

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 12, 2021 @ 5:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

Members Present: Jay Weitlauf, Liz Porter, Dean Antipas

Also Present: Susan Austin, Ken Knight, Sam Kilpatrick, Ted Keleher, Marc Romano,
Ted Keleher, Scott Post, Justine Fugere

Chairman Weitlauf called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

1. Review September 7, 2021, Meeting Minutes – The motion to accept the minutes was made by Liz Porter and seconded by Dean Antipas. Motion passes unanimously.
2. High School Athletic Facilities – Mr. Weitlauf asked what the priorities at the high school were. Ms. Austin stated that she had contacted John Burt, Town Manager, to discuss this, however, he was unable to attend tonight’s meeting. She reported that there were unexpended funds from the building of the middle school that had been approved to be used to install lights at the new turf field at GMS. The amount of \$800,000 had been approved by the Town Council and as this money is already bonded, no new bond was needed.

Mr. Romano discussed that there is a definite need for more fields at the high school. There has been a town Athletic Fields Task Force study that Mr. Romano and Mr. Weitlauf have played an active role in, however, their plan is multi-year and there are needs that should be addressed sooner rather than later. One part of the discussion included the possibility of recrowning of the football field as soon as possible. Mr. Weitlauf stated that there had been an engineering proposal for the field house by the SLAM Engineering Firm which had been sent to the Fields Task Force. Primary concerns are the condition of the field house, the concession stand, public restrooms, and lockers for female athletes. Discussion also included the possibility of connecting with Grasso Tech to arrange for use of their new turf football field. Ms. Austin will investigate this possibility and report back to the committee. Mr. Keleher stated that not only do the aforementioned items need to be upgraded/replaced, the bleachers are also in need of an upgrade as they are currently out of code. He also expressed a concern that scheduling between the FHS and Grasso football programs will be problematic.

The committee would like to hear directly from Mr. Burt and will invite him to a future meeting to discuss these issues.

3. Proposal for Culinary Rooms at FHS – Mr. Keleher stated that one of his primary areas for improvement at Fitch is the culinary instructional spaces. Mr. Post and Ms. Fugere stated that there is a need to improve the equipment and spaces. Perkins Grant money has been used to supplement the needs over the years, however, as this is now part of the IB Careers Pathways program, the need for an upgrade is essential. Currently, there is no industrial/professional grade equipment, and ventilation is also problematic. A proposal was submitted for review from SLAM for necessary upgrades with an estimated cost of \$600,000.

A motion was made to refer this issue to the COW for further discussion by Mr. Weitlauf. Motion passed – In favor: Mr. Weitlauf, Mrs. Porter; Abstained: Mr. Antipas.

4. Alliance District Building Grant Projects – The Alliance District Building Grant projects have been completed as of 8/31/2021. Among the projects completed are a new phone system for the district as well as a new fire alarm system replacement for Charles Barnum. Other work completed was Access Control in both NEA and CK as well as Network Wiring at FHS, CB, and Central Office.
5. Alliance District Funding - Mr. Knight reviewed the Alliance District funding proposed budget for FY 22 and FY 23. Each year the district will receive \$200,000. The primary focus for each year will be to improve our bilingual services as this area has increased, especially at the middle school and high school. The grant includes the cost of an EL teacher and EL tutor. Mr. Weitlauf shared his concern about the sustainability of salaries after the grant expires. Mr. Antipas inquired if we were identified as bilingual due to the number of Spanish speakers. Ms. Austin affirmed this. This item has been referred for further discussion to the COW.
6. Update re: Treehouse Finances – tabled to next month’s meeting
7. Update re: Food Service Finances & Preparing for the Discontinuation of No-cost Meals for All Students in 2022 - tabled to next month’s meeting
8. Update re: Buses – tabled as this item was being presented at the Committee of the Whole which was meeting directly after this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.