

GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library
Business Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2011

Approved 9.27.12

PRESENT:

Mr. Erik Dichter, Secretary
Ms Berta Erickson
Mr. Jim Frey, Chair
Mr. John Giger
Ms Leslie Lathrop
Ms Alison Manugian, Vice-chair
Mr. Jon Sjoberg

ADMINISTRATION:

Mr. Joseph Mastrocola, Superintendent
Mr. Gerald Martin, Director of Business and Finance

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: C. Beckert-Long, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark; R. Arena, M. Mastrullo, M. Brisson, C. McCallan, A. Cho, G. Arrighi, G. Bolt, L. Caswell, A. McPhearson,
See attached sign-in sheet

I. Call to Order:

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by the chair, J. Frey.

II. Pledge of Allegiance - Students of the High School

Ariana Cho and Clare McCallan led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ariana is a sophomore and excels in the classroom, on the soccer and softball fields and on the basketball court. She also plays several instruments and is an officer on the Student Council. Clare is a junior, an honor student and has a passion for fundraising. She is a member of the Regional Student Advisory Council and the State Student Advisory Council of Massachusetts.

III. Announcements

None

IV. Approval of Minutes

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 15, 2011.

SECONDED BY L. LATHROP

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

V. Vote to Accept Warrant Articles

A. MANUGIAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REPORT OF THREE PAYROLL WARRANTS TOTALING \$1,086,333.83 AND FOURTEEN VENDOR WARRANTS TOTALING \$2,209,450.02.

SECONDED BY J. GIGER

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VI. Questions and Comments from the Public

Student representatives who will be attending school committee meetings this year are Gerrit Bolt, Ariana Cho, Gabrielle Arrighi, Logan Caswell and Adam McPhearson. B. Erickson noted Gerrit was a member of the Principal Screening Committee and was a good contributor.

VII. Presentations

A. Kerri Figueroa (GDEF) and Amy Hoey (Lowell General Hospital)

Grant

On behalf of the Groton Dunstable Education Foundation (GDEF), Kerri Figueroa announced they have received a \$13,357 grant from Lowell General Hospital to provide the SNAP Health Center software to the

nurses in the district. SNAP Health Center is a comprehensive medical documentation and tracking software that manages every aspect of student health related data. She explained that in the spring, then district nursing coordinator, Phyllis Lang, submitted a grant application to GDEF. With the cost of the program outside its resources, the GDEF board approached Lowell General Hospital and in late June, they received word they wished to fund the program.

Nursing Coordinator Lorinda Dishington-Ortiz said the software will streamline record keeping and will give the nurses more time to focus on health promotion and caring for the students. The program is expected to be implemented by the fall. Approximately 1065 Massachusetts schools use the SNAP system.

K. Figueroa introduced Amy Hoey, Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer at Lowell General, and thanked her for funding the program. Ms Hoey said this grant aligns with their goals of leveraging technology and electronic health records to improve quality of care and to allow more time with students.

J. Frey thanked Ms Figueroa and Ms Hoey and said this is perfect example of a collaboration.

L. LATHROP MOVED THEY ACCEPT THIS EXTREMELY GENEROUS GIFT WITH GREAT APPRECIATION.
SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

B. High School NEASC Report - Principal Mastrullo

The final NEASC report was received about two weeks ago and Principal Mastrullo said they are meeting all of the requirements. The document has been released to the public within the required sixty days and is available on the district and town websites. Two of the major recommendations in the Leadership Standard have all ready been addressed with stability in the Administrative Team and curriculum leadership. He noted the foundation of the report states many times how the school is student centered, how the staff cares about the kids and how there is a unique relationship between students and staff. Some of the findings and short-term, and long-term, actions that will take place were summarized.

Evaluations - The report states evaluations are not implemented consistently and some teachers have not been evaluated in a long time. Yesterday, every teacher received a copy of who is being evaluated, and by whom, and a copy of the evaluation tool. Since the quality of the teacher in the front of the room is the most important factor to student learning, there will be an emphasis on evaluations to support teachers and to provide them with feedback for improvement.

Technology - They recognize that the some of the technology is outdated and more technology is needed, as is more technology instruction. Two laptop carts, with thirty laptops each, have been added and a room has been set aside as a dedicated computer lab. A technology committee has been formed to assess and prioritize the needs and map a plan for the future. The goal is to have interactive learning with Smartboards and the English department will pilot one this year. They have purchased "Its Learning" which allows teachers to create interactive websites and they are looking to pilot up to twenty lpads. He noted students are engaged by technology.

Curriculum and Assessment - They are completing a consistent and articulated curriculum for each course across all subjects and departments and instituting associated common assessments that identify strengths and weaknesses and inform instruction. Curriculum development is ongoing and is based on state and federal requirements, local initiatives and student assessment data. Curriculum based decisions are based on 21st century frameworks and preparing students for the 21st century. Introduction to programming, web programming and bio-technology classes have been added this year.

He stated the 21st century skills are the same as the five learning expectations in their mission statement. Skills are about active learning and collaborating with others.

The report recommends they moderate class size and they have hired two science teachers and one math/science teacher. M. Mastrullo said they recognize that every day teachers and administration are working in concert to improve teaching and learning and that they need to effectively communicate with parents and community support systems to improve student learning. A professional development plan has been developed and teachers received it on the opening day of school.

J. Frey said this is an important milestone for the high school and the district. M. Mastrullo said the formal accreditation comes in mid-October and he is confident they will receive the highest level. While the document was positive, they do have things they need to improve upon. B. Erickson said she was impressed to learn that each student has one adult to counsel them in addition to Guidance. R. Arena said it is an advisory program but is also a part of who the teachers are.

J. Giger is concerned with the comments in the report about professional development and said they need to teach students the concept of continually learning and teachers need to do that also. He feels they need to embrace professional development. M. Mastrullo agrees but feels the teachers are proactive and try to improve their practice every day and they clamor for learning. He said they have a detailed plan for professional development that is department specific.

L. Lathrop said the curriculum development, professional development and technology are pieces that the communities do not necessarily see as classroom learning but rather as overhead and it is up to the committee to show them how this really benefits the students.

J. Mastrocola thanked the Administrative Team for their hard work over the past several weeks and said this is a ten year process. He encouraged the education community and parents to read and understand the report because most of the planning, organization and budgetary costs are going to be driven by this report.

VIII. Reports

A. Subcommittees

Personnel and Negotiations - J. Sjoberg reported they will be meeting on September 20th.

Policy Subcommittee - L. Lathrop reported they met at the end of August to lay out what they want to do this year and the date of their next meeting will be determined after tonight's meeting and posted on the website.

Budget & Finance Subcommittee - A. Manugian reported they met at the end of August to see how the end of the fiscal year was wrapping up and to see how this year was starting to lay out. Their next meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m. on September 29th at Florence Roche.

B. Superintendent

1. Donations - Computers - BAE Systems, of Nashua, New Hampshire, has generously donated 30 Dell laptops and 22 Dell workstations to the district and they have been earmarked for the middle school and high school. J. Mastrocola said this is one of the best donations of usable equipment he has seen and he thanked Mr. Babin for traveling to Nashua to pick them up and Mr. Lathrop for linking the district to BAE Systems.

B. ERICKSON MOVED THEY ACCEPT THE 30 DELL LAPTOPS AND 22 DELL WORKSTATIONS DONATED BY BAE SYSTEMS. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

J. Mastrocola said he will provide a technology update at the September 27th meeting.

2. Maintenance Update Letter - Members received a list of the many major maintenance and repair tasks

that were completed over the summer months. J. Mastrocola noted many of the larger items will add up to cost efficiencies. He thanked Mr. Byrne and his team for their hard work in completing projects that were overdue and under funded. He stated the buildings sparkle inside and out.

3. High School Water Approval Letter - After eight years of non-compliance, MassDEP (Department of Environmental Protection) has approved the water quality at the high school and the "Do Not Drink" signs are no longer necessary and have been removed.

4. High School Finance Debt Reduction Update - The Municipal Finance Oversight Board (MFOB) approved the refunding for the remaining high school debt on August 31, 2011. This approval certifies that the refunding is now state qualified and enhances the district's bond rating. The district received three competitive bids for an \$18,045,000 ten year refunding bond issue and Morgan Stanley & Co., LLC was the winning bidder on the bonds with an average interest rate of 2.008%. The bond sale was conducted on September 7, 2011.

Given current interest rates, the district can expect to save \$996,099 over the remaining eleven years of debt service payments and these savings will pass directly to both towns with respect to debt assessments. J. Mastrocola commended Mr. Martin for his hard work and the Budget and Finance Subcommittee for their cooperation.

C. Director of Business and Finance

1. Approval of Bond (Action) -

A. MANUGIAN MOVED THAT THE SALE OF THE \$18,045,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION STATE QUALIFIED REFUNDING BONDS OF THE DISTRICT DATED SEPTEMBER 22, 2011 (THE "BONDS"), TO MORGAN STANLEY & CO. LLC IS HEREBY APPROVED AND CONFIRMED. THE BONDS SHALL BE PAYABLE ON SEPTEMBER 1 OF THE YEARS AND IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNTS AS FOLLOWS AND BEAR INTEREST AT THE AVERAGE RATE OF 2.008%.

2012	\$1,900,000	2017	\$1,830,000
2013	\$1,885,000	2018	\$1,795,000
2014	\$1,855,000	2019	\$1,755,000
2015	\$1,845,000	2020	\$1,725,000
2016	\$1,840,000	2021	\$1,615,000

A. MANUGIAN FURTHER MOVED THAT IN CONNECTION WITH THE MARKETING AND SALE OF THE BONDS, THE PREPARATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF A NOTICE OF SALE AND PRELIMINARY OFFICIAL STATEMENT DATED AUGUST 25, 2011, AND A FINAL OFFICIAL STATEMENT DATED SEPTEMBER 7, 2011 (THE "OFFICIAL STATEMENT"), EACH IN SUCH FORM AS MAY BE APPROVED BY THE DISTRICT TREASURER, BE AND HEREBY ARE RATIFIED, CONFIRMED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED.

A. MANUGIAN FURTHER MOVED THAT THE CONSENT TO THE FINANCIAL ADVISOR BIDDING FOR THE BONDS, AS EXECUTED PRIOR TO THE BIDDING FOR THE BONDS, IS HEREBY CONFIRMED.

A. MANUGIAN FURTHER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A REFUNDING ESCROW AGREEMENT TO BE DATED SEPTEMBER 22, 2011, BETWEEN THE DISTRICT AND U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, AS REFUNDING ESCROW AGENT.

A. MANUGIAN FURTHER MOVED THAT THE DISTRICT TREASURER AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE BE, AND HEREBY ARE, AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER A CONTINUING DISCLOSURE UNDERTAKING IN COMPLIANCE WITH SEC RULE 15c2-12 IN SUCH FORM AS MAY BE APPROVED BY BOND COUNSEL TO THE DISTRICT, WHICH UNDERTAKING SHALL BE INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE IN THE BONDS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HOLDERS OF THE BONDS FROM TIME TO TIME.

A. MANUGIAN FURTHER MOVED THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, THE DISTRICT SECRETARY AND THE DISTRICT TREASURER BE AND HEREBY ARE, AUTHORIZED TO TAKE ANY AND ALL SUCH ACTIONS, AND EXECUTE AND DELIVER SUCH CERTIFICATES, RECEIPTS OR OTHER DOCUMENTS AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THEM, OR ANY OF THEM, TO BE NECESSARY OR CONVENIENT TO CARRY INTO EFFECT THE PROVISIONS

SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON

G. Martin stated the current interest rate is an average of 4.45%. J. Giger reiterated the \$996,099 is not able to be used by the district but goes back to the towns and he hopes people will be conscious of this when the committee talks budget and finance in the future. J. Frey said the term refund is used but it is actually "funding once again". The money does not come back to the towns today but it relieves the future debt burden the towns have committed to by that amount.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL

D. Advisory Committees

Prescott Advisory Committee - B. Erickson reported five architectural firms have responded to the RFP, and they expect possibly five more firms to respond as well. The Prescott Advisory Committee will interview and choose the architect. The goal is for commercial and community uses in the building.

J. Giger asked if there has been any progress with generating an RFP for placing a cell phone antenna on the high school site. J. Mastrocola said they have had a few very informal walkthroughs with cell phone company representatives and so far, he has not had anyone that has been "hot" to the idea. B. Erickson said Dunstable is also looking into having a cell tower.

Tarbell Advisory Committee - B. Erickson reported areas on the property have tested positively for a new septic system. It is going out to bid and Town Meeting will be asked to appropriate money for that use.

E. Chair

1. Goals - J. Frey distributed a draft of the school committee's 2011-2012 Goals and Objectives for review. These will be discussed, and adopted, at the next meeting.

It was agreed members will receive the meeting packet both electronically and by mail for the next meeting.

IX. Discussions

None

X. New Business

Referencing an article in today's Lowell Sun, J. Sjoberg said Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), will be making a decision in the next few weeks as to whether or not the state would be taking over the special education collaboratives. He asked if the committee should develop a consensus on the direction they feel should be taken that would be in their best interest.

J. Frey noted Glenn Koocher, executive director of MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) is against expanding the state's role in collaboratives and believes the ethics laws and audit regulations that are in place simply need to be enforced. J. Frey said Mr. Mastrocola is part of the investigation process and sits on the Board of Directors and cannot engage himself in the process. J. Giger said Education Secretary Reville is not necessarily in agreement with the Commissioner.

It was noted four Groton-Dunstable students receive services from the MEC collaborative and J. Giger asked if the district has to pay an annual amount of money regardless of whether students are there or not. J. Mastrocola said no; they pay for alternate in-house services. J. Sjoberg said the auditor's report is on the web and noted the summary version is not quite as bleak as what is in the newspapers. It was agreed members will bring their thoughts to the next meeting for discussion and perhaps they can come up with a statement.

J. Giger said the Octoberfest 5K is run by GDEF and he and his wife have signed up for the October 2nd 5K walk to raise money for the foundation. He will walk for anyone who cannot be there in exchange for a \$25 donation to GDEF.

XI. Adjournment

B. ERICKSON MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:26 P.M. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith
Recording Secretary

With attachment