GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 7, 2021 @ 5:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

Members Present: Jay Weitlauf (via remote), Liz Porter (via remote), Dean Antipas

Also Present: Susan Austin, Ken Knight, Clint Kennedy; Marc Romano (via remote), Peter Bass (via remote)

Chairman Weitlauf called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

1. Review November 1, 2021, Meeting Minutes – motion to accept the minutes: Liz Porter, seconded: Dean Antipas. Passed unanimously.

2. Update re: Facilities
   - Groton Middle School Athletic Facilities – The Town Council requested a list for their consideration for expenditures from the remaining funds from the construction of GMS. Athletic Director Marc Romano presented the following items for our consideration with a focus on improving safety at the GMS Athletic Fields:
     - Netting behind the goals along the road and by the grass field; Scorer's table - ESTIMATE for these two items: $85K
     - Scoreboard 8x24 - ESTIMATE: $17K
     - Bleachers unit: 10 rows, 15' high with guard rail - ESTIMATE: $13K

   Discussion followed with the cost of the following items to be investigated:
     - ADA accessible bleachers
     - Additional bleacher unit
     - Bathroom facility, place for teams in case of inclement weather as well as storage

   Chairman Weitlauf asked for an update on the lighting. The Town Council has approved this project. Mr. Kilpatrick is waiting for quotes.

   Dr. Kennedy added that he has power and data concerns and asked that these issues be addressed as part of the plan. The conduit has already been completed; therefore, there is the need for cabling. The cost of having a camera station there as well will be considered.

   Principal Peter Bass also added the following to be considered for use of the unexpended funds:
     - Security cameras
     - Additional lighting on walkways
     - Lighting the GMS sign
     - Need for partitioning in room 317
     - Correcting a design flaw by adding heating in the main office by the wrap around windows.

   Chairman Weitlauf made the request for pricing on these items. He also had a concern regarding the timeframe and the closing of the bond. Superintendent Susan Austin stated that she was meeting with Town Manager John Burt on Monday, December 13. She will ask Mr. Kilpatrick to also attend.

   Another area of concern but cannot be addressed with the middle school funds is the old Field House. Ms. Austin stated that the former quotes from SLAM had been found and she will investigate further.

3. Update re: Technology Devices – Dr. Kennedy reviewed the data previously presented regarding the amount and age of hardware currently in use in GPS. He recommended that we pursue the lease program to bring all staff up to date technology that is consistent across the district. This will provide an improved ability to secure our technology and information as well as find efficiencies and create an equitable platform for all professional staff. Every teacher laptop that will be turned in will be refurbished for student use. Dr. Kennedy and Mr. Knight identified funding sources available and will not impact the current budget. This program is projected to be sustainable after the ESSER grants are no longer available through the DoD Supplemental Grant which is earmarked for technology.

4. Staffing Review at MRM and TRM – Mr. Knight presented the staffing review data for MRM and TRM (see attached). It was recommended that GPS add another full-time assistant principal, therefore, allowing both schools to each have a full-time administrator instead of a .5 position. It was recommended that this happens in the second semester of this current school year. The cost to add another FTE will be approximately $65K. This amount will be covered by the ESSER II grant, but will be a line item in the upcoming school budget.

   Mr. Antipas left at 5:46 pm.

5. Superintendent Budget Preview – Ms. Austin and Mr. Knight continued the review of the proposed budget (see attached). Mr. Knight presented a chart identifying the increases over the last eleven years. The average increase over that period was .60%. This year's projection is for a 3.0% increase due primarily to increase in salaries as well as the new minimum wage directive. Also, the current inflation rate is projected at 4.6%. In comparison, LEARN's budget is projected to be a 2% increase and State staffing projection is a 3% increase. Mr. Weitlauf asked what the timeline was for the Alliance grants. Mr. Knight reminded us that GPS will receive $200K each year to 2023.

6. Update re: Buses – Ms. Austin reported that today was the first day of the earlier time for students to disembark at GMS after the drop off at FHS. She said things went very smoothly and again praised the teachers and administration at GMS for their flexibility. She also reported that she delivered Superhero pins to the bus drivers to demonstrate our appreciation. This provided the drivers an opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with her. The drivers reported that the middle school students tend to act up a bit more once the high school students are dropped off. She informed the committee that STA and GPS staff will be reviewing the routes again and report back with any findings.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Groton Public Schools
Number of Students per Building Administrator
FY2022

	Students	Principal	Assistant Principals	6-12 Coordinators	Athletic Director	Total Administrators	Number of Students per Administrator
Secondary							
Fitch High School	1,058	1.0	3.0	0.75	0.7	5.5	194.1
Groton Middle School	905	1.0	3.0	0.75	0.3	5.1	179.2
	1,963	2.0	6.0	1.5	1.0	10.5	187.0
Elementary							
Mystic River	526	1.0	1.5	-	-	2.5	210.4
Thames River	517	1.0	1.5	-	-	2.5	206.8
Charles Barnum	329	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	164.5
Catherine Kolnaski	359	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	179.5
Northeast Academy	397	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	198.5
	2,128	5.0	6.0	-	-	11.0	193.5
Total	4,091	7.0	12.0	1.5	1.0	21.5	190.3

Groton Public Schools
Number of Students per Building Administrator
Proposed FY2023

	Students	Principal	Assistant Principals	6-12 Coordinators	Athletic Director	Total Administrators	Number of Students per Administrator
Secondary							
Fitch High School	1,058	1.0	3.0	0.75	0.7	5.5	194.1
Groton Middle School	905	1.0	3.0	0.75	0.3	5.1	179.2
	1,963	2.0	6.0	1.5	1.0	10.5	187.0
Elementary							
Mystic River	526	1.0	2.0	-	-	3.0	175.3
Thames River	517	1.0	2.0	-	-	3.0	172.3
Charles Barnum	329	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	164.5
Catherine Kolnaski	359	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	179.5
Northeast Academy	397	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	198.5
	2,128	5.0	7.0	-	-	12.0	177.3
Total	4,091	7.0	13.0	1.5	1.0	22.5	181.8

Groton Public Schools

Budget History

School Year	Budget Total	Inc/(Decr)	% Increase
FY2011-2012	72,645,500	-	0.00%
FY2012-2013	72,645,500	-	0.00%
FY2013-2014	73,662,715	1,017,215	1.40%
FY2014-2015	75,098,943	1,436,228	1.95%
FY2015-2016	76,730,239	1,631,296	2.17%
FY2016-2017	76,468,239	(262,000)	(0.34%)
FY2017-2018	76,468,239	-	0.00%
FY2018-2019	76,485,922	17,683	0.02%
FY2019-2020	77,438,090	952,168	1.24%
FY2020-2021	77,438,090	-	0.00%
FY2021-2022	77,438,090	-	0.00%
		Eleven Year Average	0.60%