

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, January 24, 2019**

NOTICE: A full meeting recording can be obtained from Fairfield Public Schools. Please call 203-255-8371 for more information and/or see the FPS website (under Board Meeting Minutes) for a link to FAIRTV.

Voting Summary

Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call

Chairman Christine Vitale called the Regular meeting to order at 7:55PM. Present were members Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Leeper, Philip Dwyer, Jessica Gerber, Christine Vitale, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Jacobsen, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, and Jeff Peterson. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, FLHS student representatives Ms. Philips and Mr. Holtz, FWHS student representative Mr. Rivera, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately five members of the public.

New Business

Adoption of a Recommended Budget for 2019-2020 Fiscal Year

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mr. Dwyer seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve an operating budget in the amount of \$182,372,957 as presented, to be forwarded to the Town of Fairfield.”

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded “that the Board of Education amend the 2019-2020 budget and transfer funds as follows:

\$50,000 from Transportation into BOE Dues and Fees
\$40,000 from Transportation into Wage and Benefit
\$10,000 from Program Assessment into Wage and Benefit.”

Motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Aysseh moved/Ms. Pytko seconded “that the Board of Education amend the 2019-2020 budget and reduce Open Choice Revenue by \$18,000 from \$255,000 to \$237,000 (budget book page 16).”

Motion failed 3-6 (Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against).

The main motion, as amended, passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Special Minutes of December 13, 2018.” Motion passed 9-0.

Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:45PM.

Detailed Minutes

Student Reports

Mr. Rivera reported for Fairfield Warde High School: The very competitive senior badminton tournament was held; the 2nd semester classes have begun; the basketball and wrestling teams are doing well; the indoor track divisional meet will take place on Saturday; the Innovation Center is very popular and getting used often – with virtual headsets and science demos; the Counties Charity Dance took place last Friday for juniors and the Red/White dance for seniors will take place February 1st.

Ms. Philips and Mr. Holtz reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School: The Ludlowe/Warde joint fencing team is participating in a statewide event in Guilford; the annual Counties Dance took place; course selection is underway with a wide range of courses available; 8th grade informational parent night was held; the Boys Basketball team won against Trinity Catholic; the Girls Basketball team is eager for another win against New Canaan; senior internship sign-ups are underway.

Old Business

Update: High School Course Credit Weights

Mr. Ebling and Mr. Hatzis reported the district is moving forward with course name changes and with reporting unweighted GPA on transcripts but will maintain the current GPA weighting system. Weighted GPA will continue to be reported on transcripts. Changes will take effect in 19-20. The Level 0 scale will be renamed to the elective scale and then will be eliminated, with Level 0 courses reclassified as Honors or College Prep through a process that will be developed this year. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly expressed some concern that Level 0 classes may have robust enrollment, signifying a need for classes that are neither Honors nor College Prep.

Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Vitale thanked staff for listening to all the public comment on this topic.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly: How are two different GPAs reported and how is that received by colleges? Mr. Hatzis said it is very common for DRG A and DRG B schools to report both. Students report that colleges rarely ask for weighted GPA, and then will often re-weight using their own scale.

New Business

Adoption of Recommended Budget for 2019-2020 Fiscal Year

Mr. Aysseh moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Board of Education approve an operating budget in the amount of \$182,372,957 as presented, to be forwarded to the Town of Fairfield.

Dr. Jones commended senior staff for responding to the Board's written questions so efficiently.

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education amend the 2019-2020 budget and transfer funds as follows:

- \$50,000 from Transportation into BOE Dues and Fees
- \$40,000 from Transportation into Wage and Benefit
- \$10,000 from Program Assessment into Wage and Benefit.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked, how these items are non-impactful? Dr. Jones said the STAR assessment and fuel costs were less than anticipated.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Mr. Aysseh moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education amend the 2019-2020 budget and reduce Open Choice Revenue by \$18,000 from \$255,000 to \$237,000 (budget book page 16).

Mr. Aysseh said he had previously confirmed with staff that the reduction could be absorbed with no effect on the budget and also refuted the idea that it is a net income producer. The amendment is designed to reduce Open Choice seats through attrition and will not harm current students. It is also an attempt to address concerns of Town bodies. The BoE is already in violation of the Racial Imbalance Plan by budgeting for 85 students instead of 100. When presenting the Mill Hill ed specs to the BoS, all three BoS members stated on the record that they wanted a BoE plan that addresses redistricting and Open Choice.

Mr. Dwyer said he would not support the amendment. There are approximately 800 open seats and students are placed only where there is enough headroom. The program is a net income producer and it should be considered as funding one teacher per year. The Racial Imbalance Plan cannot be changed without state approval, and the debate on this topic should take place after proper notice to the public. The state vests educational planning in the BoE not the BoF.

Ms. Pytko agrees with Mr. Aysseh and supports the amendment in terms of moving forward with discussions on big facility issues.

Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly questioned whether the \$18K referenced in the amendment should require an offset. Ms. Munsell said Open Choice revenue is used for salaries, which is a volatile budget line that can absorb this item. Dr. Jones added that this revenue item would not reduce the totality of the budget.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she did not support the amendment; the Board needs to remain in compliance with the Racial Imbalance Plan. The Open Choice program can change a life. Understanding the BoF's perception that bringing in more students has a space impact, it is the BoE's job to educate about that and come forward with the fact that there is a 15.2% space allowance in the district.

Public Comment:

Sue Miska, Ryegate Road: Need to understand the BoE's direction on Open Choice, redistricting and racial imbalance.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she did not want the discussion to be misconstrued, she did not want to appear as though she and Mr. Dwyer are insensitive to other boards.

Mrs. Vitale said she would not support the motion; creating a more diverse classroom experience is beneficial. It is the BoE's job to address the talking points as they arise at other town meetings.

Mr. Peterson favored the motion; it is a do-no-harm motion and does not repudiate the program. The motion streamlines the focus on how the district will look for decades to come.

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson

Oppose: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Ms. Pytko thanked Dr. Jones and staff for putting the budget together and diligently answering questions. She thanked

the Board for vetting the budget.

Mrs. Gerber said she supports the budget and thanked Dr. Jones and staff.

Ms. Vitale commended the Board for their budget review and is open to suggestions for making the process easier.

The main motion, as amended, passed 9-0

Mr. Dwyer noted that the BoE budget needs support at all Town meetings.

Board Goal Discussion

Mrs. Vitale welcomed Board input on the upcoming 2/20 BoE special meeting to address the Board goal. The meeting will be televised with the standard set-up, and follow a relaxed version of Robert's Rules. The Board requested that several topics be addressed:

- The charge for consultants
- Overcrowding at ECC; ECC as one site in an existing location and its impact on redistricting
- Walter Fitzgerald Campus
- Mill Hill Scenarios: 504 vs. 441
- District-wide redistricting
- Guiding Principles as previously approved and ideas on community input
- Mill Hill and WFC Timelines
- Milone and MacBroom data from previous discussions; recent permit and home zone enrollment
- Information from the Town's Strategic Planning project

Mrs. Vitale noted that the 2/27 Special Meeting will be a Town Hall for community input.

Quarterly Financial Report

Mrs. Munsell said as of December 31, 2018, the projected shortfall in salaries is \$1.2M. In order to close the gap, the budget has been balanced with departmental give-backs. Schools were asked to return 10% of their school allocation balances and departments were asked to give back available balances, shown in columns 2-5. Technology will maintain a balance through the end of the year; equipment purchases directly related to instruction and safety-related purchases will still be made.

Mr. Aysseh confirmed with Mrs. Munsell that there is nothing critical in the give-backs.

Mrs. Jacobsen requested a clarification of the term 'balance.' Mrs. Munsell said it references the projected balance that will be left over at the end of the year. The financial statement reflects a \$16M balance and does not show projected expenses. \$400K of the Instructional Services give-backs is due to science texts, and Mr. Cummings said the remaining \$97K is for PD that has been pushed back.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

- What comprises the capital on hold? Dr. Jones referenced page 102 in the budget as an example; the capital outlay is generally used at the principal's discretion for items such as flexible seating and furniture. The district makes every attempt to return what has been held, but first checks that the budget will balance.
- Are measures and controls for subs working? Can holds be released? Mrs. Munsell said subs have improved by \$100K, but utility costs have increased. Budget changes occur daily.

Mr. Dwyer commended the staff for budgeting and staying on top of balances and projections.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Special Minutes of December 13, 2018.”

Motion Passed: 9-0

Superintendent Report

Dr. Jones reported:

- Pre-K letters have been sent. The Burr Pre-K students will have the option to continue in KDG at Burr.
- Burr is holding a career fair, and a career as a superintendent will be encouraged.
- Thanked the senior team for all the budget work.

Committee/Liaison Reports

- Ms. Pytko (SEPTA): The next meeting takes place on January 30; SEPTA will celebrate 16 years in April.
- Ms. Leeper (Finance Committee): Private PK tuition prices were provided as comparison to ECC.
- Mr. Dwyer (SPBC): A meeting was noticed for Monday, but the agenda is not yet posted.
- Mrs. Gerber (MHBC): Voted on the Frederick P Clark traffic consultant and moving forward with hiring construction manager.
- Mrs. Vitale (Sherman BC): The initial project estimates are coming in over budget.
- Mrs. Jacobsen (Legislative Liaison): Several education bills are in the early stages, but do not include a bill that would allow parents in the classrooms.
- Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly (Policy Committee): The administration of medication policy will be on the next agenda and the homework policy is being addressed.
- Mr. Peterson (BoF and HHBC): Senior tax relief and the pile clean up were recent BoF topics. The HH project is running smoothly.

Open Board Comment

Ms. Pytko wished Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly a Happy Birthday.

Adjournment

Mr. Aysseh moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:45PM

Respectfully Submitted
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary