

## GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

High School Library  
Business Meeting Minutes  
April 10, 2012

Approved 04.24.12

### **PRESENT:**

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

### **ABSENT:**

Ms Berta Erickson  
Mr. John Giger

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

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

**STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS:** C. Lindemer, Groton Herald; L. Miller and family, T. Chase and family, P. Myerson

### **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 from Swallow Union**

Fourth graders Lily Miller and Tristan Chase led the Pledge of Allegiance. Lily is an outstanding student leader and a gifted writer. She is compassionate and always first to lend a helping hand. She has helped coordinated efforts to collect shoes and food for those in need and has helped raise over \$2000 by promoting Box Tops for Education. Tristan likes making things and enjoys the simple machine unit with its many hands-on activities. His favorite subject is math and he would like to be a carpenter so he can use his skills.

### **III. Announcements**

J. Mastrocola announced the middle school is inviting members to attend the showing of *Hana's Suitcase* on Friday at the Performing Arts Center. This is the concluding event for the Penny Tank activity. L. Lathrop said the film is about two children from Czechoslovakia who were stuck in bad circumstances because they were Jewish. It also tells the present day story of how a group of Japanese students and their tenacious teacher, Fumiko Ishioka, helped solve the mystery of Hana Brady whose name was painted on the battered suitcase they received from Auschwitz. Following the film, the eighth graders will be placing pennies, one at a time, into the tank. A butterfly bush will be planted in the center of the courtyard. A butterfly is an important symbol of the Holocaust because of the poem *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* written by a young child in a death camp.

The film will be shown later in the day, the time to be determined, for the fifth and sixth graders and anyone in the community is welcome to attend.

The spaghetti supper fundraiser for the Chamber Chorus London trip will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday at Nashoba Valley Tech. L. Lathrop thanked the Tech for hosting this fundraiser.

J. Frey announced he attended Spring into the Arts last Thursday and heard the bands and Chamber Choir performances.

### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

J. SJOBERG MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2012.

SECONDED BY E. DICHTER

**SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

**V. Vote to Accept Warrant Articles**

A. MANUGIAN MOVED TO ACCEPT ONE PAYROLL WARRANT FOR \$839,650.91 AND FIVE VENDOR WARRANTS TOTALING \$308,473.73. SECONDED BY J. SJOBERG

**SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

It was noted the \$42,000 warrant was a scheduled payment toward the London trip.

**VI. Questions and Comments from the Public**

None

**VII. Presentations**

**A. High School Presentation - Gerrit Bolt** - Postponed

**VIII. Reports**

**A. Subcommittees**

**Policy Subcommittee** - L. Lathrop reported they met and decided which holidays should be added to the school calendar - Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and two of the fasting holidays for Muslims. They are researching whether Ash Wednesday should be added. She noted these are not "no school" days. A policy will be written as to what can and cannot be done in the classroom and will include the fact that it has to be assumed there may be children in the classroom that observe these holidays so no one is made to feel different.

They made good progress with the social networking policy. She said this should be changed to technology communications.

J. Sjoberg asked if any progress has been made on the acceptable use of technology. L. Lathrop said the Internet Acceptable Use Policy should be changed to the Technology Acceptable Use Policy. E. Dichter said the issue of what technology is acceptable for students to use in school is one thing and what types of communication are acceptable between students and staff is another. There will be two policies and they want input from the educators on the second one. L. Lathrop said the MASC policies are not very useful and E. Dichter said those policies are trying to be everything to everybody and as a result, are being nothing to anybody. There is nothing measurable or enforceable.

Their next meeting is Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Budget & Finance Subcommittee** - A. Manugian reported they met on March 29<sup>th</sup> and had an introduction to OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) accounts, an exposure created for the district and towns for retirement benefits that include dental and medical insurance. Today it is about \$690,000 and grows in conjunction with the GIC increases. It is currently funded one year at a time out of the operating budget and they are looking at creating other accounts down the line to fund it into the future. They revisited the legal services to make sure they are being handled in the most advantageous manner. They discussed town meeting presentations which will be similar to last year with a handout being available. They discussed the stabilization fund and both the Groton FinCom and Board of Selectmen voted to support the creation of the fund. It is not known whether the Dunstable Advisory Committee took a vote Monday night. They have discussed the idea of having a Memorandum of Understanding that would limit the school committee, after the initial funds go into the account, to adding funds outside the operating budget so it would always be a separate warrant article at town meeting to keep it more transparent.

Training on UniFund will be next week.

Their next meeting is at 8:00 a.m. on April 26<sup>th</sup> at MSS and they will focus on the revolving accounts.

**Curriculum and Instruction** - A. Manugian reported they have not met and they need to choose a date.

**Personnel and Negotiations** - J. Sjoberg reported they will be meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to review resumes. Applications will be received through April 20<sup>th</sup> and as of last week, they have received seven complete applications. J. Frey said he was contacted by an interested party today.

## **B. Superintendent**

**1. Important Dates (Info)** - Barring inclement weather, the last day of instruction for all students is Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. This is a half day for students and a full day for staff. High school graduation will be held, rain or shine, on Friday June 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. and the middle school 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion Ceremony will be Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

The first day of instruction for the 2012-2013 school year is August 29<sup>th</sup> for grades 1-9, August 30<sup>th</sup> for grades K, 10, 11 and 12 and August 31<sup>st</sup> for Pre-K.

**2. School Choice Information/Decision (Action)** - If the committee agrees the district should be in the school choice program, no vote is required. J. Mastrocola said there are currently 60 applicants for school choice and openings will potentially be available at the high school level. He will have a firm recommendation for the committee at the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and keeping a low class size will be a priority. L. Lathrop asked how the high school space will be affected by the potential of having international students and J. Mastrocola said they had hoped for 10 but there might only be 2, if any. There is a lot of competition for students and the distance from Boston is a challenge. He noted they receive \$5300 for each school choice student. He recommends continuing with school choice. L. Lathrop said she would like to hear from the high school principal about whether it is good for the school or not. It was agreed this topic will be on the next agenda since two members are absent this evening.

**3. Donation (Action)** - Matthew Volpe, Regional Facilities Manager for Schneider Electric in North Andover, would like to donate 25 white boards, of various sizes, to Florence Roche. The value is approximately \$1500. J. Mastrocola said it will not cost very much to purchase the brackets and white board pens and he recommends approving the donation.

J. SJOBERG MOVED THEY APPROVE THE GENEROUS DONATION FROM MATTHEW VOLPE OF TWENTY-FIVE WHITE BOARDS WITH A VALUE OF \$1500. SECONDED BY L. LATHROP  
**SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

J. Frey said the donation is greatly appreciated and they appreciate all the support they get from the community.

**C. Director of Business and Finance** - The current three year trash bid ends on June 30<sup>th</sup> and G. Martin said new bids were opened on Tuesday. Four bids were received and Allied Waste was the low bidder and the district will see a savings of just over \$18,000 over a three year period.

**D. Advisory Committees** - J. Mastrocola reported Ms Erickson is representing the school committee at a meeting at the Prescott School this evening in regards to the Prescott Reuse Committee.

## **E. Chair**

**1. Meeting Dates** - The second school committee meeting in May is scheduled for May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Dunstable's election is May 21<sup>st</sup> and Groton's election is May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The certified election results will not be available for the committee to do their reorganization that evening. They could proceed with a business meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup> with the existing committee and if there happen to be any candidates-elect, they would be welcome to

attend. J. Frey will work with J. Mastrocola on the meeting dates.

**2. Union Negotiations** - A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed by all parties for the PEC (Public Employees Committee) which is the health care benefits negotiation committee representing all the bargaining units. This was an essential element to contracts that are under negotiation. The teachers are going back and will be voting on the proposal that is on the table specific to their contract. They hope to do an informational meeting this week and hold a vote to ratify amongst their membership the week after school vacation. He said this is very good progress.

#### **IX. Discussions**

None

#### **X. New Business**

By contract, the superintendent's review has to be done soon and J. Sjoberg said he will be emailing the evaluation form to members and will also have hard copies available. They need to have a workshop by the end of April or the beginning of May.

The school committee will meet on April 24<sup>th</sup> and J. Frey said they may have a more definite schedule of the sequence of events. They will be meeting in open session, although it will not be broadcast, on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to do screening of interim candidates.

J. Frey said the educator evaluation instrument needs to be negotiated with the teachers and the administration has been preparing for this. Because they are part of Race to the Top, the deadline for having it into the state is September 1<sup>st</sup>. J. Mastrocola will provide an update at the next meeting.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

L. LATHROP MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:48 P.M.    SECONDED BY E. DICHTER  
**SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith  
Recording Secretary