

# TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SELECTMEN

---

*Thursday, February 16, 2017 – 7:35 p.m.  
Groton Dunstable Regional High School Library  
703 Chicopee ROW, Groton, MA*

**Present for Finance Committee:** G. Green (Chair), R. Hargraves (Vice Chair), D. Manugian, B. Robertson, L. Leonard, J. Sjoberg, A. Prest

**Present for School Committee:** A. Manugian, J. Kubick, M. Gilbert, P. Cronin, S. Cronin, A. Donahue, M. Gilbert

**Present for GDRSD District:** B. Ryan (Interim Superintendent), F. Antonelli (Interim Business Manager), M. Knight (Asst. Business Manager)

**Present for Dunstable Advisory Board:** C. Muir, H. Simmons

**Present for the Groton Board of Selectmen:** B. Pease, J. Degen, A. Eliot

**Present for the Dunstable Board of Selectmen:** W. Alterisio, L. Basbanes

**Documents available at the meeting:** School Committee Preliminary Budget Presentation

*The School Committee voted to exit executive session and return to open session at approximately 7:35 pm.*

**On a motion by Mr. Sjoberg, seconded by Mr. Robertson, the Groton Finance Committee unanimously voted to exit executive session and return to open session at this time. The Roll Call Vote: Mr. Green- Aye, Mr. Hargraves- Aye, Mr. Sjoberg- Aye, Ms. Leonard- Aye, Mr. Manugian- Aye, Mr. Prest- Aye, Mr. Robertson- Aye. (7-0-0)**

**GDRSD FY18 Budget Update** – Mr. Ryan distributed a prepared budget presentation document (please see attached). He stressed that every line item has been reviewed at this point, and where appropriate and sustainable, costs have been reclassified from the General Fund to Revolving Funds or Grants. The School Committee provided budgetary guidelines to address professional development, reduce the achievement gap, include one-time staffing costs, maintain class sizes between 15 and 25, provide for emergency and technology capital, and avoid overrides of Proposition 2 ½. School administrators provided level-service budget proposals, and the resulting projections have been discussed with both towns and their respective Finance Committees.

*Mr. Degen joined the meeting, and called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.*

**On a motion by Ms. Eliot, seconded by Mr. Pease, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to approve a one-day liquor license for the Salt and Light Café for February 16, 2016. The Vote: 3-0-0.**

Mr. Ryan summarized the class size review and provided a budget summary highlighting the major cost drivers. He explained that three (3) new FTE's have been proposed for FY18 (one mandated ELL teacher, a SPED Teacher for Boutwell and a Technology Assistant). They are also proposing to reduce 2.8 FTE's for a net gain of .2 FTE's. He provided comparative assessment data for Groton and Dunstable (an estimated increase of \$654k for Groton and \$336k for Dunstable without debt) stressing his commitment to managing assessments in such a way as to be comfortable for both communities as well as for the district. He briefly outlined the student enrollment shift which has caused the Dunstable assessment to be \$158,000 higher than anticipated (while Groton's share has dropped \$158,000). Mr. Ryan reiterated the impact of State Aid which continues to be flat year over year, and said that they propose to use \$100,000 of E&D funding which will leave a balance of approximately \$965,791 (or 2.5% of budget). Capital costs of \$265,000 which were originally planned to be funded as separate warrant articles have been included as part of the operating budget for this presentation. He is recommending inclusion of these costs with the operating budget because these are crucial expenditures for FY18, and there is a risk that either Town Meeting could vote one or more of these down if they were presented as special articles. Inclusion in the budget also serves to protect school funding for FY19, in case an opposite enrollment shift is seen. Mr. Antonelli and Mr. Knight provided some details of these projects (which include \$60k for Boutwell HVAC units, \$100k for Florence Roche buildings and grounds updates, \$50k for High School HVAC equipment, and \$55k for an internet upgrade). Mr. Antonelli explained the process of applying for MSBA funds for the Florence Roche School. The cost of this project would be borne by Groton, as no Dunstable students attend there. A feasibility study will be required that could cost between \$500,000 and \$1 million, although MSBA may reimburse a significant portion of that. Mr. Degen requested a breakdown of all proposed building costs. Mr. Antonelli replied that this information is available. Mr. Degen would prefer not to see capital costs contribute to operating budget growth; these items should be addressed separately. Approving a Capital Stabilization account at Town Meeting would alleviate this issue. Mr. Pease requested quotes for any technology equipment to be replaced or upgraded. He expressed some concern that these items on an individual basis may not qualify as capital. Mr. Knight agreed but said that the impact to the assessments will stay the same regardless of the funding mechanism.

Mr. Knight briefly outlined the structure of the budget book provided to town officials. Ms. Muir asked several questions regarding budget line items. Some of her concerns were due to expense reclasses (explained by Mr. Knight). Additionally, it was noted that the Assistant Superintendent's salary would be decreasing in FY18 as she would be working fewer hours. Also, building maintenance shows an increase of \$30,000 due to a placeholder for a potential central office move. Mr. Green said that the Groton FinCom would be meeting next on March 7<sup>th</sup> to begin their budget deliberations. They met with a selection of Department Heads on January 28<sup>th</sup> in an effort to fully understand department requests and priorities.

Dunstable FY18 Budget Update - Ms. Muir said that Dunstable has a preliminary budget for FY18 which restores most of the services cut for FY17. The current deficit is \$224,000; while this amount could be

covered by certified free cash, it would not be their first choice. While health insurance costs rose by only 5%, this good news is offset by several unexpected increases in other budget lines. Ms. Muir provided a detailed explanation of how the leftover override funds were incorporated into the FY18 budget: A tax override of \$475,000 was approved for FY17, and \$162,000 of that was assessed for GDRSD. Because Dunstable generally reserves 60% of new revenue for the school assessment, and new revenue totaling \$266,000 has been identified, \$160,000 will be set aside for the district in FY18 as per policy. The total of the \$162,000 previously assessed and the new revenue set aside of \$160,000 is \$320,000. While this amount is not sufficient to meet the projected assessment of \$335,993, it is close enough that Ms. Muir is confident the remainder can be found elsewhere within the budget. Mr. Robertson asked how the remaining \$300,000 of the tax override was spent. Ms. Muir replied that it restored services previously cut from the municipal budget. Ms. Hutton (Dunstable Town Administrator) noted that Dunstable is making progress reducing their reliance on Fee Cash in the operating budget. Ms. Muir observed that there will be a spike in the tax rate for FY18 as the Town plans to spend all available levy capacity. The group briefly discussed scheduling additional meetings specific to addressing the capital plan and options for funding these items. Mr. Alterisio stressed the need to educate the public in both Towns about budget dynamics as the possibility of tax overrides is still high for future years. Mr. Ryan agreed saying that his staff would make themselves available to support such an effort. He added that the district will post the final version of the Regional Agreement online as soon as possible.

*Mr. Kubick officially adjourned the GDRSD School Committee meeting at 9:00 p.m.*

*Mr. Green officially adjourned the FinCom meeting at 9:00 p.m.*

*Mr. Degen Officially adjourned the BOS meeting at 9:00 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dufresne, Recording Secretary

# BUDGET PRESENTATION FY 2018



William Ryan  
Interim Superintendent of Schools  
February 16, 2017

## The Process



The School Committee approved the following budgetary guidelines:

- Professional Development
- Achievement Gap
- Include one time staffing costs
- Class size between 15-25
- Emergency and technology capital
- Attempt to achieve without override

## The Process



- Instructed Administrators to request budgets that provided level services.
- Reviewed budget requests with Principals and Directors.
- Discussed projections with Town Manager and Town Administrator.
- Met with local Finance Committees to hear concerns.
- Reviewed each account with Business and Finance Office.

## The Process



- Received, reviewed, and discussed state aid estimates with appropriate state and MASS (Superintendents) officials.
- Discussed projected assessments with Business & Finance Subcommittee.

## Class Size Review 10/01/2016



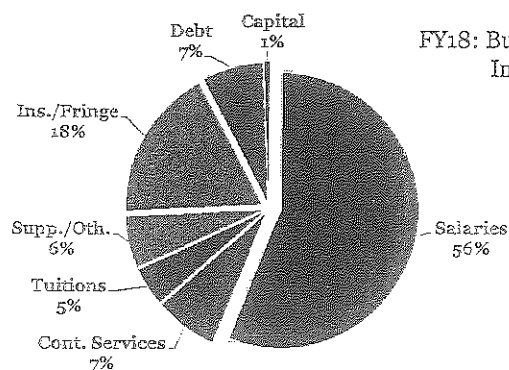
	<b>Ranges of class sizes:</b>	<b>Average class size:</b>
<b>Elementary</b>	<b>17-23</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>14-53*</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>High School</b>	<b>4-37</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>*8<sup>th</sup> Grade chorus section has 53 students</b>		

## Budget Comparison



<b>FY 17</b>	<b>\$38,210,905</b>
<b>FY 18</b>	<b>\$39,398,298</b>
<b>DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>\$1,187,393</b>
<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>+3.11%</b>

## FY 2017-18 Budget Summary



FY18: Budget \$39,398,298  
 Increase: \$1,187,393  
 Increase: 3.11 %

### The major Budget increases & decreases

• Salaries Negotiated	\$175,000
• EE's Benefits/Insur.	\$587,000
• School Choice/Charter	\$118,000
• External Oper. Review	\$ 80,000
• Central Office Move	\$ 30,000
• Capital Projects	\$265,000
• Debt Service	<\$102,141>
• Utilities	<\$105,637>

## Proposed FY18 Staffing Changes



<b>New positions:</b>	<b>FTE</b>
ELL Teacher	1.0
SPED Teacher (Boutwell)*	1.0
Technology Assistant	1.0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Reductions:</b>	
Regular/SPED Teachers	2.8
<b>Net difference</b>	<b>+.2</b>
<b>*Funded from Revolving Account</b>	

## Foundation Enrollment & Assessment Change to Dunstable



Enrollments as of October 1

	<b>FY17</b>	<b>FY18</b>	<b>Change</b>
Dunstable	533	546	13
Groton	1,847	1,839	-8
<b>District Total</b>	<b>2,380</b>	<b>2,385</b>	<b>5</b>

**Financial Impact of Enrollment Change to Dunstable**  
**\$158,000**



## Assessment Comparisons Without Debt



	Groton	Dunstable
FY17	\$18,363,565	\$5,244,976
FY18	\$19,017,737	\$5,580,969
Difference	\$ +654,172	\$ +335,993

## Assessment continued



	Groton	Dunstable
Actual Diff.	\$+654,172	\$+335,993
Initial Guideline	\$+750,000	\$+223,000
Increase/Decrease	\$- 95,828	\$ +112,993

## State Aid Is Flat



### FY18 Change

Chapter 70	+\$47,700
Transportation	+\$ 1,386
Charter Reimbursements	+\$ 3,723
Total New State Aid	+\$52,809

While State aid is rising at only .45%, budget costs have increased by 3.11%.

## Use of Excess & Deficiency Account



• Certified Balance as of June 30, 2017	\$1,065,791
• Anticipated use in FY18 Budget	\$ 100,000
• Projected Balance	\$ 965,791
• E&D as a Percentage of Budget	2.5%

## Capital Costs or Potential Warrant Articles



1. Roof Top Units at Boutwell	\$ 60,000
2. Building & Grounds Updates at Flo Ro	\$ 100,000
3. Replace HS HVAC Equipment	\$ 50,000
4. Technology Internet Upgrade *	\$ 55,000
<b>Total Capital Projects</b>	<b>\$ 265,000</b>

\*Actual Cost \$110,000 Erate funds \$55,000

## FY 18 Assessment W/O Debt including Capital Projects



	Groton	Dunstable
Operating	\$18,784,670	\$5,549,036
Capital Projects	\$233,067	\$31,933
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$19,017,737</b>	<b>\$5,580,969</b>
Diff. From FY17	\$654,172	\$335,993
Town Guideline	\$750,000	\$223,000
Difference	(\$95,828)	\$112,993

## Dates to Remember



**Public Hearing** February 28, 2017

**Budget adopted by SC** March 07, 2017

**Town Meetings:**

**Groton** April 24, 2017

**Dunstable** May 8, 2017

## Thank You



### QUESTIONS?

**Contact Superintendent Bill Ryan**  
**by email: [Bryan@gdrsd.org](mailto:Bryan@gdrsd.org)**  
**Or call 978-448-5505, Ext.200**