

Board of Education Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 20, 2016
7:45PM

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the meeting to order at 7:52PM. Members present were Eileen Liu-McCormack (arrived 7:59PM), Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Marc Patten (arrived 7:58PM), Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Donna Karnal and Trisha Pytko were not present.

Business Items

Discussion of the Possible Impact to the 2016-2017 BoE Budget With Regards to the State Budget Proposal

Mr. Dwyer said the BOE Budget is currently in the hands of the RTM and that per Special Meeting By-Laws, there will be no public comment. Comments regarding the budget should be directed to the RTM. At the moment, the BOE budget has been reduced to \$163, 658,561. This Special Meeting was called in response to a request from the RTM Moderator – for the Board Chairman to attend the April 25 RTM Meeting, in light of the \$930 million projected shortfall occurring at the state level. The governor has reduced Fairfield’s funding from the Educational Cost Sharing from over \$3 million to \$0. The loss of the \$250K in Special Education funding is also an issue. The options that have been discussed are:

1. Make an assumption on the amount of the budget cut and try to find savings to match the assumed cut.
2. Vote on the budget as it exists today, knowing that the BOE and Town will work together under the “one-Town” concept.
3. Postpone the RTM vote to deal with the budget as a fact and not as a projection.

Mr. Dwyer said he intends to work under the one-Town idea, as in the past, the BOE and the Town have helped each other. The current BOE budget meets the needs of the students; decisions shouldn’t be made on projections. There is no doubt that there will some cuts and the BOE will be challenged to work on those, together with the Town leadership. He then requested that Board members present their views.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said Option 3 is appealing – what is the timeline for finding out the viability of that? Mr. Dwyer asked Mr. Tetreau to address that.

Mr. Tetreau said the Town attorney confirmed that the RTM vote can be delayed and he will provide a written opinion by Monday night to confirm this. Budget vote delays do occasionally happen, particularly in towns with Town meetings.

Mrs. Gerber asked, Is there a date by which the RTM would have to meet?

Mr. Tetreau said the simple answer is no; there are state statutes and guidelines. Some towns have been delayed a year. It is allowable to spend up to last year's budget amount without an approved budget. There are logistical issues such as tax bills; this would not be preferred.

Mr. Dwyer said the state is also grappling with this issue at the state level.

Mr. Patten expressed frustration; the BOE had saved money with the new Health Insurance Plan, and thanks to Dr. Title and his staff, a budget was presented with educational enhancements. Now it appears that a cut will be likely, and the Board will do its best to adjust; the Board will work with the Town.

Mr. Dwyer said the 2 final slides of the BOE Budget Powerpoint presentation to the RTM clearly summarize the budget review and the risks. This is posted on the BOE website.

Mr. Tetreau said the state budget as it stands is not expected to pass, but questions remain on the budget that will be passed in Hartford.

Mr. Dwyer said much is happening at the state level.

Adjournment

Mr. Calabrese moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Passed: 7-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:12PM

*Respectfully Submitted By
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education
Secretary*