App'd 3.9.22

Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
SPECIAL JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING WITH GROTON SELECTBOARD AND FINANCE COMMITTEE/DUNSTABLE SELECTBOARD AND ADVISORY
PUBLIC HEARING FY23 BUDGET
March 1, 2022 at 7:00 PM
ZOOM Webinar

Members Present: Marlena Gilbert, Pete Cronin (entered at 8:09 PM), Rafael Glod, Jeff Kubick, Brian LeBlanc, Lacey McCabe, Fay Raynor

Administration Present: Dr. Laura Chesson, Superintendent; Kristin DeFrancisco, Ass't. Superintendent; Sherry Kersey, Director of Finance & Operations

Others Present: Members of Groton FinCom and Board of Selectmen; Members of Dunstable Advisory Board and Board of Selectmen

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM

FY23 Budget Presentation - S. Kersey, Director of Finance & Operations
Ms. Kersey presented a PowerPoint for the FY23 Budget. The budget book can be found on the district website: gdrsd.org under Business & Finance Documents.
The purpose of this discussion was to present a review of components of the comprehensive budget package;

- Operating Budget Overview
    - Assumption - Level Service Budget w/ no additional positions, initiatives or programs added. The recommended operating budget reflects an increase of 2.67%
    - Assumption - Contingency Line of $400,000 was adopted in prior budget years. The amount was reduced in FY21 and FY22 and will remain at $320,000 for FY23
    - Assumption - Excess & Deficiency Usage (district savings account). Free cash limited to 5% of the operating budget. Administration is recommending the use of $600,000 from this fund for FY23 per budget guidance.
    - Assumption - Capital Plan is higher than anticipated, however cutbacks were made in FY21 and FY22. Priority will be given to health, safety, and technology related items.
- FY23 Operation Assessment (including debt service and capital)
    - Groton - $25,587,770 ($289K more than the placeholder in preliminary budget)

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    - Dunstable - $7,587,285 ($61K more than the placeholder in preliminary budget)

Ms. Kersey reviewed 5 scenarios

- ARPA Funds Usage Overview

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES
March 9 - SC Certifies the Budget
March 10 - Send Assessment Letters to Towns
April 30 - Groton Annual Town Meeting
May 14 - Dunstable Annual Town Meeting

Becky Pine called the Groton Selectboard to order at 7:54 PM
Questions/comments were taken from both School Committee members as well as the panel of Groton-Dunstable town representatives.

Adjournment of public hearing at 8:03 PM.

Policy EBCFA Face Coverings. - Jeff Kubick, Policy Subcommittee Chair - Discussion/Vote
The new policy was summarized by Mr. Kubick. The Chair announced that because there were two prior meetings on this topic, no public comment would be taken at this point.
Mr. Kubick reviewed the changes to the policy in moving all schools to mask optional on March 7th. Questions/comments were taken from the school committee members including thoughts on starting the policy change the following day, however Dr. Chesson said that the union asked to keep masks on for a week past the return from school break.

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the EBCFA-Face Coverings policy as represented by the subcommittee.
So Moved - P. Cronin
Second - R. Glod
Discussion - Mr. Cronin asked about the subsection concerned with the use of masks for 5 days after returning from a COVID diagnosis. How would this be supported if there is no compliance. Dr. Chesson said they can remain out of school or would be sent home if they return after 5 days and refuse to wear a mask. There is a separate policy for communicable disease that families would have to follow.
Roll Call - B. LeBlanc, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; J. Kubick, yes; R. Glod, yes; F. Raynor, yes; L. McCabe, yes; P. Cronin, yes
Motion Approved

Conservation Restriction MOU - F. Raynor, Chair, Building Committee - Discussion/Vote

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F. Raynor made a motion to approve the MOU and accompanying Exhibit A that outlines the understanding between the GDRSD and the Town of Groton Conservation Commission pertaining to a Conservation Restriction. This MOU will form the basis for a future formal CR contract/agreement that will be entered into between the two parties.
So Moved - L. McCabe
Second - R. Glod
Discussion - Mr. Kubick asked for clarification on the use of the wetlands for recreation. The land can still be used for this purpose by the public.
Roll Call Vote - B. LeBlanc, yes; M. Gilbert, yes; J. Kubick, yes; R. Glod, yes; F. Raynor, yes; L. McCabe, yes; P. Cronin, yes

Announcements: March 3, 2022 at 7:00 PM - Public Forum for Dunstable
TBA - Public Forum for Groton

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jo Ann Sivazlian
Secretary

Link to meeting:
http://schedule.thegrotonchannel.org/Cablecast/public-site/index.html#/search?channel=1&query=school%20committee
List of documents used by the GDRSC during the meeting:

- Agenda
- Budget Book FY23
- GDRSD Proposed Budget PP
- Conservation Restriction MOU
- Policy EBCFA

Public Hearing
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District
Superintendent's Proposed FY23 Budget
March 1, 2022

Presented By: Dr. Laura Chesson, Superintendent of Schools
Sherry Kersey, Director of Finance & Operations

How to access FY23 Budget

www.gdrsd.org
- Menu
  - Documents Folder
    - Business and Finance Folder
      - FY2023 Budget Folder
        - Superintendent's Proposed FY23 Budget

*All SC presentations are there as well

Presentation Agenda

- Operating Budget Overview
- Capital Budget
- ARPA Funds Usage Overview

Budget assumption- Level services

This budget is a level services budget. There are no additional positions, initiatives or programs added. COVID positions funded by grants and ARPA funds have those funding sources available for FY23, thus Towns assessments will not increase due to those positions.

The recommended operating budget reflects an increase of 2.67%.

Budget assumption: Contingency

Contingency Funding:

- The contingency line of $400,000 was adopted in prior budget years
- In FY21 & FY22, in an effort to reduce the assessment requests to the towns and balance the budget, this amount was reduced to $320,000. The contingency line remains at $320,000 for the FY23 budget.

Budget assumption: E & D usage

- Excess and deficiency is the school district's savings account.
- It is limited by law to 5% of our operating budget.
- On February 3, 2022, our E & D was certified at $1,381,846 or 3.12% of our budget.
- Excess and Deficiency funds are typically used for one time expenditures rather than recurring expenses. Budget guidance from the committee directed Administration to slowly reduce this amount over several fiscal years. Thus, Administration is recommending the use of $600,000 in E&D funds as compared to $800,000 in FY21 and FY22.

Capital Plan Assumption:

Capital Plan:

- The Capital Plan assessments to both towns have been significantly increased in FY23, as the two prior years were significantly reduced. Priority was given to items that were health, safety and technology related.

FY23 Operating Assessment - Groton

	FY22	FY23
Operating Budget:	$23,481,350	$24,527,840
Debt Service :	$ 541,784	$ 482,904
Capital:	$ 217,298	$ 577,026
Total Assessment	$24,240,432	$25,587,770

FY23 Operating Assessment - Dunstable

	FY22	FY23
Operating Budget:	$ 7,000,663	$ 7,262,942
Debt Service :	$ 166,081	$ 135,369
Capital:	$ 64,202	$ 188,974
Total Assessment	$ 7,230,946	$ 7,587,285

Assessment vs. Current Town Funding

- The assessment to Groton is $289K more than the placeholder they have in the preliminary budget.

- The assessment to Dunstable is $61K more than the placeholder they have in the preliminary budget.

Assessment vs. Current Town Funding

With the drop of E & D appropriation of $200,000, that added $154,000 to Groton's assessment and $46,000 to Dunstable.

Furthermore, the FY23 minimum required contribution for Groton increased at 5.23% over last year, while Dunstable MRC increased 3.9%. This differential shifted $50,000 from Dunstable to Groton.

How can we close the gap?

There are 3 ways to close the gap:

1. Use additional alternative revenue sources - Those available to us are considered one time funds that may create a funding hole in the future (ex. E & D, Circuit Breaker, ect.)
2. Reduce expenses - As this is a level service budget, any reductions would bring the budget below level services.
3. A combination of both reducing expenses and applying alternative funding.

Scenario Summary

Scenario 1: Level Services: $600,000 E & D (this is the current scenario)

Scenario 2: Level Services: $600,000 E & D and add'l $75,000 in Circuit Breaker Funding

Scenario 3: Below Level Services: $600,000 E & D, $75,000 in Circuit Breaker and 1.0 Instructional FTE at the HS or MS $80,000.

Scenario 4: Below Level Services: $690,000 E & D, $100,000 in Circuit Breaker and 1.0 Instructional FTE at the HS or MS $80,000.

Scenario 5: Level Services: $730,000 E & D and add'l $115,000 in Circuit Breaker Funding

Scenario 1

The District uses reduced level ($600K) of E & D in FY23, level services:

Groton Estimated Funding:	$24,238,580
Groton Preliminary Assessment:	$24,527,840
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 289,260)
Dunstable Estimated Funding:	$ 7,201,663
Dunstable Preliminary Assessment:	$ 7,262,942
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 61,279)

Scenario 2

The District uses reduced level ($600K) of E & D in FY23 and $75K more Circuit Breaker, level services:

Groton Estimated Funding:	$24,238,580
Groton Preliminary Assessment:	$24,469,917
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 231,337)
Dunstable Estimated Funding:	$ 7,201,663
Dunstable Preliminary Assessment:	$ 7,245,865
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 44,202)

Scenario 3

The District uses reduced level ($600K) of E & D in FY23, $75K more Circuit Breaker, $80K 1.0FTE reduction at HS or MS, below level services:

Groton Estimated Funding:	$24,238,580
Groton Preliminary Assessment:	$24,408,133
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 169,553)
Dunstable Estimated Funding:	$ 7,201,663
Dunstable Preliminary Assessment:	$ 7,227,649
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 25,986)

Scenario 4

The District uses reduced level ($690K) of E & D in FY23, $100K more Circuit Breaker, $80K 1.0FTE reduction at HS or MS, below level services:

Groton Estimated Funding:	$24,238,580
Groton Preliminary Assessment:	$24,319,318
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 80,738)
Dunstable Estimated Funding:	$ 7,201,663
Dunstable Preliminary Assessment:	$ 7,201,464
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 199)

Scenario 5

The District uses reduced level ($730K) of E & D in FY23, $140K more Circuit Breaker, **no FTE cuts**, level services:

Groton Estimated Funding:	$24,238,580
Groton Preliminary Assessment:	$24,319,318
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 80,738)
Dunstable Estimated Funding:	$ 7,201,663
Dunstable Preliminary Assessment:	$ 7,201,464
(Shortfall)/Surplus:	($ 199)

Comparison of Operating Budget for Each Scenario

Scenario 1:	$44,614,813	2.67% increase
Scenario 2:	$44,539,813	2.50% increase
Scenario 3:	$44,459,813	2.31% increase
Scenario 4:	$44,434,813	2.26% increase
Scenario 5:	$44,394,813	2.16% increase

Capital Plan

High School/Swallow Union/Boutwell

Project: Update the security system
Estimated Cost: $100,000

High School

Project: Parking lot pothole repair and sealcoating
Estimated Cost: $79,500

Capital Plan

High School

Project: Fence Repair
Estimated Cost: $25,000

Boutwell Early Childhood Center

Project: Concrete work - New loading dock and front sidewalks
Estimated Cost: $65,000

Capital Plan

Middle School South

Project: Stair Tread Replacement - 3 Stairwells
Estimated Cost: $22,500

Capital Plan

Middle School North

Project: Ductless Splits in Rooms 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 219 and 220
Estimated Cost: $25,000

Middle School North

Project: HVAC Control System - Phase II
Estimated Cost: $50,000

Capital Plan

Middle School North

Project: Roof Recoating
Estimated Cost: $15,000

Middle School North

Project: Fencing repair/replacement near softball field
Estimated Cost: $20,000

Capital Plan

Swallow Union

Project: Ductless A/C in all classrooms - Year 1 of 3 requests
Estimated Cost: $45,000

Swallow Union

Project: Stair Tread Replacement - 2 Stairwells
Estimated Cost: $15,000

Capital Plan

Athletic Requests

Project: Stadium Field

- New Goal Posts (necessity)
- New Press Box (safety issue)
- New Sound System (currently just use speakers)
- Move Scoreboard

Estimated Cost: $55,000

Capital Plan

Athletic Requests

Project: Storage Sheds (2) for Athletic Equipment
Estimated Cost: $16,000

Project: Net Fencing for Soccer/Baseball/Lacrosse fields (4 systems) w/ batting cage
Estimated Cost: $19,500

Project: Benches at Middle School and High School Fields
Estimated Cost: $20,000

Capital Plan

Technology Requests

Student Chromebook Lease	$124,500
Teacher Device Lease	$ 12,500
Lab Computer Lease	$ 16,500
iPad Lease	$ 15,000
Projector Replacement	$ 25,000
Total	$193,500

Capital Assessment to Towns

Total Capital Projects:	**$766,000**
Groton Assessment:	$577,026 (5-yr plan $540,187)
Dunstable Assessment:	$188,974 (5-yr plan $174,353)

Capital Assessments to Towns

Groton Assessment:	$577,026
Groton Estimated Funding:	$577,023
Difference:	$ 3
Dunstable Assessment:	$188,977
Dunstable Estimated Funding:	$ 64,202 (FY22 level funding)
Difference:	($124,775)

Capital Assessments to Towns

Q: What would it take to balance this assessment with available funding?

A: If the capital list were to be reduced to meet the Dunstable estimated funding, the **only project** funded would be the Security Cameras as well as the Technology Leases.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

ARPA Funding was granted to the Towns of Groton and Dunstable. It is a designed to be a multi year funding mechanism that can only be used for specific uses.

The School District submitted a proposal to each Town listing each intended use of the funds, how much it costs, how it fit into the ARPA guidelines for allowable expenses, a justification narrative, when expenditure would be complete, and which fiscal year.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding
Groton $900,000 over 2 years

Groton Funding Includes: 3 Reading Specialists, 1 Math Interventionist, 1 Preschool Teacher, 1 Preschool Para, Grade 4 Teacher, 2 Integrated Arts Specialists, 1 DEI Coordinator and associated MTRS expense. These expenses are in FY 22 and FY23 spending plan. FY22 also includes:

- Upgraded wiring at Florence Roche
- Air Purifiers district wide
- Renovations at preschool for additional classroom
- 2 metal picnic tables for outdoor learning space
- Final trailer rental for excess classroom stuff (1 month)
- Tent Rental for outdoor learning space (1 summer)
- ZOOM renewal (1 year)

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding
Dunstable Funding $270,000 over 3 years

Dunstable Funding Includes: 1 District Team Chair and associated MTRS expense and 5 Ductless Splits for classrooms at Swallow Union. The Ductless Splits are in FY22 only.

FY22 - Team Chair and Ductless Splits
FY23 - Team Chair at 75%
FY24 - Team Chair at 50%

Important Upcoming Dates

March 9 - School Committee/Certify Budget

March 10 - Send Assessment Letters to Towns

April 30 - Groton Annual Town Meeting

May 14- Dunstable Annual Town Meeting