

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 @ 5:00 P.M.
REMOTE MEETING

Members Present: Jay Weitlauf, Liz Porter, Dean Antipas (arrived at 5:17 p.m.)

Also Present: Susan Austin, Ken Knight, Clint Kennedy, Sam Kilpatrick

Chairman Weitlauf called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

1. Review August 2, 2021, Meeting Minutes – A motion to accept the minutes of August 2, 2021 was made by Dean Antipas, seconded by Jay Weitlauf. The minutes were accepted.
2. Budget Timeline – Ken Knight presented a budget timeline based on last year’s model. At this time, the target date for the Board of Education to vote on the 2022-2023 budget is planned for February 21, 2022.
3. Discuss Details of HVAC Upgrades Included in CIP Proposals – Sam Kilpatrick stated that the cost for these upgrades is allowable through the ARP ESSR III grant money. These upgrades are slated for Charles Barnum Elementary School and Fitch High School. Specifically, at FHS, there is an immediate need to replace two units that have been damaged by the salt air. He is waiting for a quote from Fuss and O’Neill and will report back to the committee regarding this estimate. Mr. Kilpatrick is also working on prioritizing CIP’s and aligning them with the Town of Groton. He is investigating the Silver Petrucelli report previously completed and will be putting in a CIP request.
4. Update re: New Elementary Schools – Mr. Kilpatrick reported that the two new elementary schools opened on time and applauded the crews for working feverishly throughout the weekend to ensure that this would occur. He reported that the tiles in classrooms have been replaced and that the tiles in the hallways still need attention. The hallway tiles will not be replaced until students are not in the building; therefore, the work will be completed on weekends, days off or vacation days. There are several items on the “punch list” such as the coping edge on the roof that needs to be addressed. This item can be addressed during school hours as the process will not affect the educational process. Mr. Kilpatrick indicated that at this time, he expects that the Board of Education will take possession of these buildings possibly after the holiday season. On another note, children and adults are truly enjoying the new playgrounds.
5. Update re: Alliance District Funding for 2021-2022 – Susan Austin recently received a call that indicated that Groton will receive \$200,000 for this year and another \$200,000 next year. Mr. Knight presented a chart that showed the distribution of funds over the last few years. Historically, these funds have been used primarily for technology and software. Mrs. Austin will be working with Clint Kennedy as he assesses GPS’s current needs and bring their recommendations back to the committee at a future date.

6. Discussion re: District Technology Needs – Mr. Kennedy stated that he is reviewing the Alliance District funding as well as the DoD supplement to determine how best to use these funds. He is currently working through technology issues at the new schools as many items are backordered. Another area Mr. Kennedy is investigating is the sustainability of the current one to one computer distribution to students PreK to 12 and teachers. He will be creating a mid to long range plan that addresses equity issues as well as policies to handle damages. Mrs. Porter indicated that there was a policy in the past where students had to pay for damages. Mr. Kennedy said that he will look into this and update it as needed. His focus will be on sustainability and equity.
7. Update re: Bus Driver Training – Mr. Weitlauf asked why drivers were not given the bus routes ahead of the start of school. Mr. Kilpatrick stated that the routes were finalized late last week. He also stated that STA did not have enough drivers and that to compensate for this shortage, STA drivers from Greenwich came to fill in the slots. Currently, Groton is missing five drivers. This is a nationwide problem. Other glitches are being worked on by Mrs. Austin and Mr. Kilpatrick along with other relevant personnel and administrators and will keep the committee apprised of the situation as it develops.

The meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m.