Special Meeting

February 19, 2013

A special meeting of the Groton Board of Education was held on February 19, 2013, in Room 11 of the School Administration Building, for the purpose of discussing the proposed 2013-2014 budget.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kirsten Hoyt, Chairperson of the Board, at 6:08 p.m.

PRESENT

Dr. Kirsten Hoyt, Chairperson
Mrs. Elizabeth Gianacoplos, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Patricia Doyle
Mrs. Shelley Gardner
Mrs. Kim Shepardson Watson
Mrs. Rita Volkmann
Mrs. Beverly Washington
Mr. Chaz Zezulka
Dr. John Ramos, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Carolyn Dickey, Business Manager
Mrs. Denise Doolittle, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Mrs. Laurie LePine, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Sean McKenna, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. William Robarge, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Mr. Paul Sikorski, Director of Technology Services
Mr. Joseph Arcarese, Principal, Fitch High School
Mrs. Christine Dauphinais, Principal, Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School
Mrs. Beth Horler, GEA Co-Chair

ABSENT

Mr. Robert Peruzzotti

1. Budget

Dr. Ramos gave an overview of the status of the budget and how the district has handled getting to a 0% increase budget. Dr. Ramos gave an overview of the charge from the Board in preparing the proposed 2013-2014 budget which was to:

a. Identify what it would cost to run the district as we do today this time next year;

b. Demonstrate how to get the budget to a 0% increase (with the realization that in this case, it will actually cost 4 million more).
Dr. Ramos explained that the administration has met with the Town Council to talk in a preliminary way as to where we are at. Dr. Ramos stated that at the February 13th meeting the Board had requested the following information:

- IB Program
- Pupil Testing
- Class Size
- Review of the budget line by line
- Principals were asked what would they take off the table

**Items that could be taken off the table**  [ATTACHMENT #1]

Dr. Ramos further reviewed the list of possible reductions noting:

- CO Support - $50,000: Supt. added this back in the budget
- School Administration: This refers to an Assistant Principal
- School Psychologist: This was added back in the budget
- Three Elementary Teachers: The word “Interim” was dropped from the description
- Elementary Music: only eliminating an aspect which would result in the reduction of 1 teacher
- Business Teacher: This was added back in the budget
- HS Music Teacher: This was added back in the budget
- Paras: This remains in yellow

**IB Program**  [ATTACHMENT #2]

Mr. McKenna gave an overview of the IB Program.

Mr. Arcarese was asked to do a study of the IB Program. Mr. Arcarese gave the history relative to the cost involved over the years.

Mr. Zezulka stated that he would like to see statistics on the AP Program.

Beth Horler explained the suggestion was put forth by Mr. Croxton regarding the IB Program whereby Groton would solicit students from area Towns for the IB Program.

Mr. Zezulka asked what were the percentage of students at the high school in the AP Program and the IB Program and the percentage of students in both.

Mrs. Gianacoplos ask if the IB Program was dropped, would it jeopardize our relationship with the IB Program.

Mrs. Washington asked if the IB Program were expanded to freshmen, what would it cost.

Mrs. Washington asked for more information on the IB Program in other districts.
Mrs. Washington asked what other ways could the IB funds be spent to help students.

**Pupil Testing**

Mrs. Dickey gave an overview of all pupil testing that appears in the proposed budget.

A referral was made to the Policy Committee to review the mandated cost to take the IB Test & the feasibility of parents paying for student to take the test and then being reimbursed if the student got a 3 or higher on the test.

**Class Size** [ATTACHMENTS #3, 4, 5]

Mrs. LePine gave a brief overview of the class sizes. Mrs. LePine stated that she had surveyed Groton’s DRG relative to class size and found them to be comparable.

Mrs. Volkmann stated that she would like to see the class sizes for K and grade 1 lowered by 1.

Mrs. Watson made a referral to discuss class sizes at the COW meeting in March.

**Review of the Budget Line by Line**

The Board reviewed the following pages in the proposed budget:

- Elementary K-5
- Full Day K ARRA Stabilization
- Art 6-12
- Computer Education 6-12
- Language Arts 6-12
- World Language 6-12
- Consumer Science 6-12
- Technology Education 6-12
- Mathematics 6-12
- Music 6-12
- Physical Education 6-12
- Science 6-12
- Social Studies 6-12
- Health K-12
- Cooperative Work Experience
- International Baccalaureate
- Instructional Unclassified

Mrs. Volkmann asked for a discussion of the iPads at the middle school and suggested that the district look for grant funds for grades 7 & 8.

It was suggested that the next budget work session begin with a discussion from Karen Bryer regarding the iPads.
It was suggested that the February 25th COW agenda be reduced to allow for further discussion of the proposed budget and change the time and location to 5:30 p.m. in Room 11 of the School Administration Building.

The budget meeting was recessed at 9:25 p.m.