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Advisory Board
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February 8, 2023

Present: Clint Keeney, Jim Frey, Jake Lewon, Harold Simmons, Leo Tometich, Matt Naughton

Joint Meeting (GDRSD School Committee, Groton Select Board, Groton Board of Health) called to order 6:05 pm at GD Middle School.

ITEM 1: PFAS Issue at GDRHS

Reps from MassDEP provided a presentation on PFAS issues and the potential issue at the Groton Dunstable Regional High School. Drinking Water and Cleanup standards regarding PFAS are new - just coming into effect in 2019 and 2020. Standards are set at 20 parts per trillion (ppt). GDRHS water is consistently showing 55-65 ppt, after treatment, but 400+ppt untreated off the wellhead. Mass DEP believes the source of the contamination was a construction fire on the GDRHS site that occurred in 2003, which required the use of AFFF fire-retardant foam, a known source of PFAS chemicals. While the immediate location of the fire was mitigated and cleaned up of known chemicals of concern at that time, the PFAS contamination was not recognized and remained.

This affects both the high school, due to well contamination, as well as several down-slope private residences, including one that was classified as having a need for urgent abatement. The football field, which has been irrigated using contaminated well water, was found to contain PFOS (one of six common PFAS chemicals) at significant levels.

In the immediate term - the HS is being provided with bottled water for drinking. There are no expected restrictions for use of the athletic fields based on this contamination. Costs for this fit within current discretionary budgets.

In the interim term - study is underway to determine a more cost-effective supply of water. It is currently thought that bulk delivery of water from the Groton Town Water system will be the best choice here. A new contingency line item of \$72,000 has been added to the FY24 budget for this and other project expenses.

The only consensus viable long-term answer for addressing this issue at the HS is to bring a water source into the site from a clean municipal water source, from Groton, Pepperell, or Dunstable. These options are currently under examination and will be further discussed in the coming months. MassDEP advises that there is funding available - 0% interest loans, as well as some principal forgiveness - coming from the federal and state government levels that might be addressable for this project. These funds must be applied for by August 2023. Cost impact to Dunstable is unclear at this time.

ITEM 2: FY24 GDRSD Budget

Latest projections, drivers, and details for the GDRSD FY24 budget. The most recent version includes a 9.8% YoY increase in the Dunstable assessment, totaling \$709k more than FY23. Discussion was held to clarify specific spending categories, revenue sources, and exceptional changes. Of the total increase being requested by the district, the significant majority is being driven by increase health insurance costs for employees and retirees, and special education services. Next steps were identified, starting with a public hearing next week, Feb 15.

Meeting adjourned 9:28 p.m. by unanimous vote.