in-person learning. The plan created minimizes the risks.

Karen Richmond-Goddard, resident and teacher at the high school stated she has a son in 11th grade at the high school. She stated she is currently taking a graduate class and her school provided 14 days of professional development so teachers felt equipped for the return. She stated our technology department and administration tried to give the best they could but more instruction should have been given for remote and on-line learning. She stated technology has shaken a lot of people's confidence. She also stated social distancing in the commons will be difficult to monitor and she expressed her concerns that Granby is going back earlier than other districts.

III. Consent Agenda

III.A. Minutes

A motion was made by Rosemarie Weber and seconded by Sarah Thrall that the Granby Board of Education adopt the consent agenda. This motion passed at 7:56 p.m. with two abstentions (Melissa Migliaccio and Brandon Webster).

IV. Old Business

There was no Old Business to report.

V. New Business

V.A. Athletic Update

Mr. Brian Maltese, Athletic Director, updated the Board on the fall athletic program and stated this year will be much different than sports seasons in the past and the health and safety of the students to get them back to their respective sport is of the utmost importance. Mr. Maltese informed the Board the initial first 3 weeks, students will be in cohorts of no more than 10 students with 30 minutes of conditioning and 30 minutes of skill work. Masks must be worn to and from practice. The NCCC is split into two (2) sections of seven (7) rather than 14 in our geography pool in order to mitigate travel. Each team has sanitizer spray bottles to sanitize equipment between uses. Locker rooms are currently being used for storage and athletes are encouraged to dress in athletic clothing for the school day. Mr. Maltese is working with Mr. Dunn on revising these protocols with the colder weather approaching. Games will begin on October 1st with 6 home and 6 away games. Mr. Maltese stated Phase II will begin Sept. 21-25 and Phase 3 Sept. 26-30. CIAC did not have any guidelines for cheerleading so Granby got together with other districts who have cheerleading and came up with guidelines. Received news today that the CIAC is not allowing football. There will be no practices in the fall; however, the team will work on conditioning. Awaiting guidance as to what the potential later date might be—possibly the spring. Mr. Maltese stated there are 263 total athletes for the fall which aligns to what we have had in the past. Middle school field hockey and cross country started this week, aligning with what is being done at the high school. Melissa Migliaccio inquired if football athletes will be able to pivot to another sport. Mr. Maltese stated, yes, players can switch up to the first contest of that sport which is October 1st. Jenny Emery thanked Mr. Maltese for his presentation and also Shannon Sullivan for getting water to the fields. David Peling inquired if there was any guidance on the winter season. Mr. Maltese stated there is no guidance as of yet. Mark Fiorentino inquired if people are allowed to attend games when they start. Mr. Maltese stated this is an ongoing conversation with Mike Dunn and Dr. Grossman; however, the district is trying to wait to see what the metrics tell us in the next couple of weeks.

V.B. First Reading of Policy 6172.3 - Homeschooling

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended Policy 6172.3, Home Schooling, to the Board for a first reading. Sarah Thrall stated this policy normalizes an existing practice that a family needs to file with the district when planning to homeschool a student. She has received some comments and will incorporate those changes for the second reading.

V.C. First Reading of Policy 4118.237/4218.237/5141.8, Face Masks/Coverings

The Curriculum/Policy/Technology/Communications Subcommittee recommended Policy 4118.237/4218.237/5141.8, Face Masks/Coverings, to the Board for a first reading. Sarah Thrall stated she has received a few comments on this policy and will also incorporate them for the second reading. Jennifer Parsons stated this policy correlates to the Executive Order in place. Jenny Emery inquired if there are any discipline issues with students wearing masks and Ms. Parsons stated mask wearing by students has been exceptional. Rosemarie Weber stated she is impressed with the level of mask wearing going on with the students and it is truly a testament as to how much they want to be in school and participating in activities.

V.D. FY20 Year-End Budget Transfers

The Board discussed the approval of FY20 year-end budget transfers as recommended by the Business Manager and Finance/Personnel/Facilities Subcommittee. A motion was made by Jenny Emery and seconded by Dave Peling that the Granby Board of Education approve year-end budget transfers for FY20 as recommended by the Business Manager and Finance/Personnel/Facilities Subcommittee. Ms. Emery stated there are several specific pages in the packet about budget transfers. The budget is approved by the voters but the BOE has the discretion of returning money to the town. Some accounts are underspent and accounts are moved around. \$199K was spent in June once the equipment needs were known but, other than that, it is just the moving around in line items and the BOE needs to approve the changes from one line to another where the money was spent. This motion passed unanimously at 8:29 p.m.

VI. Miscellaneous

VI.A. Board Standing Committee Reports

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

Sarah Thrall reported this subcommittee had a special meeting this evening to discuss a draft Title IX policy and it was decided to keep the policy in subcommittee for one more meeting as it is a pretty comprehensive policy. In May, there were new federal regulations on Title IX and changes to the definition of sexual harassment and broadens the district to events and supervision as well as who you can report sexual harassment to and the process followed. Melissa Migliaccio stated she prefers that the subcommittee takes their time with this policy. Ms. Parsons stated although we do not have this policy revised as of yet, we are in compliant with our current Title IX policy as well as staff training.

VI.A.2. Finance/Personnel/Facilities

Jenny Emery reported this Subcommittee met this evening and discussed food service issues. Last spring Granby participated in the federal seamless summer option program to keep feeding students despite schools closing. Sodexo was our food service provider at the time and the program was supposed to be cost neutral; however, now Sodexo is stating we owe them money which administration is working to resolve. Separate from that issue, Fresh Picks out of VT, our current vendor, has been dealt a difficult hand to make the food system work and be cost neutral to us. This requires a certain level of participation and since school has restarted, we are at 20% or less of what is normally expected for students purchasing lunch. This is happening to all of the vendor's other customers as well. CDC guidance states for students to bring food from home even though there is no instance of transmission with food service. This is causing a real cost to the district so we invited the food service representative to talk to us and through a combination of expense reduction and activities that promote more utilization of the food service program, looking to try to ultimately move toward the revenue neutral program. There is no final answer but the good news is the federal government re-upped the summer seamless option program and Granby may want to participate in this which would allow access to food service to everyone for free. Administration will summarize the details and make a recommendation to the subcommittee at the next meeting.

VI.B. Other Board-Related Reports

VI.B.1. CREC/CABE

Mark Fiorentino stated CREC met today for the first time this school year. CREC schools went back in full 5 days a week at the beginning and reported it is going well. Additionally, CREC is expanding the program to help certify minority teachers and Granby should not lose focus on this for our plan.

VI.B.2. Granby Education Foundation

GEF will meet next Monday.

VI.C. Calendar of Events

Open houses will be done virtually this year.

VI.D. Board Member Announcements

There were no Board member announcements this evening.

VI.E. Action Items

There were no action items this evening.

VII. Executive Session/Non-Meeting

A motion was made by Melissa Migliaccio and seconded by Sarah Thrall to enter into an Executive Session to discuss a collective bargaining agreement. This motion passed unanimously at 8:43 p.m. The Executive Session ended at approximately 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Weber, Board Secretary