

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINUTES  
WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
January 17, 2024**

BOS Present: Ryan Curley-First Selectman, John Dillon, Robert Hetrick, Jr., Shaun Manning, Michael Pelton, Jim Tripp

Absent: Michael Hernandez

BOE: Dr. Charles Britton, (Supt. Of Schools), BOE Members Laurel Steinhauser, Timothy Lavoy, Dave Murphy, Kim Nagy-Maruschock, Meg Scata

Others Present: Seamus McNamee, Vice President, Research, Great Blue Research, Members of the Public and Media

**1. FIRST SELECTMAN CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

First Selectman Ryan Curley called the Special BOE/BOS Joint Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Buck-Foreman Community Room located at 265 Main Street, Portland, CT. He welcomed the speaker Seamus McNamee and thanked he and his company for their work.

**2. PRESENTATION FROM GREAT BLUE SURVEY RESULTS**

Mr. McNamee gave some background about Great Blue Research, an overview of the survey, and key study findings. Following are some, but not all, of the key points.

The process was described including the distribution of postcards telling of the upcoming survey. Approximately 1,000 survey responses were received. The survey targeted town residents and contained 35 questions. It focused on awareness and sought levels of support and opposition of the elementary schools. The margin of error was  $\pm 3.0\%$ . Research dates were November 6, 2023 through January 1, 2024. Demographic profile was: 50.9% female, 41.2% male, 98% owned real property, 25.4% were Republicans, 34.3% were Democrats, and 38.8% were parents with children in school. A positive view of the quality of life in town was represented by 87.8% of the respondents; 7.1% plan to leave the town in the next few years.

81.2% of the respondents thought significant facility improvements are necessary to ensure the long-term stability of the school infrastructure.

- 41.9% Support Plan 1 - Consolidate to two elementary schools & close Gildersleeve**
- 56.9% Support Plan 2 - Consolidate to one elementary school, close Brownstone & Gildersleeve**
- 49.8% Support Plan3 - Maintain all schools and capital improvements only**

**Plan 2 was significantly higher than Plan 1 and 3.**

The preference was to keep Brownstone in public use. Respondents felt it was important to know the plan before voting. 71.7% of participants were interested in additional update from the Town. The mill rate was important.

Great Blue was happy with the interest and participation. They do not expect a big change in the next six months.

Discussion:

Laurel Steinhauser was interested in seeing the responses by age of participants.

Ryan Curley said the full report will be on the Town website for review. Anyone from the public is free to reach out to Mr. McNamee. Ryan thanked Seamus and Great Blue and said this information will help the Town to proceed further.

### **3. ADJOURN MEETING**

Shaun Manning made a motion, seconded by Michael Pelton to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy  
Board Clerk