



TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 12, 2016
Conference Room F
7:00 p.m.

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Members Present: Daryl Rynning, Chairman
Laura Often, Vice Chair
Peter Carlson, Secretary
Maureen Cohen, Member

Student Representative: Bianca Carangelo

Also Present: Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools
Tracey Calo, Assistant Superintendent
Daniel Gale, Finance Director

Call to Order – Open Session

- a. Chairperson's Update: None
- b. Community Groups and Citizens - None

1. Educational Reports

a. GHS Program Studies – Mr. Pignataro gave an overview of the 2016-2017 Grafton High School Program Studies, noting the process had been ongoing for months with staff and administration. Mr. Pignataro summarized all the proposed school wide program changes. The departments affected were English, Science, Mathematics and Business & Computer Science. Mr. Pignataro noted that some changes would mean some policy changes would be needed. Additional AP courses were important for students to better prepare them for entering college as well as some honors courses. After reviewing each addition, change and deletion, Mr. Pignataro outlined the steps which would be taken moving forward. They would hold Grade Level Guidance Meetings, hold 8th Grade Parent Meetings, coordinate one on one student teacher meetings, and conduct one on one student guidance course selection and registration meetings. Also planned was an 8th Grade Registration day at GHS and a session for parent Review of course selections. Ms. Carangelo asked what was planned if a student could not afford to take the AP classes. Mr. Pignataro said they would look into this and do its best to assist if they could. Mrs. Rynning asked how these changes were going to be communicated to parents. Mr. Pignataro said notices would be sent out in October to prepare parents. They would also meet with students

after February break and follow up at least two more times with parents. Mrs. Often asked if the district had the means to expand the courses to two years. Mr. Pignataro felt they did with the current staff. Mrs. Often was also happy to hear that the school was communicating with colleges to better align with their requirements. Mrs. Cohen would like to be sure that we educate parents and students; these AP courses are very important and will give the students a competitive advantage. Mrs. Rynning said the district should think outside of the box to get more students into AP Classes.

- b. Curriculum Update: Ms. Calo was present to give professional development update (Teaching and Learning). She outlined what development opportunities were available to staff this year. They offered a workshop for special education which was for teaching diverse learners. This helped teachers obtain their certifications. Facilitator sent out a reflection survey at the end of the workshop, noting the feedback was great. This development opportunity helped teachers tailor classrooms, their instructional strategies and their assessment to meet the need of all learners. Area of need emerged; teachers have asked for additional information on specific learning disabilities. Ms. Calo will offer a workshop in March; for support with support dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Ms. Calo noted that collaborative learning had been a long standing initiative. The leadership team defined the term as student engagement, active learning and motivation. After this review, they decided on collaborative learning which addressed almost all the elements for student engagement. All teachers were piloting collaborative learning techniques from this resource. This was rolled out in every building and teachers chose what strategies they would use. Ms. Calo reviewed instructional assistant training noting this would be facilitated by district staff. Topics were selected by instructional assistant. Parent workshops had been rolled out as well, spearheaded by the report card committee. Ms. Calo also discussed the responsive classroom plan which was a great way to create social and emotional health. This was rolled out for new teachers and those needing a refresher; splitting training over 4 days. Across the district, English Language Learners would have sessions in the spring. Mrs. Often was pleased with the enthusiasm and work Ms. Calo and staff had done. She would like to find a way to get this information out to parents and the community so they understand what a Professional Development days is; highlight the work they do.

2. General Business

- a. Collaborative Report: Dr. Cummings gave an overview of the Assabet Valley Collaborate report. Dr. Cummings felt this was one of the best collaborative in the state and noted that SWEC was progressing well too. Dr. Cummings stated that the report would have to be accepted this evening. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to accept the Assabet Valley Collaborative Report for 2015. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee 1-0. Mr. Carlson mentioned that this was one of the best reports so far. Dr. Cummings would like

- to see this kind of report in the future; for the minimal costs he felt it was worth it.
- b. NESDEC Demographic Analysis: Dr. Cummings discussed the decision to revisit NESDEC for a Demographic Analysis relative to enrollment. NESDEC had visited Grafton meeting with various departments both on the School and Municipal side in order to collect data and prepare the report. The group was close to finalizing their report. Dr. Cummings prepared a brief review which captured several slides from the report. Dr. Cummings noted the final outcome; it appears that growth in Grafton will be stable over the next 10 years. Dr. Cummings would share the final report when it was available and place it on the web. Dr. Cummings felt the money spent on this analysis was well spent. Mrs. Rynning was pleased that they used similar numbers when planning the building of the High School; so seeing this stable growth vision for 10 years was great and in line with what they planned.
 - c. FY17 Budget Reviewed – Dr. Cummings and Mr. Gale were present to give a brief overview of the upcoming FY17 School Budget. It was expected that school enrollment would be stable over the next ten years. Dr. Cummings felt the most volatile area at this point was the special education line. He discussed the increase in private special education tuition; several were in collaborative and would move to private which will give some offset. There would be an increase in this budget next year. Dr. Cummings discussed the individual accounts within the budget noting where they had increases, reductions and/or shifts from the capital plan. Some non essential projects were moved out of the FY17 budget. Dr. Cummings discussed his initial plans for staffing and scheduling relative to how he and Mr. Gale would prioritize these. All budget lines were interconnected and they were always looking to meet the core needs of all pieces, some of which were; special education, class sizes, administrative staff, custodians and technology. Dr. Cummings reminded the School Committee that they would hold their budget hearing at the next meeting on January 26th. The hearing would begin at 6:30 p.m. Mrs. Rynning questioned the Medicaid reimbursement in the district and wondered if Grafton received a sizeable amount as well. She hoped we were getting the most we could. Mr. Gale was working to get all the funds the town was owed. Dr. Cummings suggested a presentation on this process at an upcoming meeting. There were no further questions for Dr. Cummings at this time.
 - d. Capital Planning Update: Dr. Cummings gave an outline on Capital items stating he'd met with both Mr. Gale and Mr. LeMay and they had done a great job preparing this for CIPC. An outline of projects by priority was given to the School Committee by Dr. Cummings, noting no context changes had been made since their last review; the document was just laid out differently. While discussing Capital Project, Mr. Carlson gave his CIPC report at this time. He stated with the potential sale of the Creeper Hill property this year they may be able to fund 80% of the capital projects, if sold. The Capital Improvement

Planning Committee felt they were in a good positions this year. Their (CIPC) next meeting would probably be sometime in February, Mr. Carlson would keep the committee informed.

3. Superintendent's Report

- a. District Update – Dr. Cummings recognized the Grafton High School Math Team which placed third in the division. Freshman math team placed 4th in their division. Dr. Cummings thanked and recognized the Grafton Land Trust which awarded 3 grants for programs/projects in conservations; ecology, wildlife preservation or environmental education. The parent workshops were going strong, with more coming in March. Dr. Cummings said these were very successful thanks to the hard work of Ms. Calo and Kristen.
- b. Upcoming Activities: Dr. Cummings submitted an updated activities list.

4. Future Agenda Planning:

- a. Mrs. Rynning asked the committee's opinion on the interview process if they only received one letter of interest. The committee was comfortable with a meeting vs an interview where the candidate gave a brief statement about themselves, a less formal process would be appropriate.
- b. Policy IKF will have to be reviewed in an upcoming workshop.
- c. Mrs. Rynning was going to shoot a segment on GCTV.
- e. The Committee discussed their thoughts on "traveling meetings" which was when the School Committee held meetings at each school in the district. Mrs. Rynning enjoyed going to the schools but realized the work that went into taking a meeting on the road. She was ok with having the schools come to the municipal center. She would also like to include the respective PTG's either along with the schools or separately. Mr. Carlson felt it was a good opportunity for schools to demonstrate what they did at their locations, but was alright with meeting at the municipal center if the logistics were easier. Mrs. Often knew the staff was proud to show off their school and enjoyed holding meetings on site. She felt the PTG's would present anywhere. Mrs. Often would urge members to make an appointment and visit the schools. Mrs. Cohen said logistically it made sense to say here, but wouldn't want to lose the tour piece; it could just be done at a different time. For now, it was agreed that the meetings would be held at the Municipal Center, showcasing schools individually.

5. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the Minutes of October 27, 2015 as submitted. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee and 1-0 Student Representative.

A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the Minutes of November 10, 2015 as submitted. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 3-0-1 Mrs. Cohen abstained. 1-0 School Representative. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson to approve the Minutes of November 24, 2015 as submitted. Motion seconded by Mrs. Often. Motion carried 4-0 School Committee and 1-0 School Representative.

6. Financial Report
 - a. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson that the School Committee approve Warrant #26, dated December 23, 2015 in the amount of \$494,306.94. Motion seconded by Ms. Carangelo. Motion Carried 3-0-1 Ms. Often abstained. 1-0 School Representative
 - b. A motion was made by Mr. Carlson that the School Committee approve Warrant #29, dated January 14, 2016 in the amount of \$595,643.62. Motion seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Motion Carried 4-0 School Committee and 1-0 School Representative.
7. Policy: There were no policies for review, Mrs. Often would suggest a workshop in the near future to review the remaining policies.
8. Correspondence - Mrs. Rynning discussed an email from the Town Administrator and Craig Daupinais, Chair of the Board of Selectmen requesting a meeting to discuss the budget. If no one objected, Mrs. Rynning will attend the meeting and relay the information to the committee. Mrs. Rynning did not think this was deviating from the subcommittee work, it was just an additional meeting request that came in. All were ok with the meeting, it would be good to have the two chairs meet, transparency was important. Mrs. Rynning noted a complaint relative to a bus stop issue at highpoint. These issues had been resolved thanks to Mr. Gale and Dr. Cummings.
9. At 9:00 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 Mrs. Often. Roll call taken: Mr. Carlson Aye; Mrs. Cohen, Aye; Mrs. Often Aye; Mrs. Rynning Aye. Motion carried 4-0 The Committee will return to open session to adjourn only.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Ide
Recording Secretary