

## **GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

High School Library  
Business Meeting Minutes  
November 15, 2006  
(approved 11/29/06)

### **PRESENT:**

Ms Cindy Barrett, Secretary  
Dr. Forrest Buzan  
Ms Berta Erickson  
Dr. Paul Funch  
Ms Karen Lofgren  
Mr. Chuck McKinney, Chair  
Mr. Frank O'Connell, Vice-Chair

### **ADMINISTRATION:**

Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent  
Timothy Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:**

Lauren Palmacci

**STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS:** J. Kulesz, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark;  
E. Lazaris

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

C. McKinney announced the GDRSC Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. and the Committee voted to adjourn to executive session under M.G.L. Ch. 39, Section 23B-3. The meeting reconvened in open session at 7:10 p.m. , with no plans to return to executive session, and was called to order by the chair, C. McKinney.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members read prepared announcements and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Dr. Genovese announced Education Commissioner David Driscoll is retiring on August 31, 2007. He stated Dr. Driscoll has been a real support system for him as a superintendent, is a strong advocate for public education and is always accessible to discuss any issues. He distributed a copy of the press release covering some of Dr. Driscoll's accomplishments.

Dr. Genovese announced Principal Joe Dillon has announced this will be his last year as principal of the high school. Dr. Genovese said Principal Dillon has made many contributions to the district, and especially the high school, during his tenure. Dr. Genovese said he will be outlining the process to find his successor and will bring it back to the Committee.

### **MINUTES**

C. BARRETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 4, 2006 AND NOVEMBER 1, 2006. SECONDED BY K. LOFGREN  
**SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY WITH AN AMENDMENT TO THE OCTOBER 4, 2006 MINUTES**

### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

B. Erickson said she, Ms Lofgren and Dr. Genovese attended the MASC/MASS Joint Conference in Hyannis last week and found it very informative and a lot of fun and invited the other members to attend next year. Three meetings she attended stood out for her:

Having healthier schools and healthier kids: She stated health is an educational issue and the school committee should set the tone for any changes that may come along and they should continue to improve their lunch programs.

Collaborative - She stated this meeting was very informative and she learned collaboratives are really a local court entity, they are not for profit, bidding laws apply, the cost of service is set by our agent and the taxpayers are the shareholders.

Speaking to the Media - B. Erickson said they learned "jargon is the foundation of obscurity and the antithesis of leadership".

K. Lofgren stated she enjoyed the General Sessions. Because it is a joint conference, every workshop has a superintendent perspective on it and she said this says a lot about working collaboratively and being partners in the business of a school district. She distributed copies of a presentation on the basics of policy, as well as other items from vendors.

## **PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION**

### **Establish Facilities Subcommittee**

C. McKinney asked members to give their thoughts on the direction they would like to take with regards to the facilities. He stated there a number of on-going projects, as well as a number of pending projects, that are significant financial obligations. There is no school committee subcommittee to oversee any of the projects. He asked if the Committee wants a subcommittee put together to oversee the existing and pending projects and also have a Facilities Task Force III to consolidate existing data and provide a report on where they are with the facilities relative to the population forecasts and what they should be planning for i.e.: continuing to renovate some or none of the buildings, or focus on an elementary school and site.

F. O'Connell said Budget and Finance got a review from Mr. Sheehan on a limited set of future capital projects and said it may be helpful to have a subcommittee work with Mr. Sheehan, and others, to brainstorm what future capital projects there might be and prepare a report for the Committee. The next steps for that subcommittee could then be decided. Dr. Funch agrees and feels the Facilities Task Force III might evolve from that group. The group would look at the capital projects first and some of the issues looked at would impact whether they use some of the schools in the future. Thinking back to Facilities Task Force II, F. O'Connell thinks there is an opportunity for the subcommittee to grow into something more.

C. Barrett asked if this would be a subcommittee of the school committee or a larger group that includes community members. C. McKinney feels it needs to have members from both communities, and possibly people involved with town finances and Capital Planning. Dr. Genovese said it is good to include people with expertise in areas such as engineering and construction. C. McKinney said school councils would have an interest in their own buildings and Prescott, in particular, has a group looking at the building and what may or may not need to get done.

B. Erickson said she sees the overlap mentioned by Dr. Funch. She asked how far out they are talking with respect to new buildings as this would impact how large the subcommittee is and how serious it becomes. She would like to see a subcommittee large enough to handle both parts.

C. McKinney said if a subcommittee was formed by late December, they could be given an initial charge to review the last Facilities Task Force enrollment data and projections, along with the current capital projects, and provide a report to the school committee by March or April.

F. Buzan asked the time frame of Facilities Task Force II. F. O'Connell said it was initially two weeks and ran for about two years. This was about six years ago. F. Buzan sees the need for a facilities subcommittee of the school committee as an ongoing committee to handle projects that come up unless they are handling capital

items with the finance group. If they need something ongoing, he said it might need a "kick start" with a community group that looks at the bigger picture and as a building is being built or renovated, they would have a special committee for that project. C. McKinney said the projects on the radar screen do not have to be overseen by the school committee. He said right now it is more research and coordination and the second part comes based on what the research tells them.

As someone new to the district, T. Sheehan said the presence of a subcommittee that deals with facilities would allow him to tap into some historical and institutional knowledge that could be invaluable. Given the current structure of subcommittees, he feels the Budget and Finance subcommittee is where the issues belong for now. He said he would welcome a wider group that would look at long range issues. C. McKinney said he would keep financial issues with Budget and Finance and keep capital planning project discussion with the Facilities Task Force. B. Erickson said it would be helpful to have a member from Budget and Finance on that committee.

C. Barrett asked if members could get a copy of the Facilities Task Force II report to bring them all up to speed. F. O'Connell agreed the working documents would be helpful and Dr. Genovese will get copies.

Dr. Genovese said they need to keep in mind that with respect to SBA, the state would need to come in and make the determination that the district is in a crisis mode and they agree with the enrollment projections. He asked if it would be the intent to have the subcommittee look at potential sites. If there was a presumption that a new elementary school is needed, C. McKinney said the next question would be where would it be?

C. Barrett said they should have the fact finding and research gathering and then if it is decided a new elementary school is needed, stop at that point and create a new committee that would be a building committee to look at sites. K. Lofgren agrees. F. O'Connell said this is what occurred with the last Facilities Task Force.

In summary, C. McKinney said he is hearing there should be a single group to compile the current list of capital projects, including the ones on the radar, and they would have a charge to review the Facilities Task Force II work as well as the current capacity condition of the facilities. A report with their recommendation on how well suited the district is to meet the needs of the short-term future based on projected student enrollment would be made to the school committee. He said they will write a proposed charter and composition of subcommittees for the next school committee meeting. He would like the word to get out that they may be putting together a committee that needs volunteers from the communities. B. Erickson reiterated parental input is very important. Members interested in being on the subcommittee can contact C. McKinney.

### **REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES**

**Budget and Finance** - F. O'Connell reported they met at 6:00 p.m. last night. They met with the Joint Budget and Finance Committee at 7:00 p.m. and finalized the budget timeline. They discussed the format, the presentations and this year they will try to have more executive summaries. Mr. Sheehan reviewed some potential capital projects and discussed the new foundation formula. A copy of the budget timeline was distributed. The joint budget and finance meetings are scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on November 30<sup>th</sup>, December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup> in the high school library.

C. McKinney said the meeting was televised and he found the discussion to be useful. He thanked Mr. Sheehan for his hard work.

In order to accommodate the December 6<sup>th</sup> Joint Budget and Finance Committee meeting, Dr. Funch said the school committee meeting for that night needs to be changed to November 29<sup>th</sup>. Members are fine with the change.

**Policy** - K. Lofgren reported they will be meeting on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

**Report of the Chair** - C. McKinney reported the committee will be entering into negotiations with three

separate groups and he will represent the committee with Unit D (paraprofessional organization), C. Barrett will assist with Unit C (secretaries) and B. Erickson will assist with SEIU (cafeteria workers).

**Report of Director of Business and Finance** - T. Sheehan reported the FY08 budget process is well underway. The Administrative Council has been devoting most of their meetings since the first of October to the issue, the principals have submitted their first round of their expense budgets, following guidelines and budget assumptions they received, and the directors at the Central Office are working on their budgets. He has been working with the Director of Human Resources to work on salary budgets system-wide to capture details relative to the number of teachers that will be making step and lane changes. They are putting together a great deal of factual information to support their recommendations. He stated this is a brand new process for him but he is enjoying it. C. McKinney acknowledged the extraordinary number of hours Mr. Sheehan has been putting in and stated the committee appreciates the hard work he is doing to get up to speed and providing them with timely information.

### **Report of the Superintendent Update on Groton Dunstable Football**

Dr. Genovese stated he attended a meeting led by Athletic Director Dan Twomey and they discussed where they are with football and what needs to be considered if they are to move forward with a football program. Dr. Genovese distributed a copy of Mr. Twomey's ideas. An open meeting for people interested in helping or participating in the discussion process is scheduled for Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the high school. Mr. Twomey is looking for people willing to share ideas and take on some responsibilities with respect to researching start-up costs, facilities, bleachers etc.

They have a Cooperative Agreement with Ayer and over thirty students participate. In FY08, D. Twomey is proposing that Groton Dunstable starts a JV team with all 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will continue to play at Ayer High School next year. In FY09, Groton Dunstable would have a JV team open to 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders and the 12<sup>th</sup> graders would play at Ayer. In FY10, Groton Dunstable would offer a varsity and JV team. Preliminary costs were included in the report. Dr. Genovese said Mr. Twomey is also looking at the entire athletic program.

B. Erickson asked if the estimated cost will be about \$4,000 the first year and \$9,000 the second year. Based on forty participants and a user fee of \$225., C. McKinney said Mr. Twomey is identifying a shortfall of \$9,000 the first year and \$14,000 the second year.

C. Barrett said Mr. Twomey made a presentation about possibly moving into football last December and at that time, mentioned the need for additional fields, locker rooms, effects on other teams (will the soccer program lose players), equipment and insurance. Dr. Genovese said each item needs to be explored and he will pursue the insurance portion to see if the district would need additional insurance for playing football.

C. Barrett noted some of their cheerleaders also cheer for the football team and they need to plan ahead for that program as well. F. Buzan included the band.

F. Buzan asked if the district currently provides funds to the Ayer program. T. Sheehan said the cost is \$500 per student, capped at \$10,000. They currently have more than twenty students participating. C. McKinney said this is provided from the general fund and is above and beyond the user fees.

Dr. Genovese suggested Connect-Ed be used to notify people of the November 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Dr. Genovese distributed a letter from the Prescott School Preservation Committee, thanking the town for funding the nomination of the Prescott School to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dr. Genovese distributed an updated list of his goals. His original six goals remain and raising the level of achievement for all students has been added as Goal 1. He stated they have been discussing this quite rigorously at the Administrative Council meetings in terms of things they can do in the existing budget to help improve student scores and provide resources as well as implications to the FY08 budget.

**ACTION ITEMS**

None

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

J. Kulesz requested copies of the handouts.

Dr. Genovese stated Mr. Byrnes has advised the on-going leak at Swallow Union needs to be taken care of sooner than later. The cost is about \$5,000 and he feels it can be done within the budget. It involves replacing a 20' x 30' section of the roof and insulation that has gotten wet also needs to be replaced.

**ADJOURNMENT**

F. BUZAN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:21 P.M. SECONDED BY B. ERICKSON  
**SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith  
Recording Secretary

With attachment