

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 22, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jay Weitlauf - Chairperson, Beverly Washington – Vice Chairperson (remote), Andrea Ackerman, Adrian Johnson, Robert Meade, Matthew Shulman, Ian Thomas, Jennifer White

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dean Antipas

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Philip Piazza, David Fleig, Sam Kilpatrick, Clint Kennedy, Denise Doolittle, Laurie LePine

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Jay Weitlauf, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION RE: TOWN'S ANNUAL AUDIT - Mr. Weitlauf noted that it has come to his attention from the auditors that there were four items that they need more information on, and David and his team have been working around the clock to ensure that those items are taken care of. It is his understanding that there is one item left that can be done in a week or so. Additionally, the auditors are accruing certain checks from 2024 to 2023 and apply them to the DoD Supplemental. Mr. Weitlauf sat in on a meeting with the Auditors and they made their recommendations, and the Town Manager is studying the issues and seeing how we can make those accruals.

III. BUDGET WORK SESSION

- Ian Thomas suggested that the Board should do a forensic audit.
- Jay Weitlauf suggested that they meet in COWs to discuss and develop a new budget process prior to the vote by the RTM on the Board budget.
- Jennifer White shared her view on lowering the budget.
- Superintendent Austin noted that the administration can still find more efficiencies once the budget is submitted to the Town.
- David Fleig reviewed the following new efficiencies developed by the administration for the Board's consideration, which would bring the proposed budget increase down to 8.41%:
 - Reduce regular education transportation by one bus (\$80,000)
 - Cut funding for summer school (\$77,973.27)
 - Cut funding for Adult Education (\$252,335)
 - Cut funding for the T*TED consultant (\$22,000)
 - Cut funding for software (\$51,400)

After extensive discussion, the following motions were made:

MOTION: Thomas, Johnson - to rescind the proposed cut to summer school and restore \$252,335 to the budget.

After clarification to the above motion, the following amended motion was made:

III. BUDGET WORK SESSION (Cont'd)

AMENDED MOTION: Thomas, Johnson - To restore the Adult Education line item to the amount of \$252,335.

YES (4) – Weitlauf, Johnson, Thomas, White

NO (4) – Washington, Meade, Ackerman, Shulman

ABSTAINED (0)

ABSENT (1) – Antipas

MOTION FAILED

MOTION: Shulman, Washington - To delete \$250,000 from the Adult Education budget, which would leave \$2,335 to help Groton residents with transportation to the Adult Education program in New London.

After discussion regarding the transportation cost reflected in the above motion, the following amended motion was made:

AMENDED MOTION: Shulman, Washington - To delete \$240,000 from the Adult Education budget, which would leave \$12,335 to help Groton residents with transportation to the Adult Education program in New London.

YES (2) – Shulman, Washington

NO (5) – Meade, Weitlauf, White, Ackerman, Johnson

ABSTAINED (1) – Thomas

ABSENT (1) – Antipas

MOTION FAILED

MOTION: Thomas, Shulman - To restore \$77,973.27 to the budget for Summer School.

YES (7) – Weitlauf, Washington, Ackerman, Johnson, Shulman, White, Thomas

NO (1) – Meade

ABSTAINED (0)

ABSENT (1) – Antipas

MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Johnson, Thomas - To add \$300,000 to the budget to support the Right to Read Legislation.

YES (7) – Weitlauf, Ackerman, Johnson, Meade, Shulman, Thomas, White

NO (0)

ABSTAINED (1) – Washington

ABSENT (1) – Antipas

MOTION PASSED

MOTION: Thomas, Johnson - To add \$115,000 to the budget to upgrade the district's financial software.

YES (7) – Weitlauf, Washington, Ackerman, Johnson, Meade, Thomas, White

NO (0)

ABSTAINED (1) – Shulman

ABSENT (1) – Antipas

MOTION PASSED

III. BUDGET WORK SESSION (Cont'd)

- The final budget number is \$88,857,603, which represents a 9.01% increase.

MOTION: Thomas, Ackerman - To request that the Town Council rearrange their budget review calendar to consider the Board of Education's budget last.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Johnson - To adjourn at 8:36 p.m.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY