GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 7, 2022 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

Members Present: Jay Weitlauf, Dean Antipas

Members Absent: Beverly Gardner

Also Present: Susan Austin, Rick Norris, Sam Kilpatrick, Ken Knight, Clint Kennedy (remote)

Chairman Weitlauf called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

1. Review May 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes - The minutes were accepted as presented.

2. Update re: Solar Panels - Mr. Norris gave an update on the solar panel purchase agreement for the two schools, Groton Middle and Mystic River. Mr. Norris and Mr. Kilpatrick reviewed the agreement and made some final adjustments and resent to attorney for review. It is anticipated the agreement will be signed by the end of the month, and that installation will commence in August. It is also anticipated the project will be probably be finalized after the beginning of the next school year.

3. Update re: Field Lights - Mr. Norris gave an update on the field lights at Groton Middle School. We are working with Musco Engineering, who is on the state bid list, to review the project. Due to the height of the lights, we may need to obtain a variance, either at the July or August meeting. Installation will occur after that, and it may be tight for the start of the fall season.

4. "OneCard" Library Update - Mr. Kennedy reviewed the "OneCard" library update. He stated that he is working with Groton Public Library to make the two systems work together and allow student IDs issued at FHS function as a full library card, a beta test is underway. Once complete it will be rolled out to middle and even elementary school students. Mr. Weitlauf stated that this has been an issue for many years and expressed frustration that this has not been resolved.

5. New Chromebook Agreement for GMS and FHS - Mr. Kennedy review the new Chromebook Agreement for FHS and GMS. The district suspended requiring the agreement and fee for insuring the Chromebooks as a result of the pandemic. All Chromebooks are to be collected at the end of the school year for inventory, cleaning and updating. We intend to roll out the agreement with the return of the equipment utilizing a combined (middle and high) document. Students will be asked to pay $20 for the year, with exceptions made for families who require financial assistance.

6. Camera Equipment Needs - Mr. Kennedy reviewed the camera equipment needs in the district. He stated that the three newer schools all have new building-wide camera systems, while the remaining locations are utilizing a variety of older equipment. The plan is to design a comprehensive system that would be consistent across the district and would allow administration and the Groton Police Department access to cameras. Mr. Kennedy is working with a vendor to determine the cost. Mr. Antipas asked about the safety of access to cameras. Mr. Weitlauf inquired as to how this would be funded. It was determined that first step would be to understand the cost first.

7. End of Year Financial Process - Mr. Knight reviewed the end of year process. He stated that at the May Board of Ed meeting, the projected unexpended balance was $141,262. Since then we have estimated final costs for electricity, which is up substantially due to taking longer than anticipated to switch over the three closed schools (Claude Chester, SB Butler and Pleasant Valley) to the town, and unanticipated increased costs at the newer school buildings, offset by the decreased costs for snow removal and some out of district special education placements. We are projecting unexpended balance of $90,796, which could be used to fund the replacement of a trailer used by maintenance and the study/plans for the culinary arts program at FHS.

8. Paper Shortage - Mr. Knight discussed the impending paper shortage. During the bidding process for school supplies for next year, the cost for a case of paper increased 40-50% over the current year. Many factors are impacting this including supply chain issues and delivery constraints. We have locked into paper for the next six months at the lowest price, but will need to revisit for the second half of next fiscal year. We have met with IT to accelerate our plans to going paperless with as many processes as possible.

9. Discussion re: Electric School Buses - Mr. Kilpatrick discussed electric school buses. He has contacted STA, our transportation contractor, and they have sent a representative to the state to discuss electric buses. Mr. Kilpatrick intends to have follow up conversations with STA regarding this issue.

10. Review New Schools' Punch List/Principals' List - Mr. Kilpatrick reviewed the new schools' punch list and the list compiled by the principals. The punch list items are being addressed by the contractor, and Mr. Kilpatrick feels confident these will be finalized shortly. Some of the items on the principals' list are being addressed with purchases through the Board of Ed budget, such as window film and some desks and chairs. Mr. Weitlauf suggested we look to fund the remaining safety and security items through DoD Supplement Impact aid.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.