

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, May 7, 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 7:13PM. 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, FWHS student reps Mr. Rivera and Ms. Solari, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 100 members of the public.

New Business

*Approval of Revised Graduation Time*

Mr. Peterson moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the revised time of high school graduation to Fairfield Ludlowe and Fairfield Warde High School to **Friday, June 14, 2019 at 5:00PM.**”

Motion passed 8-0-1 (Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Peterson in favor; Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly abstained).

*Approval of Music Curriculum, Grades 6-12*

Mr. Peterson moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Music Curriculum, Grades 6-12.” Motion passed 9-0.

*Approval of Fairfield School Solar Proposal at School Sites*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Peterson seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Roger Ludlowe Middle School” Motion passed 9-0.

Ms. Leeper moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Burr Elementary School.” Motion passed 8-1 (Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Mr. Aysseh against).

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Leeper seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Stratfield Elementary School.” Motion failed 4-5 (Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen in favor; Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against).

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Holland Hill Elementary School.” Motion passed 9-0.

Mrs. Vitale asked the Board for unanimous consent to take up the interim Superintendent vote before the Budget Adjustment discussion, and to switch the first read of the redistricting principles with the ECC Update; the Board agreed.

*Approval of Interim Superintendent of Schools’ Contract*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded to enter into executive session to discuss the interim Superintendent of Schools contract. Motion passed 9-0. The Board went into executive session at 8:40PM and came out of executive session at 8:50PM.

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Dwyer seconded the recommended motion “that the Fairfield Board of Education hereby moves to appoint Stephen Tracy as the Acting/Interim Superintendent of Schools, subject to Dr. Tracy holding all certifications and meeting all requirements set forth in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-157 and other applicable law. The Board further moves to approve the Contract with Mr. Tracy as discussed in executive session; and designates to the Board Chair the authority to execute the Contract document on behalf of the Board.” Motion passed 9-0.

At 10:50PM, Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Ms. Leeper seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:15PM. Motion passed 7-2 (Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly in favor; Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Peterson against).

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded to table agenda items 8-11. Motion passed 6-3 (Ms. Pytko, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Leeper, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen against).

The meeting ended at 11:15PM

## Detailed Minutes

### Student Reports:

Mr. Rivera and Ms. Solari reported for Fairfield Warde: Pequot won Battle of the Houses; the spring play ‘City of Angels’ had 3 great performances; Kristen Murphy and Noah Igram were honored as CAS Scholar Athletes; senior students attended a college safety assembly led by Fairfield University; the Warde/Ludlowe Lax games took place last week; wrestling coach Mr. Shaughnessy was inducted into the Wrestling Hall of Fame with over 600 people in attendance; AP testing is underway; Junior Prom will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup> in the Courtyard and the Senior Prom will be held at the Trumbull Marriott on June 1<sup>st</sup>; and the mock crash will take place soon.

### Public Comment:

*Robert Horne, Stroll Rock Common:* Supports one ECC location.

*FPS Student, Judd Street:* Supports one ECC location and solar energy in schools.

*Ally Bartlett, Riverside Drive:* Shared her experience with redistricting as a teacher in New Canaan.

*Douglas Price, Willowbrook Road:* Supports solar projects.

*Phil Levieff, Sturges Hwy:* Supports solar projects.

### Presentation:

#### *Student Recognition*

Odyssey of the Mind: Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly recognized the Burr, Stratfield and Jennings teams (including the volunteer coaches) that earned their way to the World Finals being held at Michigan State University. The students created props and scripts to creatively problem-solve.

All-State and All-National Musician Honorees: Ms. Sara Hoefer read the names of all 90 students accepted to the Western Regionals as well as other competitions, and celebrated their extreme dedication and talent.

Fall and Winter High School State Athletic Champions: Mr. Hatzis recognized sophomore track star Tess Stapleton and the co-op Girls Ski Team. Mr. Ebling also recognized the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive title for the Girl’s Ski Team, and wrestling

champs Noah Zuckerman and Joe Gjinaj. Their coach, Mr. Shaughnessy, was recently inducted in to the Wrestling Hall of fame, a very high honor.

CABE Communication Awards

CABE Board Member, Mr. Trefry, presented the Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence in Educational Communications to Fairfield Public Schools in 2 categories: District Website and Computer Generated Project. Mr. Trefry presented plaques to the district, saying Fairfield should be proud of this excellent work.

**New Business**

*Approval of Revised Graduation Time*

Mr. Peterson moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded that the Board of Education approve the revised time of high school graduation to Fairfield Ludlowe and Fairfield Warde High School to **Friday, June 14, 2019 at 5:00PM.**

Mrs. Vitale apologized to members of the community affected by the time change.

**Motion Passed: 8-0-1**

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Peterson  
Abstention: Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

*Approval of Music Curriculum, Grades 6-12*

Mr. Peterson moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Music Curriculum, Grades 6-12.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of Fairfield School Solar Proposal at School Sites*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Peterson seconded that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Roger Ludlowe Middle School. The Board suggested that Mr. Thompson discuss changes applied since the previous presentation.

Mr. Scott Thompson, Chairman of the Sustainable Task Force, summarized the changes made to the solar designs: the RLMS solar project location has been moved from the roof to a carport in the rear parking lot; Burr Elementary has a narrower design, moving away from the basketball court; and the PPA rate was reduced with the size of the systems. Mr. Thompson underscored the educational benefit of the solar projects and responded to Board questions:

- There is a renewable standard for 2020 and beyond. Any fines for not meeting the target are applied to the utility provider.
- The PPA rate is fixed for 20 years.
- The district will ensure that solar does not adversely impact facilities.
- If needed, the task force will mitigate the neighbor's view of the RLMS carport.
- The main system of the Holland Hill solar project is proposed on the new roof, and Dr. Jones and Mr. Papageorge affirmed solar placement on the slanted part of the roof. Mr. Abrill (SkyView) said his company works with the roof manufacturer to ensure placement is amenable to the warranty.
- When tree removal is necessary, trees are replanted elsewhere with guidance from the tree warden.

Mr. Dwyer expressed safety concerns at the Stratfield site. Mr. Papageorge said parking lot footings could slow down the snow plows.

Mr. Peterson said he is pleased with the relocation of the RLMS project, but will oppose the Stratfield project for aesthetic reasons.

Public Comment:  
*Jill Vergara, Old Post Road: Supports solar projects.*

**Motion Passed 9-0**

Ms. Leeper moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Burr Elementary School.

**Motion Passed: 8-1**

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson  
Oppose: Mr. Aysseh

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Leeper seconded that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Stratfield Elementary School.

Mr. Dwyer supported the motion; the benefits outweigh the aesthetics.  
Ms. Pytko said while she teaches and supports renewable energy, the project was not an appropriate fit for the space.

**Motion Failed: 4-5**

Favor: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Jacobsen  
Oppose: Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Fairfield School Solar Proposal at Holland Hill Elementary School.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Vitale thanked the committee and said the Board supports solar energy.

**New Business**

*3Q Financial Report*

Mrs. Munsell presented the 3Q financial report. As of March 31, 2019, total expenses are expected to be within budget with the utilization of department and school give-backs. Any remaining funds after finalizing obligations, will be used for budgeted purposes to the extent possible. The Major Classifications Projection and Giveback sheet was discussed.

- The total amount in Givebacks is on line 28 and is just over \$1M.
- Dr. Jones said any remaining funds would go the schools; the principals would work with central office to determine needs.
- Excess Cost this year is very close to actual at 73%, and is also projected to be 73% next year.
- Medicaid revenue is \$115K, and higher than the initial projection of \$50K.
- The \$250K transportation deficit is due to changes in sped out of district transportation.
- Line 26 is mostly due to science, and is also reflective of the lack of available materials.

- Custodial overtime was due to water issues at the beginning of the year.
- Interns come from the universities; the expense can be found in part-time salaries. The intern program is unique to this area; the \$15-\$20K expense for each intern is well worth having a full-time intern, and that amount is applied towards the intern's education.

Mrs. Vitale asked the Board for unanimous consent to take up the interim Superintendent vote before the Budget Adjustment discussion, and to switch the first read of the redistricting principles with the ECC Update; the Board agreed.

#### *Approval of Interim Superintendent of Schools' Contract*

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#### **Motion Passed: 9-0**

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Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Fairfield Board of Education hereby moves to appoint Stephen Tracy as the Acting/Interim Superintendent of Schools, subject to Dr. Tracy holding all certifications and meeting all requirements set forth in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-157 and other applicable law. The Board further moves to approve the Contract with Mr. Tracy as discussed in executive session; and designates to the Board Chair the authority to execute the Contract document on behalf of the Board.

#### **Motion Passed: 9-0**

#### *Discussion of Possible 2019-2020 Budget Adjustments*

Dr. Jones reported that the RTM passed the BOE budget increase of 4.6%. This included a \$700K reduction, which led to a difficult exercise to scour departments for adjustments. Additionally, in the course of managing updated budget information for FTE's, para salaries, insurance and electricity; there is an additional reduction of approximately \$700K which has to be factored in, resulting in an overall budget reduction adjustment of \$1.38M. Referencing the Budget Adjustment sheet, Dr. Jones responded to Board comments:

- Parking fees will be utilized differently. Initially, the fees were implemented to pay for safety.
- FTEs on lines 1 and 2 reference new hires for next year. It's too early to tell if a Warde staff member could cover the .2 FTE; KDG numbers are not yet finalized and FPS does not have a staffing contingency.
- The high school capital equipment requests go through central office.
- Mr. Arnone said the ELL program fully supports students and is partially funded with various grants. Some of the grants are new, and must be applied to the specifics as outlined in the grant. There is no substitute for the ELL Blended Learning software.
- Mr. Cummings said the reduction in curriculum PD and curriculum writing will affect funding for cognitive coaching and K-5 reading materials.
- Ms. Byrnes said that high stakes assessment testing requires wireless connectivity; the elementary project is part of the 3-year tech plan that is slated for next year. This item could be pushed off another year, but the district is trying to stay ahead of any problems that might arise.
- Dr. Jones said she would not have not brought forward school allocation reductions if she thought they would greatly impede instruction; allocations are used differently at each school. The district has been able to avoid discussing positions. Mr. Hatzis said the Ludlowe allocation reduction may impact elective areas with more

expensive consumable materials such as family consumer science and tech-ed. The Chromebook technology has reduced the need for textbook replacements and provided savings. Mr. Ebling said each area would be looked at including costs for sports and music. Ms. McGoey said Stratfield's allocation reduction might affect library/media budget and math/science consumables and paper.

- Mr. Cummings added that science textbook money was not built into the budget; the allocation reduction will not affect NGSS text-like resources.
- Mrs. Vitale asked for more detail about the \$200K budget line item for WFC.

Mr. Aysseh said the Board of Education is non-partisan, unlike other boards in town. The biggest budget drivers are the collective bargaining agreements. After the First Selectman's \$700K BoE budget cut, there were unforeseen expenses to the already-lean budget, which now translate to cuts totaling \$1.4M. He urged the Board and others to continue to advocate for the BoE budget.

Mr. Dwyer clarified that the real cut to the budget is \$700K. Every June, the Board approves approximately \$1M in transfers in order to apply savings to overage areas. He noted the importance of approving labor contracts that ensure competitive salaries for FPS staff.

Mrs. Vitale asked the Board to submit any changes to the budget adjustments before next Tuesday.

#### *ECC Update*

Dr. Jones reiterated that the space issue at ECC is forcing the district to look at expansion programs in other elementary schools. Currently, the peer ratio is at 23% due to insufficient space. Mr. Mancusi provided an elementary programming update, featuring maps showing results of the ECC program rubric results. In 2020-2021, the recommended ECC program sites are Holland Hill, North Stratfield and Stratfield elementary schools. Program goals and a revised feeder pattern were presented. Dr. Jones and Mr. Mancusi responded to Board questions:

- The Board requested that staff review moving ECC out of Warde in its entirety. Warde is at capacity and continued growth is expected there.
- ECC will have identical, clustered programs at each location, allowing highly effective, appropriate spaces to provide continuum of services.
- The ECC plan allows for building utilization rates at 85%; long-term building utilization and enrollment could be addressed by Milone and MacBroom. As of 2020, elementary students would not have to move to make room for ECC.
- The revised 2019-2020 ECC feeder pattern may appear off-balance, but it is determined by enrollment.
- PK placement in an elementary school increases the likelihood of improving the peer ratio. Stratfield parents are very happy with the quality of the programming.
- Itinerant services, such as speech, need more review.

Mr. Dwyer recommended a grandfathering option to avoid multiple moves.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said itinerant services may be disruptive to elementary schools with the constant coming and going of students and parents.

#### *First Reading of Guiding Principles*

Mrs. Vitale recommended that the Board move forward on voting for the ECC timeline in order to be able to provide that information to Milone and MacBroom. Before the next meeting, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly requested a full picture of itinerant services and Ms. Pytko requested a site visit to North Stratfield and Holland Hill. Determining whether WFC will remain at its current location is the next step.

Ms. Vitale suggested the Board give guidance to Milone and MacBroom, rather than the principles document.

Mr. Peterson does not want to default to current boundaries.

Mr. Aysseh would rather Milone and MacBroom do their work with guidelines; without restrictions as imposed by the Guiding Principles. He would be happy with a guideline of 85-90% building capacity.

Mrs. Jacobsen called Point of Order and said the Guiding Principles are on the agenda as a First Read. The Board entered into discussion on whether the Guiding Principles document should be updated or even used at all. Ms. Pytko said Milone and MacBroom need clarification and a charge.

Mrs. Vitale agreed to continue with reviewing the document. Mrs. Jacobsen would reinstate #1 to maintain neighborhood schools, and read from the Facilities Planning Principles to make her point. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she has no interest in busing walkers, but would do so if needed.

At 10:50PM, Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Ms. Leeper seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:15PM.

**Motion Passed: 7-2**

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Peterson

Mr. Peterson asked that public comment be allowed at this time. Ms. Pytko agreed and said this discussion requires the Board's full attention.

Ms. Leeper said the Guiding Principles provide transparency. There are students who already don't attend their neighborhood schools; this is not a guarantee that can be provided to everyone.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded to table agenda items 8-11.

**Motion Passed: 6-3**

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson

Oppose: Ms. Leeper, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Jacobsen

*Public Comment:*

*Sarah Ferrizz, S. Benson Road:* Urged Board to have transparency and maintain Bylaws and original Guiding Principles.

*Alissa Schwarz; Avalon Court:* Shared the sense of community that Sherman provided during Hurricane Sandy, and reflected on the importance of neighborhood schools.

*Dan Satlow, Turney Road:* Proud of Fairfield's principles as a town that cares about solar energy and racial diversity. Trust in the Board to have great sensitivity, and that quality should be relayed to the consultant.

*Bonnie Rotelli, Merritt Street:* Frustrated to hear that ECC will be in 3 spaces; the ECC plan sounds vague. Finds inequity with Math Academy concept.

*Jennifer Gainer, Riverside Drive:* Fairfield has unique pockets where people fit in.

*Meghan Dockum, Riverside Drive:* Encouraged members to review #7 from the Facilities and Planning Document; hopes to let walkers walk.

The meeting ended at 11:15.

*Respectfully submitted by Jessica Gerber  
Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary*