

**GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**High School Library**  
**Business Meeting Minutes**  
**June 1, 2005    Approved June 15, 2005**

PRESENT:

Ms Cindy Barrett, Secretary  
Ms Kim Cowie  
Ms Karen Lofgren  
Mr. Chuck McKinney, Chair  
Ms Patricia Murray  
Mr. Frank O'Connell, Vice- Chair  
Mr. Alan Vervaeke

ADMINISTRATION:

Dr. Mary Athey Jennings, Superintendent  
Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum/Staff Development  
Ms Joan Endicott, Director of Pupil Personnel

Student Advisor:

Mike Fredrickson

STAFF, PRESS, OTHERS: J. Kulesz, Groton Herald; P. Comtois, Groton Landmark;  
J. Mitchell, B. Morgan-White, F. Belitsky, G. Yanchenko, S. Prendergast, J. Dillon,  
J. Ellis, J. Gilmartin, P. Cunningham

CALL TO ORDER

The GDRSC Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by the chair, C. McKinney.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Jennings announced graduation will be held on June 4th at 1:00 p.m. In the event of rain, the ceremony will be held in the gymnasium.

Dr. Jennings announced there will be a half day on June 7th and thanks to GDAY and a half-day planning committee, there are many activities for students to do which include going to the Llama Lounge at the Groton Public Library, Movie Day at the Pit in MSN or going to the PTYC.

Dr. Jennings announced the Red Flags and Resources book will be going home with students. The book was put together by the communities that participate in the Youth at Risk Survey and helps parents identify "red flag" behavior. The books are made available through an \$8000 grant from GDAY.

Dr. Jennings announced the fifth grade book club, Bookmakers and Dreamers Club is putting together the largest book in the world with the topic "Do you believe we can achieve world peace?" They have asked for contributions from various dignitaries and citizens and Channel 38 is coming out to feature the book club on Tuesday, June 7th at 7:00 p.m.

A. Vervaeke announced awards were presented for the first time for the Morgan Babcock Memorial Scholarship of Dunstable at Sunday's Memorial Day parade and at today's Senior Awards Day. Laura Starbird was awarded a scholarship of \$16,000 and will receive \$4,000 a year for four years. Courtney Cunningham, Ariana Dubay, Jim Kurdzo and Brian Belley were given one time scholarships of \$2,000. He congratulated the recipients.

M. Fredrickson announced this is the senior's last week before graduation and today they celebrated Class Day. Scholarships and awards were presented and Sarah Carson was named Valedictorian and Brian Belley was named Salutatorian.

M. Fredrickson announced this is his and Erica's last night serving as the School Committee student representatives and he thanked the members for the opportunity to serve with them. He stated they greatly benefited from the new responsibilities they gained having this role and commended the members and Dr. Jennings for the great job they have done with the school system and hopes success continues to grow.

On behalf of the high school students and staff, Principal Dillon thanked Mike and Erica for the time they put in at the meetings as well as for their ideas and input. He stated they represented the high school as well as anyone could. Their replacements will be announced before the end of the school year.

F. Bellitsky, President of the Groton Senior Foundation, announced they, in partnership with the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Nashoba Valley Medical Center, are hosting an information forum on having a health care proxy. It will be held on June 7th from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Sibley Hall in the Groton Public Library. He stated having a health care proxy is important for everyone, not just the aging population, and urged members to attend. As a nurse, P. Murray stated hospital personnel need to be notified when someone has a health care proxy and said often a doctor's order is also needed.

With Representative Hargraves apologies for not being here tonight, C. McKinney read a citation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts House of Representatives offering their congratulations to Dr. Jennings on her retirement.

P. Cunningham read a proclamation to Dr. Jennings from the town of Groton. He stated the Board of Selectmen have proclaimed June 4, 2005 as Mary Athey Jennings Day where citizens, family and friends will join together to wish Dr. Jennings luck in her future endeavors.

#### REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

C. McKinney distributed sub-committee assignments and noted many members wished to stay in their current positions. He stated there are two open positions and he has withdrawn all appointments to the Communications subcommittee. He would prefer to dissolve this sub-committee and have each individual sub-committee take that role back themselves.

K. Cowie has been appointed to the Policy, Naming and Vision Planning sub-committees.

Budget and Finance - P. Murray announced they will be meeting on June 14th. They are trying to schedule a joint meeting with the towns the week of June 20th or June 27th to discuss the final funding numbers and where they are headed in September.

Building Committee - A. Vervaeke announced there was an intention for them to meet on June 8th. He stated the bids for Prescott have come in and the School Committee will be discussing this later this evening.

Naming Committee - J. Endicott announced they met yesterday and came to a consensus on the names to recommend to the School Committee on June 15th. A. Vervaeke said the Naming Committee had discussed having an open forum where people who had made recommendations could come and "preach their case" and asked if this will take place.

Ms Endicott said this was discussed and they put in their application that it may be a consideration and feels it would be the School Committee's decision based on the recommendations. C. McKinney stated he has appointed, without objection, Judy Converse as an additional community liaison to maintain some consistency. K. Cowie requested the minutes from the last sub-committee meeting.

#### MINUTES

P. MURRAY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2005. SECONDED BY A. VERVAEKE  
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

P. MURRAY MOVED TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2005. SECONDED BY A. VERVAEKE

In Favor: C. Barrett, K. Lofgren, A. Vervaeke, C. McKinney, P. Murray, F. O'Connell

Abstention: K. Cowie

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

F. Bellitsky presented the video For Which It Stands to the middle school. It is about the American flag and made by the American Legion. He stated it is a good civics lesson.

Mr. Bellitsky suggested a contest be sponsored for the senior class on "What is a senior citizen?". He stated he would be willing to give some prizes.

A. Vervaeke stated last year Senator Robert Byrd interjected a piece of legislation into a bill making every September 17th Constitution Day, requiring every school teach the Constitution on that day. Since September 17th is a Saturday this year, this will happen in the schools on September 19th.

#### PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

##### Library Review

Members had received a copy of the 1999 review done by Dr. Carolyn Markuson, President of BiblioTECH Corporation and she also prepared this year's review. B. Morgan-White said the Committee will see there are a lot of "behind the scene" operational efforts that make the libraries run.

B. Morgan-White said Dr. Markuson reviewed all the libraries and spoke with the library staff and principals. She used the MSLMA rubric which covers three aspects of the library. Accomplishments she found include the automation system, web page development, flexible scheduling, the collection, weeding and replacing of books and collection development plans.

Recommendations included in this year's report include having a professional librarian at the elementary level. B. Morgan-White stated research shows that students who learn the joy of reading at a younger age become life-long readers. She stated they do not have the curriculum coordination since they do not have a certified librarian. She stated technology and library need to be seen as an umbrella of curriculum and are infused to enhance the instruction and learning. It is important to create a scope and sequence to see the technology and library skills infused into the curriculum and for students to use them as tools. Other points in the report include automated system training, keeping the libraries open for co-planning, teaching and classes and an AV hardware review. Goals for 2005-2006 include scope and sequence, making strategic plans and continuing the website effort.

A. Vervaeke stated a bookstore and a library are his favorite places and for him, it is sad to see so many computers in library space. He feels it turns a library into a place to look things up on the internet rather than being a fun place to be to do simple research. He stated the fiction section in the high school library is very small. While he feels they need to have librarians in each school, he questioned the need to have certified librarians to teach children the love of reading when parents do it every day. B. Morgan-White said there is currently a library aide and a lot of the time is taken up being behind the desk and not with the teacher. She feels the expertise is in the instruction and co-planning. She noted that when students are at the high school level, they have the knowledge to choose where they need to go to get the information they need.

P. Murray stated an elementary librarian is being hired next year and asked what research will be provided for that age level. B. Morgan-White said they will provide the same aspect of working with the teachers and co-planning and tapping into resources such as free data bases.

Dr. Rubel said the library becomes the focal point and the librarians become an integral part of the curriculum planning team. They also want them to provide instructional leadership to students and currently there is no one to lead this effort at the elementary level.

K. Cowie asked when the middle school students use the library to do research and B. Morgan-White said when the librarian and the teacher co-planning use that effort.

K. Cowie is concerned that her daughter, who is in the sixth grade, and many of her friends, have only been to the library once and are not learning the needed skills. She asked if they could have library as an integrated art to teach these skills. B. Morgan-White said it is a scope and sequence, working with the curriculum and the library and technology team and seeing where the skills fall with each level. She said it is a year or two job and agreed it should be an integral part of their knowledge and should advance, particularly in the transitional years.

K. Lofgren stated Groton has a summer reading program and feels there is a lot of bridging they can do with the public library. She would be happy to volunteer to help make this happen. Dr. Rubel stated there will be a Dive Into Reading evening for K through eight parents at the high school on June 8th. The Title I reading teachers and town librarians will be there and there will be lots of ideas for summer reading activities.

C. Barrett stated there was concern in the 1999 report that the collections were outdated and insufficient in size and content to support the schools. She asked if they can now say they are current and sufficient. B. Morgan-White said they are better than they were, especially with the building projects. C. Barrett asked how they are doing on making the elementary school libraries equitable and B. Morgan-White said this also becomes part of the scope and sequence.

C. McKinney stated the summary report seems to reference other materials and asked if there is a more detailed report that the administrative council will follow up on. There is not a more detailed report and with respect to the recommendations, B. Morgan-White said they will have to coordinate with the administration and other parties involved.

A. Vervaeke stated other aspects of a library are for kids to go in, find a book that grabs their attention and have fun and for it to be a social center. He asked if the libraries are open before homeroom. With respect to weeding out collections, he noted fiction never ages.

B. Morgan-White agrees the library is the hub of the school.

K. Cowie stated GDAY's half day initiative is partnering with the Groton Public Library and on the next half day they will be signing kids up for the summer reading program.

#### Continued Program Review Process

J. Endicott stated the district was identified as being in need of a six year review and the last one was done by the DOE in 1999. The purpose of the review is to evaluate how the district implements state and federal laws in various areas that include Title 1, civil rights, special education, English Learner Education, safe and drug free schools, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and nutrition. It is also to look at how the district has improved and how it can improve.

A team of five came for eight days and she stated the cooperative effort was considerable. The Superintendent's office, guidance, principals, SPED staff, PAC, the personnel, curriculum and business offices, food services and the Safe and Drug Free School coordinator participated. J. Endicott stated each department prepared all documentation to prove how they implement the state and federal regulations. Thirty-two student folders were prepared (five regular and twenty-seven special education) in a specific format and twenty-seven parent surveys were sent to SPED parents by the DOE. Sixty-seven interviews were scheduled and she noted the DOE was here during MCAS testing. The DOR toured each building site and observed a Title 1 class. She noted the DOE did not have time to review three six inch binders of documentation and they took them to collect further information.

Following the exit interview on May 27th, the DOE has forty-five business days to present a draft to the district for review. The district has ten days to respond and the final report is sent to the superintendent in early September and becomes a public document at that time. Copies will be in the libraries and on the website. The district has thirty days to respond to the final report and submit a corrective action plan. J. Endicott stated the criteria includes a commendable rating, an implemented rating, a partially implemented rating, a non-implemented rating and not applicable. J. Endicott stated they do not have any specific results

but the team chairperson advised they received all twenty-seven surveys back and noted that is very unusual.

P. Murray asked if there are issues where they may need to take corrective action and J. Endicott stated they highlighted some general areas but at present, they do not know what they will be looking at. K. Lofgren asked if the SPED surveys were randomly sent and J. Endicott said they matched the twenty-seven selected folders. The parents were not interviewed. The DOE wanted representation of all grade levels.

C. McKinney asked who will take responsibility for the response and Dr. Jennings said the superintendent coordinates it with the team leaders. He asked if there will be a briefing for the new superintendent or if it is assumed it will be delegated down. Dr. Jennings said she will be discussing this with Dr. Genovese. She said this is a wonderful tool for a new superintendent and new pupil personnel director because it tells them exactly what they need to work on in the next six years and in three years, they receive an interim report. She thanked Ms Endicott, as well as Dr. Rubel and Dr. Robinson, for the tremendous amount of work they did.

#### Review of Student Handbook Changes

Dr. Jennings stated there are four substantive changes to the high school handbook. Principal Dillon said the Leadership Team and School Council reviewed the recommendations for revisions to the handbook that would be considered substantial. The changes are: adding dress code guidelines, camera phones are not to be used during school, motor vehicles/parking policy (students eligible to park will be assigned a space) and language regarding eligibility requirements will be added to Extra-Curricular Activities. C. McKinney stated the Committee will vote on these changes at the June 15th meeting.

With respect to the dress code guidelines, C. Barrett feels "halter tops" should be taken out since they are backless and have a strap around the neck. She also suggested adding camisoles to the sentence. J. Dillon said the language used in the handbook, when it is not legal language, is "student friendly" language. The language around dress is what students are familiar with and they still use the basic "disruption to the school environment" as the measure to determine what is and is not appropriate. Students know that if their dress causes a substantial disruption to the school environment, they will be asked to change. He stated the guidelines are used to guide them and their parents in determining how they come to school. She asked if they could insert who grants permission to wear sunglasses since the handbook is clear on who grants permission for other things. J. Dillon said this would only be granted for a medical reason and they prefer not to be that specific. He said this has been a non-issue.

A. Vervaeke read the dress code from the high school handbook from five years ago. He noted there is no detention for a dress code infraction as there was five years ago. He cannot understand why the dress code has gone down hill and it is now okay to show two inches of midriff. He does not understand what the maturity difference is between kids five years ago and now that allows for this substantive change. Dr. Jennings said fashion and times have changed and the administration is working with students, who she believes have good judgment at this age, to have a dress code that reflects what their world is like. The law says they have to have a policy where the administration can spot a "substantial disruption" and act on it. She acknowledged it is different from five years ago.

P. Murray asked how they will monitor the assigned parking. J. Dillon said it will take a few days for it to become habit but the students will welcome this as it is a fairness piece. It does not become a problem until February or March when juniors get their licenses. She asked if the police track the wearing of seat belts and if he gets feedback about speeding on Reedy Meadow. J. Dillon said in the main part of the lot there are generally three or four people managing the exit of the students and this goes smoothly. They have received some complaints about students exiting at the top of the hill in an unsafe manner and the liaison officer is scheduled to be there on a regular basis and give them a report. He stated they cannot force students to obey seat belt laws but they do encourage them. He noted the Peer Leaders have put on a SADD program that includes the monitoring of seat belt use for both students and adults.

K. Lofgren asked if there are any changes in the middle school handbook and Dr. Jennings said there are no changes from the previous year.

C. Barrett stated only one lane of traffic can get through when people park along the driveway near the upper athletic fields and asked if there is a plan in place to prevent people from parking there. J. Dillon said there is one No Parking sign but it has not had any effect. They have more to put up and once they are up, they will be enforced. He said they plan to designate "event parking". Mr. Byrne has facilitated a parking plan for graduation and they will use all available space which will include two hundred and sixty additional spaces. The police and maintenance personnel will direct traffic and will have a systematic approach.

#### Prescott School Bids

S. Prendergast introduced Greg Yanchenko of Helene Karl Architects Inc. S. Prendergast stated the bids were opened last Thursday and the Building Committee has not had the opportunity to review them. They have a significant shortage from the initial amount of money that was funded almost two years ago. He feels the Building Committee would strongly recommend the School Committee fund the project as it currently exists. He stated they have had a good working relationship with the Historic District Commission. Some minor expansions of the initial scope of the project have been made which include masonry work on the roof and doors.

G. Yanchenko said they received three bids and the funding currently stands at \$350,000. The low bid, which includes the entire scope of work, is \$537,000. This excludes architect fees and other costs that have all ready been expended. Two years ago, an estimate had been given to replace the roof for about \$65,000 and the windows for about \$260,000. He stated the roof desperately needs to be replaced as it leaks, is cracking and has all sorts of problems. The masonry and flashings also need to be replaced and increases the scope of the work. The chimney also needs to be reconstructed and the roof drain needs to be replaced down to the basement. Testing was done on the windows and there is asbestos in the caulking and lead paint on the windows. At a bare minimum, he recommends doing the roof and noted roofing costs are increasing ten to twenty percent a month.

Four basement doors were bid as an alternate at a cost of \$8,000. The base bid is for the roof and windows on the front of the building. The sides and back of the building were individual alternates. Sample aluminum clad windows, approved by the HDC, are on the left side of the building.

P. Murray appreciates they packaged the job but stated the whole thing needs to be done. She stated some members were aware in March that the project would likely run over and she believes this is primarily due to using different windows. There are safety issues with panes being close to falling out of second story windows. She stated this is a perfect example of something being put off for one too many years. She noted the sample windows have all ready made a difference in the administrative office. She asked what safeguards will they have with respect to the insulation not being an issue with snow load.

G. Yanchenko said per the Building Code, there is an energy code so the roof will contribute to the reduction of heat loss in the winter and heat gains in the summer. He stated there should be no structural problems with the roof.

C. McKinney asked if the additional scopes of work have been addressed in all the bids they received and G. Yanchenko said there will be a complete replacement if they accept all the alternates - the masonry will be re-pointed, flashings will be installed, cornices will be repaired, the windows, basement doors and roof will be replaced and the turbine ventilators will be capped and abandoned. C. McKinney asked if only one window qualified with the HDC and if this is the reason for the increased cost. S. Prendergast said the cost of the cheapest aluminum window is \$1000 versus \$1500 for the aluminum clad.

Since Prescott will have to stay open because of student population, A. Vervaeke said he would support encumbering \$250,000 from E&D for this project. He stated this is a one time expense and does not feel they can afford to wait.

K. Lofgren asked if Budget and Finance has an opinion and P. Murray said they were aware this was coming but they did not know what the number was and they do not have a formal opinion. K. Lofgren

said the building has been neglected for quite a while and supports using E&D. She stated the long term savings on energy costs alone make it worthwhile.

C. Barrett asked if the school can open in September if all these things are done and S. Prendergast said yes. G. Yanchenko said they would like to award the bid immediately. There is a six to eight week lead time for the Pella window. Construction would start a week after school ends and they anticipate two to three weeks for the roof replacement and having two to three sets of windows being put in each day.

As the new chair, C. McKinney said he would like to instill a little Committee discipline in terms of their process and is reluctant to have the Committee discuss spending \$250,000 on the same night they were presented the bill. He asked if the Committee deciding this evening or deciding on June 15th plays an absolute role in whether they get the project done this summer. G. Yanchenko said he would not recommend a two week delay but a delay of a couple of days would not matter. He reviewed the process and time frame for awarding the contract.

K. Cowie asked if all the bids include the removal of asbestos and lead paint on the windows and G. Yanchenko said it is not the removal of lead paint but the disposal since the windows are left intact. The asbestos is primarily in the caulking. She is concerned about the safety of the classrooms when the children return and asked if there is lead paint in other places that will be disturbed. G. Yanchenko said the sashes and stops will be removed and the new window will be installed in the old frame and an aluminum cladding goes over the frame. He stated there should not be any major disturbance in the interior side of the classroom. Only the windows, doors and roof were tested by a certified industrial hygienist. She asked what happens if they find additional lead and asbestos. G. Yanchenko said he does not see this as a risk because the sashes are coming out and they can see what is in the track. They do know that some of the roof insulation has asbestos and has been accounted for. A bigger concern would be finding deteriorated roof planking that needs to be replaced. P. Murray noted there were no significant issues when the three replacement windows were installed.

While she agrees this is something that needs to be done, K. Cowie said she is leery in approving this after one night. K. Lofgren clarified the Committee was informed a while ago that the costs would be more than they anticipated.

The Committee is aware Groton has funded the initial \$350,000 and S. Prendergast said he has asked the Board of Selectmen chairman if they are interested in funding any additional funds but due to financial circumstances, they cannot see themselves doing that in the foreseeable future. He stated Groton has passed the Community Preservation Act and the CPA would urge them to apply for renovation funds, several years in the future, for Boutwell and possibly Prescott.

#### ACTION ITEMS

VOTE: Approval of High School Trips

C. BARRETT MOVED THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVE THE TRIP ENTITLED LONDON TO AMSTERDAM, PROPOSED DATES FEBRUARY 15, 2006 TO FEBRUARY 23, 2006 AS WELL AS APPROVING THE TRIP ENTITLED SPAIN ON THE DATES APRIL 12, 2006 TO APRIL 21, 2006 AS LISTED IN THE DOCUMENTS THEY RECEIVED. SECONDED BY P. MURRAY

A. Vervaeke asked if the district policies supersede what local laws might be with respect to age requirements and J. Dillon said yes.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

VOTE: Prescott School Bids

P. MURRAY MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVE \$250,000 IN ADDITIONAL FUNDING, TO BE FUNDED THROUGH THE EXCESS AND DEFICIENCY FUND, FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPLETING THE PRESCOTT SCHOOL PROJECT,

THE ESTIMATED COST BEING \$600,000, WITH \$350,000 TO BE FUNDED BY THE TOWN OF GROTON. SECONDED BY A. VERVAEKE

C. McKinney does not believe the source of funding needs to be articulated since they are not voting to incur debt. He noted state funding is not yet finalized and other funding sources may be available that will not require the entire amount come from E&D.

A. Vervaeke said like the purchase of the modulars, this is a one time expense and if it is not identified, it theoretically comes out of the budget. He said they know they have the funds in E&D.

K. Cowie asked if this expenditure will affect their bond rating as they look forward to their land court date that is coming up. Dr. Jennings stated Moody's looks at the E&D balance as well as what it is spent on. They do not approve of it being spent on operating costs but would likely consider this a good use of E&D. Should they receive additional funds, they can refill the E&D. A. Vervaeke asked if they have to wait until the end of the fiscal year to put money in E&D and Dr. Jennings believes they can move money after they have an audited budget and an audit will take place in August.

SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLLCALL

VOTE: Awarding of Contract

A. VERVAEKE MOVED THE GROTON DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE AWARD THE BID FOR THE PRESCOTT SCHOOL PROJECT TO THE APPARENT LOW BIDDER, GVW, INC. OF EAST BOSTON, MA., TO FOLLOW ALL LEGAL CONDITIONS AS SET FORTH IN THE BID AND APPROVED CONTRACT. SECONDED BY P. MURRAY  
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLLCALL

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

A. Vervaeke announced it was overlooked at the last meeting but he was re-elected to serve another three years on the School Committee.

ADJOURNMENT:

P. MURRAY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:33 P.M.  
SECONDED BY A. VERVAEKE  
SO VOTED IN FAVOR UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

Susan H. Smith  
Recording Secretary