

**GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
GROTON, CONNECTICUT**

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

**Special Meeting**

**February 5, 2020**

A special meeting of the Groton Board of Education was held on February 5, 2020 in the CR 1 of the Town Hall Annex, for the purpose of conducting a joint meeting with the Town Council and RTM to review the 2020-2021 budget.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Kim Watson, Board Chairperson, at 6:35 p.m.

**PRESENT**

**ABSENT**

Mrs. Kim Shepardson Watson, Chairperson  
Dr. Andrea Ackerman, Vice Chairperson  
Mrs. Jane Giulini  
Mrs. Gretchen Newsome  
Mrs. Rosemary Robertson  
Mrs. Rita Volkmann  
Mrs. Lee White

Mr. Jay Weitlauf

Dr. Michael Graner, Superintendent of Schools  
Ms. Susan Austin, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Ken Knight, Business Manager

Mr. John Burt, Town Manager

Mrs. Patrice Granatosky, Mayor  
Mrs. Portia Bordelon, Town Council  
Mr. Aundre Bumgardner, Town Council  
Mrs. Rachael Franco, Town Council  
Mr. Conrad Heede, Town Council  
Mrs. Lian Obrey, Town Council  
Ms. Juliette Parker, Town Council  
Mr. Joe Zeppieri, Town Council

Mrs. Syma Ebbin RTM Moderator  
Mrs. Karin Adams, RTM Member  
Mrs. Kathy Chase, RTM Member  
Mr. Albert Colon, RTM Member  
Mrs. Jan Desillier-Fleming, RTM Member  
Mrs. Katrina Fitzgerald, RTM Member  
Mrs. Cindy Fortner, RTM Member  
Mr. Chase Foster, RTM Member  
Mr. David Gauthier, RTM Member  
Mrs. Lauren Gauthier, RTM Member  
Mr. Bruce Jones, RTM Member  
Mrs. Rosanne Kotowski, RTM Member  
Mrs. Lynn Lockett-Hubbard, RTM Member

**PRESENT – cont.**

Mrs. Nancy Mello-Miller, RTM Member  
Mr. Eric Ossmann, RTM Member  
Mrs. Jill Rusk, RTM Member  
Mr. Dane Stevenson, RTM Member  
Mr. Ian Thomas, RTM Member  
Mrs. Beverly Washington, RTM Member  
Mr. Gary Welles, RTM Member  
Mr. Michael Whitney, RTM Education Member

Mrs. Watson gave a historical prospective of the proposed 2020-2021 school budget.

Dr. Graner gave an overview of the Superintendent's proposed budget. [ATTACHMENT #1]

Mr. Knight explained the average per student expenditure.

**DISCUSSION:**

1. Mr. Zeppieri asked for the number of students supported by the budget.
2. Mrs. Chase asked about the Alliance funds - When it runs out, how will staffing be sustained?
3. Mrs. Bordelon asked about Title I funds – She would like to see funds go to closing the Achievement Gap. She does not like to compare our students to the more affluent Towns.
4. Mrs. White stated that MYP is for all kids in grades 6-10.
5. Mrs. Franco asked for the increases in the last 5 years. Dr. Graner gave the increases for the last 8 years; the average increase was .74%. Mrs. Franco stated that she wants to maintain the MBR.
6. Mrs. Gauthier asked will there be Mental Health resources increases for the new Middle School. Dr. Graner stated that there will be no decreases for the new Middle School. Mrs. Franco asked why the need for 1 to 1 devices. Dr. Graner noted that it is only at the high school.
7. Mrs. Obrey asked what the budget would be if Groton still had all the schools that have been closed. Dr. Graner stated that he would provide the information.
8. Mrs. Mello-Miller asked about Impact Aid.
9. Mr. Bumgardner asked about grants – are they earmarked for the purchase of computers or can they be spent for other things?
10. Mr. Jones asked where he can get educated about the schools and the programs in the district.
11. Mrs. Volkmann gave clarification regarding Groton being an Intra-district Magnet School district and how parents can select the school they want their child to attend; however, all children are automatically assigned to their neighborhood school.
12. Mr. Heede asked what revenues are received by the district and how they are spent.
13. Mrs. Rusk asked if the high school and the middle school can be transported on the same bus. Dr. Graner explained that they did a run through and there would be a need for 10 additional buses.
14. Mrs. Bordelon asked if the budget is not completely spent, where does it go?
15. Mr. Whitney asked how is the cost per pupil calculated?
16. Mrs. Parker asked about the “Tuition/Other” account.
17. Mrs. Desillier-Fleming asked about IT. Dr. Graner responded that he will inform her when the IT Director reviews his budget.
18. Mrs. Franco noted the new housing going up and asked is there a way to plan for the increase of students.
19. Mr. Thomas noted his support for the Superintendent's budget.

20. Mayor Granatosky made closing comments and stated that she didn't see the need to see the budget document. Mayor Granatosky observed that Groton is an Alliance district, but stated that the goal is to come out of it.
21. Mr. Ossmann asked what was spent last year for IT.
22. Mr. Colon asked if Groton was working with Grasso Tech relative to IT.
23. Mr. Stevenson stated that we should give our students the best that we can.
24. Mrs. Parker clarified her earlier comment.
25. Mrs. Robertson gave an overview of the budget increases over time.
26. Mrs. Chase asked what will happen if the Alliance funds go away. Dr. Graner explained the process beginning under Gov. Malloy through Gov. Lamont.
27. Mrs. Washington asked for a copy from the State regarding what is an Alliance District.
28. Mr. Zeppieri stated that the Council should not micro manage the school system.
29. Mrs. Gauthier noted her concern with grants and stated that we should not be depending on them.

**MOTION:** Ackerman, Newsome:

To adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

**PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY**

Overview of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget

- 1.5% increase = \$1,272,538
- Middle school consolidation cost avoidance
  - 0% increase in teacher salary account
  - FY20 = \$735,000
- Health insurance and other benefits - 4% increase = \$400,000
  - Includes social security, pension, severance
  - Teachers' early retirement incentive
- Paraprofessional support - 4% increase = \$119,000
- Safety personnel - \$122,000 increase
  - SRO @ Groton Middle School
  - 2 security staff
- OT/PT - new provider = \$62,000
- Transportation (STA & Curtin) - 2% increase = \$4.8 million
- Site budgets - 2% increase
- Tuition/Other - \$129,000
  - Friendship School
  - Marine Science Magnet High School – increase in the number of students (80 to 92)
- Equipment - \$120,000
  - computer infrastructure
  - instructional technology

Possible Board Budget Alternatives

- 6-12 Campus Staff
  - Instructional Coordinator
  - 6-12 Media Specialist
- Additional sports at Groton Middle School
- Additional tutors for World Languages
- Full-time Career Counselor