



**TOWN OF GRAFTON**  
**GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD  
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519  
(508) 839-5421

**MINUTES**  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
August 9, 2016  
Grafton Municipal Center Room F  
7:00 p.m.

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK  
GRAFTON, MA  
SEP 14 10 11 11

**Members Present:** Laura Often , Chairman  
Maureen Cohen, Vice Chair  
Peter Carlson, Secretary  
Teri Turgeon, Member

**Absent:** Jennifer Connelly, Member

**Also Present:** Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools  
Tracey Calo, Assistant Superintendent

**Call to Order – Open Session**

Chairperson's Update. Ms. Often turned the meeting over to Dr. Cummings whom announced that teacher Chris Underwood, an outstanding teacher, person and friend tragically passed after an illness. Mr. Underwood made a positive impact during his 16 years of teaching. He would be greatly missed by all. Mrs. Often held a moment of silence for Mr. Underwood.

Community Groups and Citizens - No comments

1. Educational Reports – Tracey Calo gave an overview of the Summer Programming which included 38 Academy Workshop. The academy curriculum projects were outlined. Ms. Calo highlighted those which were aligned with the curriculum work. Ms. Calo stated that this week started the summer reading program; she recognized the staff who worked extremely hard with students. The program would run for two weeks. The August Professional Development Workshops was completed and 165 teachers responded to the topic survey. The team held a year end synopsis meeting to discuss what was working or not. The consensus was flexibility in the length of sessions which would enable people to choose 4 workshops. There was a great range of workshops and all but 3-4 programs were done in-house. Ms. Calo also discussed the Schoology Learning Management system which would be piloted in Grafton.

## 2. General Business

- a. GHS Field Trip Request: Maureen Moriarty, a World Language teacher presented a request for approval for a trip to Quebec City during Winter break. The trip was open to French students. A survey was done and approximately 84% of the students showed interest. The trip would be Monday through Thursday via bus transportation with approximately 40 students participating. The estimated cost was \$798 based on current interest though that could decrease with participation. The anticipated tour fee was an estimated based on turnout. The group fee could decrease based on participation. Mrs. Turgeon asked if all 60 students signed up, were we prepared. Ms. Moriarty said they would most likely keep it at 40 students and possibly do another trip later. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the proposed field trip to Quebec during February vacation. Motion seconded by Mrs. Turgeon. Motion carried 4-0.
  
- b. GHS Handbook Mr. Pignataro was present to review the proposed revisions to the student handbook. Four changes were discussed. #1 Attendance with changes made to an unexcused absence relating to discipline reasons. Mr. Pignataro said they needed to amend that language to make it inline with the state. They would remove the language referencing referral to the office for disciplinary reasons and suspension from school. Currently if a student was on suspension they could make up work and the absence was not held against them, for work. They could always make up their work. They were making the policy right; practice vs. policy. Students would not be penalized twice. #2 Appropriate Use of Technology; this change was to bring Grafton's policy in line with the district policies. Inappropriate use of technology was discussed; they were working with the students to make sure they understood what was acceptable. #3 Plagiarism and Cheating; the current language was, if caught a student will receive a zero. This had been discussed and they've wondered if following the "letter of the law" was the route to go. Was it a mistake or intentional. The change here would be from "will" to "may" and with this staff can look at each incident individually. Mr. Pignataro said the bottom line was to educate the students on what they did, was it wrong or right. This change gives flexibility. Prior to a decision being made, teachers will come to administration and they will review it for intent, quantity etc. #4 National Honor Society Admission Requirement; the current requirement was to maintain a 3.43 or better. The change is to require a 3.7 or better as it ties into the honor roll criteria. Having National Honor Society and Honor Roll with the same requirements makes it consistent. Mrs. Often felt this was a large document and didn't feel a document of this size was truly read. Mr. Pignataro said it was during the first meeting of the year, they cover significant items with staff and zero in on items which could results in critical decisions being made for a student. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the changes to the GHS Handbook as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Turgeon. Motion carried 4-0.

3. School Committee Member Reports - None
4. Superintendent's Report
  - a. District Update - Dr. Cummings stated he was gearing up for the start up in a few weeks with teacher orientations. The bus routes were expected to be online by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Hiring was nearly complete; two teaching positions should be finalized by next week. He Recently met with the teams for strategic planning; will have a plan of action in the near future for community input. Reviewed grading and evaluations; should have this finalized by the end of August. The school building projects were wrapping up and on time, Mr. LeMay would attend an upcoming meeting with an overview of projects. Mr. Carlson asked if it were possible to do a before and after presentation to show residents what we had to accomplish but got done in-house.
  - b. Upcoming Activities - None
5. Future Agenda Planning:
  - a. Mrs. Cohen would like to discuss strategic planning and committee goals.
6. Approval of Minutes – 2016

A motion was made by Mr. Carlson approve the Minutes of May 24, 2016 as submitted. Motion seconded by TT. Motion carried 4-0

A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the minutes of June 28, 2016 as submitted. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Motion carried 4-0. Mr. Carlson would like to include the end time of the executive (8:15). Motion carried 4-0.
7. Financial Report
  - a. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson that the School Committee approve Warrant #4, dated July 28, 2016 in the amount of \$449,600.85. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Motion Carried 4-0.
8. Policy: Attendance – First Reading

Ms. Calo reviewed this on behalf of the committee. It was a first reading however it could be submitted as a second reading if the committee was in agreement. Ms. Calo clarified the first change; all absences would be recorded. This clarified for parents that a documented not does not remove an absence from the record. Ms. Calo said that the School Committee needed to do their due diligence to be sure the districts policies was consistent with the State's policies. Remove the word unexcused; as it was confusing the absentee record. Mrs. Calo noted that administration will work to clarify this during parent teacher conferences and orientation. Mr. Carlson asked if this was the same on elementary level as the high school. This was not applied in elementary levels, reason being, not credit based. The State requires reports at the middle and high school levels. Ms. Calo said the Principals were pleased with the policy for the consistency and clarity. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the

attendance policy as presented as first reading and to waive the second reading. Motion seconded by Motion carried 4-0. (with amendments).

9. Correspondence – None

At 8:10 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Carlson to enter into executive session for the purpose of non union negotiations under Chapter 30A, Paragraph 21, Section A, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation of discussions with non union personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non union personnel. Motion seconded by. By Roll Call vote, Peter Carlson, Aye; Teri Turgeon, Aye; Maureen Cohen, Aye; and Laura Often, Aye; The Committee will return to open session to adjourn only.

Respectfully submitted



Cindy Ide  
Recording Secretary