

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 8, 2022 @ 6:00 P.M.  
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

**Members Present:** Jay Weitlauf, Dean Antipas, Beverly Washington (remote)

**Also Present:** Susan Austin, Laurie LePine, Sam Kilpatrick, Ken Knight, Nikki Salaun, Jake Tedeschi, Zel Steever, Jessie Stratton, Kat Fitzgerald (remote), members of CT Green Bank-Mackey Dykes, Emily Basham, Allen Sabins

Chairman Weitlauf called the meeting to order at 6:05PM.

1. Review December 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes – The minutes were accepted as presented.
2. Review Tree House Tuition Rates - Mr. Knight reviewed the revenue and expenses for the Tree House program through 12/31/2021. The balance in the account at 12/31/2021 was \$61,835. Mr. Knight then reviewed the FY23 budget for Tree House at both the current and proposed tuition rates. It was noted that on 1/1/22, Tree House raised its wages due to both the labor shortage, as well as the impending minimum wage increase, and that if kept at the current tuition rates, the program will not be self-sustainable. Mr. Tedeschi reviewed comparable local programs indicating that the Tree House program is least expensive when compared to the number of hours. Mr. Tedeschi also reviewed the income guidelines for Care 4 Kids.
3. Solar Panel Power Purchase Agreement - Mr. Kilpatrick stated that he received positive references from Union, Newtown, and Manchester for the solar panel company, CT Green Bank. He said some feedback from those municipalities were to not install during school hours and the need for snow guards due to snow falling off the roof. Zel Steever and Jessie Stratton from the Groton Resiliency and Sustainability Task Force spoke in favor of the project. It was discussed putting a panel at ground level for educational purposes. Also discussed was putting the energy monitor in an area accessible to students. Mr. Weitlauf asked about the long-term impact of disposing the solar panel upon termination of the contract. Members of CT Green Bank stated they would take possession of the panels at end of contract, but there have been no end of life projects to date. CT Green Bank confirmed that the rates would be fixed for the term of the 20 year contract.
4. SNAP! Raise Fundraising - Mr. Knight discussed a fundraising request from the Fitch High School junior class. They want to utilize an organization called SNAP! Raise. This company has been used by the Fitch Booster clubs in the past. The company organizes fundraising, creates a website, and accepts donations through credit cards. They keep a portion of what is raised, and the rest is deposited into the Fitch Student Activities account. In order to continue, we would need to provide our tax identification number to SNAP! Raise. It was decided that we would use this as a test case for this type of fundraising.
5. DEI Coordinator Stipend/Salary - Ms. LePine discussed that the duties for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator has grown beyond the stipend. Ms. Austin explained that there is funding in the ARP ESSER grant for an administrator level DEI position for FY23 & FY24. There was discussion around the sustainability of this position. Mr. Weitlauf requested a review of the job description.

6. 2022-23 Salary & Wages for Non-union Personnel - Ms. LePine reviewed the wage analysis and proposal that was implemented on 1/1/22, as well as the FY23 non-union hourly and stipended positions/pay and hiring rates sheet. Ms. LePine also reviewed a history of pay increases by employee group. Mr. Knight reviewed examples of the impact of pay increase, cost share increase, and overall cost of insurance increase.
7. Project Support for Facilities - Mr. Kilpatrick outlined three upcoming Board of Education projects; Fitch High School HVAC, Groton Middle School field lights, and Northeast Academy drainage, that he feels could utilize a consultant. He proposes no more than 20 hours per week. This would be funded by the unfilled maintenance man (boiler) position. The consultant would be paid on a project by project basis.

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.