

**GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GROTON, CONNECTICUT**

(*Attachments are available upon request from the Superintendent's Office.)

Regular Meeting

April 24, 2017

The regular meeting of the Groton Board of Education was held on April 24, 2017, in CR 1 of the Town Hall Annex.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Kim Watson, Board Chairperson, at 6:07 p.m.

The first order of business was the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag by Senator Somers.

PRESENT

ABSENT

Mrs. Kim Shepardson Watson
Dr. Andrea Ackerman
Mrs. Katrina Fitzgerald
Mrs. Gretchen Newsome
Mrs. Rosemary Robertson
Mrs. Rita Volkmann
Mr. Jay Weitlauf
Mrs. Lee White

Mr. Gary Baker

Dr. Michael Graner, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Susan Austin, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Samuel Kilpatrick, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Mrs. Laurie LePine, Director of Human Resources
Miss Cindy Fan, Student Representative
Mr. Joel Lee, Student Representative
Miss Holly Conlon, Fitch High School
Mrs. Heather Somers, State Senator
Mr. Joe de la Cruz, State Representative
Mrs. Christine Conley, State Representative
Mrs. Martha Reuling, CPR Youth Marketing Director

B. RECOGNITION AND PARTICIPATION AND DELEGATIONS

- Mr. Arcarese introduced Holly Conlon, the 2017 Governor's Scholar. Mr. Arcarese noted that this is the third time in four years FHS has had a Governor's Scholar.

B. RECOGNITION AND PARTICIPATION AND DELEGATIONS – cont.

- Representative de la Cruz, Senator Somers, and Representative Conley presented citations to SBB and NEA Schools for being selected by the State Department of Education as Schools of Distinction. This distinction is based on how students did on the SBAC test in the 2015-2016 school year.

Dr. Graner asked the legislators to give the Board an update on the budget. Senator Somers stated that the Appropriation Committee will be coming out with a budget later this week and that Groton should fair very well.

- Mrs. Martha Reuling, CPR Youth Marketing Director for the American Heart Association, presented the Groton Public Schools a CPR Kit. Mrs. Reuling noted that 5 CPR Kits were presented to districts and Groton had been selected as one of them.

C. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

1. Mrs. Beth Horler, GEA President, made comments regarding the difficult job the Board is faced with regarding the closing of a school and non-renewal of non-tenured teachers. **[ATTACHMENT #1]**
2. Mrs. Beth Reinhold, 110 Doppler Lane, shared comments in opposition to the closing of PV school. **[ATTACHMENT #2]**
3. Mr. Peter Bass, Principal of Cutler Middle School, shared comments regarding the future of the middle schools in Groton. **[ATTACHMENT #3]**
4. Ms. Linda Cady, Teacher at Cutler Middle School, shared comments regarding the future of the middle schools in Groton **[ATTACHMENT #4]**
5. Mrs. Jessica Panucci, Teacher at Cutler Middle Schools, shared comments regarding the budget cuts and the future of the middle schools in Groton. **[ATTACHMENT #5]**

II. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

1. Mr. Weitlauf responded to the comments made by Mrs. Horler.

III. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

The Student Representatives reported:

- An Empty Bowl Project was held to raise money and awareness to help fight hunger. It was noted that great reviews were received from all those that attended.
- The Fitch Robotics Team has had an amazing season thus far. This week they will be at the World Championship in St. Louis, Missouri.
- The Drama/Fitch Falcon Theatre You're In Town Performance will be held on April 28, 2017 and April 29, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 30, 2017, at 1:00 p.m.

III. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – cont.

- AP and IB testing will be held on May 1st and May 12th, 2017
- Mrs. Sullivan’s Washington, DC field trip will be leaving on Friday, May 12 and returning on Sunday, May 14, 2017. Their agenda includes touring the Smithsonian African-American History Museum and the National Holocaust Museum.
- The Junior Prom will be held Saturday, May 13, 2017, 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., in the Fitch High School Flag Hallway.
- Senior Events:
 - Honor Cord Assembly – Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.
 - Senior Awards and Scholarships – Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.
 - Holiday Hill/Senior Field Day – Thursday, May 25, 2017, from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 - Senior Skip Day – Friday, May 26, 2017
 - Senior Prom – Saturday, June 3, 2017, from 6:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., at the Mystic Marriott
 - Senior and Faculty Breakfast and Graduation Rehearsal #1 – Wednesday, June 14, 2017, from 7:30 a.m. to 11: 00 a.m.
 - Graduation Rehearsal #2 – Friday, June 15, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
 - Graduation – Friday, June 16, 2017, at 6:00 p.m.
 - After-Graduation Drug and Alcohol-Free Party – Friday, June 16, 2017 after graduation

IV. SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Dr. Graner gave an update on the FY 18 budget. He noted the following dates:
April 3, 2017 Town Council voted to reduce the budget by 5.2 million
April 19, 2017 Town Council revisited their vote on the budget
April 21, 2017 Town Council compromised to restore \$1.9 million and added \$255,000 million to the budget; this brings the cut to a sum total of \$3.0 million from the Board’s budget

Dr. Graner presented an amended list of cuts from the Board’s budget. [ATTACHMENT #6]

A. REPORTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE STAFF

1. Assistant Superintendent Report [ATTACHMENTS #7]

Ms. Austin shared an article on the efforts of Rebecca Beyus, Communication Coordinator, on the Groton Public Schools.

A. REPORTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE STAFF – cont.

2. Business Office Report [ATTACHMENT #8]

Dr. Graner gave an overview of the FY 17 budget summary dated April 19, 2017; the unexpended balance as of that date is \$315,161. Dr. Graner asked Mrs. LePine to give an update on Health Insurance Report.

Mrs. LePine noted that the trend was normal for the month of March. As soon as the latest report is received, it will be shared with the Board.

3. Director of Human Resources

Mrs. LePine reported that she has spent time identifying the responsibilities of the Business Office Staff; the pairing of staff on particular projects would be utilized when necessary; and she noted that the Business Office staff is well versed in their specific responsibilities.

Mrs. LePine also reported that she has attended two job fairs – March 23, 2017, Fleet and Family; April 24, 2017, The Day at the Marriott.

4. Director of Buildings and Grounds Report

Mr. Kilpatrick reported:

- The close out of the CB and CC asbestos projects and that the check has been received by the Town.
- That he has renegotiated the landscaping contract and noted a \$23,000 savings/year for the next 3 years.
- The water heater at FHS has been installed this last week.
- The stage floor at FHS has been polyethylene with 5 coats of varnish this past Saturday and Sunday. He stated that the set was back up for the play in a timely fashion.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Finance/Facilities Committee:

There was no report.

2. Policy Committee:

Mrs. White stated that the Policy Committee continues to meet every month.

3. Curriculum Committee:

There was no report.

4. Negotiations Committee:

Mrs. Watson noted that the Negotiations Committee is negotiating with the Custodians/Technicians/Maintenance bargaining union.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS - cont.

5. LEARN:

Mrs. Volkmann noted that Commissioner of Education Wentzell and Deputy Commissioner of Education Cohn presented on the Connecticut Next Generation Accountability System. Mrs. Volkmann also noted the Friendship School and encouraged parents who are interested to apply. She further noted that the cost is less than \$4,000 a year and that the Federal Government may pick up the cost for those families in need. Mrs. Volkmann also noted her attendance at the disability summit at Mohegan Sun.

6. Groton Parent Council:

Mrs. White stated that the Groton Parent Councils met last month and discussed the status of the budget. The Groton Parent Council will meet again next week.

7. Town & City Councils/RTM/Board Liaison Committee:

Mr. Weitlauf noted that the Town & City Councils/RTM/Board Liaison Committee met on April 5, 2017 and discussed the budget, had a 2020 update, an Efficiency Committee update, discussed Magnet Schools, and the MM parking lot.

8. GEA/AGSA/BOE Liaison Committee:

There was no report.

9. Groton Scholarship:

Mrs. Newsome noted that the Groton Scholarship Fund met and noted that the selection of the recipients of the scholarships is complete. Mrs. Newsome stated that the ceremony for the presentation of scholarships will be held on May 23, 2017.

10. CABE

There was no report.

11. Trails Liaison:

There was no report.

12. Ad Hoc Middle School Program Review:

There was no report.

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. RESOLUTION ACCEPTING BOARD MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the regular minute of the March 27, 2017 and Special meeting on March 29, 2017, are hereby accepted and approved.

A. CONSENT CALENDAR – cont.

2. RESOLUTION ACCEPTING GIFTS

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby accepts gifts to the Groton Public Schools as follows:

- YouCause, LLC Trustee for Pfizer Foundation (Peter Fairbank) has made a donation of \$70.53 to the Fitch High School Fencing Team.
- Home Salon and Spa has made a donation of \$720.00 to the Groton Public Schools Summer Meal Program.

MOTION: Ackerman, Lee: To approve the Consent Calendar.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

B. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion and possible action regarding approval as a first reading policy P 5131.6 Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Products. **[ATTACHMENT #9]**

MOTION: White, Robertson: To approve as a first reading policy P 5131.6 Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Products.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

2. Discussion and possible action regarding approval as a first reading policy P 6172.4(a) Title I Parent Involvement. **[ATTACHMENT #10]**

MOTION: Robertson, Fitzgerald: To approve as a first reading policy P 6172.4(a) Title I Parent Involvement.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

3. Discussion and possible action regarding approval as a first reading policy P 6146.1 (a-c) Examination/Grading. **[ATTACHMENT #11]**

MOTION: Fitzgerald, Volkmann: To approve as a first reading policy P 6146.1 (a-c) Examination/Grading.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion and possible action regarding approval of a modification to the 2017-2018 School Calendar of an Early Release Day on October 17, 2017.
[ATTACHMENT #12]

MOTION: Newsome, Weitlauf: To approve a modification to the 2017-2018 School Calendar of an Early Release Day on October 17, 2017.

PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

2. Discussion and possible action regarding the Futures Education Transportation Study regarding Special Education.

MOTION: Weitlauf, Robertson: To approve the Futures Education Transportation Study regarding Special Education.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

3. Discussion and possible action regarding the closing of Pleasant Valley Elementary School at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.
[ATTACHMENT 13]

MOTION: Ackerman, White: To approve the closure of Pleasant Valley Elementary School at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.

AMENDMENT: Fitzgerald, Volkmann: To close PV as of September 1, 2017.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT: YES – Weitlauf, Robertson, White,
Watson, Ackerman, Fitzgerald

NO – Newsome

ABSTAINED – Volkmann

PASSED

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED:

YES – Weitlauf, Robertson, White, Watson, Ackerman,
Fitzgerald

NO – Newsome, Volkmann

PASSED

C. NEW BUSINESS – cont.

Mrs. Newsome wanted it noted why she voted against the closing of PV:

- We don't have an exact plan for where the children will attend school next year.
- She believes that the choice is hasty. We have not given the idea enough thought about how closing the school will affect the entire school district, including the PV families.
- Closing the school and returning it to the Town still requires maintenance, etc. The money does not come out of your right pocket (the BOE), the costs associated with the building will come from a different pocket (the Town) in the same pair of pants. The Groton tax payer is still financially responsible for the up keep of the space.

4. In his capacity as Superintendent, Dr. Graner recommends that the Board of Education non-renew the teaching contracts of non-tenured teachers who would expect to achieve tenure in the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

He made this recommendation for the following reason:

- a massive reduction in the FY 18 budget.

He stated that the above identified teachers will be advised prior to this meeting that he intended to make this recommendation, and if the Board takes action, has the right under Connecticut General Statutes §10-151 to request the reasons for the Board's action to non-renew their contracts of employment.

MOTION: Watson, White: To approve, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §10-151, that the Groton Board of Education non-renew the teaching contracts of non-tenured teachers who would expect to achieve tenure in the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

It is further moved that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to the above identified teachers, and further, that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any request which may be forthcoming from the above identified teachers or their representative pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §10-151.

PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

C. NEW BUSINESS – cont.

5. Discussion and possible action regarding teacher retirement incentive.

MOTION: Volkmann, Weitlauf: To approve the teacher retirement incentive.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

VI. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

A. LETTERS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND COMMENTS

1. Mrs. Fitzgerald noted;
 - a. That she received e-mails regarding the closing of PV School.
 - b. That she attended the Efficiency Task Force meetings.
 - c. That she attended the FHS Student Council meeting regarding the collection of books in memory of Mary Kelly, former Board Member. She also noted that she attended the NEA Book Fair.
2. Dr. Ackerman noted that she met Alex White at the Coast Guard Academy and they discussed that Robotics team earned several special awards at the recent competitions.
3. Mr. Weitlauf noted that he attended the reception for the sponsors of the FHS Empty Bowls.
4. Ms. Robertson noted:
 - a. That she attended the reception for the sponsors of the FHS Empty Bowls.
 - b. That she attended the Sound Communication Services meeting.
5. Mrs. White noted that she attended the reception for the sponsors of the FHS Empty Bowls.
6. Mrs. Volkmann noted:
 - a. That she attended the reception for the sponsors of the FHS Empty Bowls.
 - b. That she attended the Robotics Appreciation.
 - c. She thanked parents for their support of the Board's budget.
 - d. She made a referral regarding a policy allowing Police dogs to go through the schools.
7. Mrs. Watson also thanked parents for their support of the Board's budget.
8. Mrs. Volkmann noted her attendance at the NSBA Conference held in Denver and she thanked LEARN for their support in allowing her to attend.
9. Mr. Weitlauf noted the volunteer hours – 290 volunteers and over 1500 volunteer hours. He further noted that PV had the largest number of volunteer hours for the month of March.

VII. ADVANCE PLANNING

A. Future Meeting Dates and Calendar Items

As noted in the agenda.

RTM Public Hearing	May 1, 2017	7:00 p.m., Senior Center
RTM Ed. Committee	May 3, 2017	6:30 p.m., Senior Center, Classroom B
RTM Ed. Committee	May 18, 2017	7:00 p.m., Senior Center

B. Suggested Agenda Items

NONE

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Weitlauf: To adjourn at 9:03 p.m.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY