

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, October 6, 2015**

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

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:35PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack (arrived 7:41PM), Marc Patten (arrived 7:37PM), Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, John Convertito, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Ludlowe student representatives Mihir Nene and Isabella Frango; Warde student representatives Ashley Agrello and Brittany Shuster; members of the Central Office Leadership Team, and approximately 90 members of the public.

Mr. Dwyer took a moment of personal privilege and asked for a moment of silence to honor Selectman Tetreau's younger brother who recently passed away.

Student Reports

Ms. Agrello and Ms. Shuster reported for Fairfield Warde High School: Students are finding the new block schedule to be more efficient; Open House was well attended; PSATs will be next week; college representatives will be visiting; the Pep rally and homecoming are this week; and a thank you to Mrs. Parks and Mrs. Munsell for attending the September 17 summer reading book chat raffle.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the WIFI access at the school. The students said some parts of the building are better than others but it is excellent in the library.

Mr. Patten asked how the new block schedule was working out. The students said they are adjusting well and appreciate the extra time, especially in Physics lab.

Mr. Nene and Ms. Frango reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School: The renovations, cafeteria expansion and student lounge have been well received; WIFI is much improved; fall sports are in full swing; senior class officers are working hard on spirit days; seniors are also in the midst of college applications; slight complaints have been heard on the new food policy; some students don't like the 10:39 early time for the first lunch wave; the new block schedule is going well, but a mid-class break has been suggested; PSATs will be given next week; and the student activity fair provided new opportunities.

Ms. Karnal asked whether there is enough time allotted between classes to get to class on time. The students said yes, the 5 minute timeframe is generous.

Mr. Patten asked about activity period and was told it occurs during the school day.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if students are allowed to move back and forth from the library to the cafeteria. The students said underclassmen can't leave the cafeteria once they are there, but students are allowed to go to the cafeteria first and then the library.

Public Comment

The following speakers spoke similarly in support of the Holland Hill expansion and renovation and were concerned about the following: impact of music and library on a cart, lack of privacy and safety for discussions, OT and PT taking place in the hallways, negative impact of overcrowding; and no dedicated room for gifted instruction. Many felt that the ed-specs and assignment of a building committee should be expedited, and the 504 capacity should be reinstated.

Trudi Durrell, Holland Hill PTA

Robyn Bilotta, Marsh Drive

Laurie Branscombe, Pemburn Drive

Gregory Jackson, Longview Avenue

Lisa and Rafael Gonzalez, Holland Hill parents

Kristin Tharrington, Walbin Court
Yngrid Li, Holland Hill parent
Sara White, Wilton Road
Abby Zandri, Brookmere Drive
Kerry Hind, Elderberry Lane
Chaithanya Balasubramaniam
Barbara Robbins, Jennings Road
Chrystal Moynahan, Szost Drive
Odyssa Billings, High Street

<i>Presentations</i>

Recognition of PTA Leaders

Mrs. Gerber thanked the Board of Education representatives who attend the BOE meetings and introduced several PTA leaders including: Tom Kane – Stratfield, Melanie Fox-Carvallo – Stratfield, Gina Luczaj – RLMS, Bonnie Rotelli – Stratfield and SEPTA, Adam King – Riverfield, Eric Newman – PTA Council, Monique Sudikoff – FWMS and North Stratfield, Kelly McWhinnie – North Stratfield and PTA Council, Jennifer Meehan – Holland Hill, Trudi Durrell – Holland Hill and FWMS, Lisa Broder - Burr and TMS, Neal Fink – 14-15 PTAC President.

Riverfield Elementary School Building Committee Update

Mr. Quinn, RBC Chairman, said Riverfield opened on time with the gym and pod scheduled for completion in December. He felt fortunate to have support from the Riverfield principal, Brenda Anziano. The work included 7 new classrooms, 20 updated classrooms, 7 new resource/academic support rooms and others. He mentioned that it is best to identify building deficiencies at the very beginning of the project, and work closely with the police and fire departments to reduce change orders. Mr. Quinn gave a presentation with before/after pictures and highlighted the secure entrance and air conditioning that exists throughout. Also presenting with Mr. Quinn were Mr. Stone/Ken Boroson Architects and Mr. Warrington/Colliers Group.

Mr. Patten commended the team for a job well done and said he noticed the walls in the POD area seemed stripped. Mr. Quinn stated that the footprint of that area remained largely the same; due to hazards, 200K was needed to rebuild the walls and doors in that area. He recommended that future project members understand that contingencies may be needed.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly echoed the appreciation. She asked if he would share details on why a project takes so long to complete and if he had any suggestions on how to expedite the process. Mr. Quinn said it is difficult to get the design to meet the budget and there are state, local and federal rules to follow. He recommended getting a good team up front including the architect, construction manager and the owner's rep. Mr. Stone said there was a 6 month delay due to the PCBs. It typically takes 12-14 months depending on various factors and there are multiple phases of design.

Mr. Fattibene also thanked Mr. Quinn and asked if there were any outstanding requirements. Mr. Quinn said he is not aware of any.

Mr. Convertito asked if the ed specs need to be made clearer, and whether time could be saved with a good team and up-front PCB testing. Mr. Quinn said once he got used to the jargon, ed specs were pretty clear; he said up-front PCB testing is recommended. Mr. Stone said the more up-front information that exists, the better. In this case, the environmental engineers became part of the design team.

Mr. Llewellyn thanked the team for the presentation and asked if there was pressure from the Town to bring the budget down. Mr. Quinn said his budget numbers were different than the Town's. Mr. Llewellyn agrees that going and probing up front is important. Mr. Llewellyn said that there are now 100 students under the MGT projection for Riverfield and asked what the district's plan is for the expected 5 empty classrooms once the pod is completed in December. Mr. Quinn said that is an incorrect statement; there won't be 5 empty classrooms.

Mr. Dwyer said this question is better addressed when discussing the Long-Range Facilities Plan.

Mr. Llewellyn said it's a very simple question, unless there's something to be hidden.

Mr. Convertito said the previous facilities plan that was adopted used a 504 standard to deal with the ebbs and flows of enrollment. Riverfield at one time had more students and OHS is currently over-capacity.

Mr. Fattibene made a Point of Order; he felt an additional rebuttal should be allowed. He disagreed with Mr. Convertito and said the primary reason for a 504 capacity was that, educationally, that is the optimum size for an elementary school and providing the curriculum and breadth that everyone wanted; space was secondary to that.

Mr. Dwyer said he has no doubt that the Long-Range Facilities Plan will be revisited.

Mr. Llewellyn said he is not disputing the 504 capacity, his question is what will happen with the excess space?

<i>Old Business</i>

Approval of 2016-2017 School Calendar

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the 2016-2017 School calendar.

Dr. Title said the school calendar follows the regional calendar.

Mr. Patten asked about the February break, as he was absent the previous meeting. Dr. Title explained that the regional calendar was a handout at the last meeting.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked about the region members and Dr. Title said it includes the CES region; 18 districts from Stratford to Greenwich.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Update on Holland Hill

Dr. Title said he appreciated the parent involvement and has met with PTA leadership and Holland Hill staff. He commended principal Laura Cretella for her hard work to find interim solutions with help from her staff, much like the staff at Osborn Hill during their suboptimal situation. He said he would look into the possibility of including the cost of 1 or 2 portables in the project funding for use during construction; moving the Riverfield portables is not feasible. He reviewed the timeline for project approval and said the ed-specs should be prepared in the January timeframe. It is important to get the project approved by Town bodies before June 30; that is the state deadline for project submittal and reimbursement. The fire marshal has determined there are no fire code issues currently at Holland Hill.

Mr. Convertito asked where the portables would be placed, and expressed concern that requesting portables may actually prevent the project from moving forward. Dr. Title said Mr. Morabito has reviewed the site and said space exists on the blacktop in back. Dr. Title shared the concern with moving the project forward and envisioned the portable request as part of the funding package for the project.

Mrs. Gerber asked if a letter from the Board chair to the First Selectman is needed and Dr. Title said no. Once the Board passes the ed-specs, an architect can be hired for a conceptual design and RTM approval follows. Additional funding requests can be made if there are contingencies. Mrs. Gerber asked whether ed-specs are needed for a conceptual design and whether advance work to determine the possibility of a PCB presence would make sense. Dr. Title said although early environmental work could be an advantage, it should in no way delay the June 30 deadline, and surprises could still exist. An architect could use the Long-Range Facilities Plan, rather than ed-specs, to create a conceptual design; the ed-specs could be reviewed once the BOE approves.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked for a timeline to hire an architect. Dr. Title said the Town's purchasing procedures are followed.

Mr. Patten asked about the cost of portables and whether a temporary architect would have to be hired if the ed-specs were approved in January. Dr. Title said a temporary architect would still be needed. The district would commit to the portables for multiple years and while the cost is approximately \$120K per portable, there are other fees such as lease cost, set-up and delivery, connecting fees, architect fees, etc.

Mrs. Gerber asked about the TPZ approval timeline. Dr. Title wasn't sure, but said portables could be in place by September 1 with RTM approval.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked about the monthly leasing cost and installation costs and timeline for portables and said she was interested in speeding up the portable delivery by not including it with the project's funding request, and instead use funding from the current year's budget. She asked to have this topic added to a future agenda as she was concerned about the loss to the music curriculum by not having a dedicated room. Dr. Title said the monthly leasing cost is at least \$2K per month. This would be in addition to the \$250K for both portables, among other fees. He added that there is no current source of funding to deliver portables immediately. He knows it is not optimal at HH but believes it is more prudent for getting the portables for next year. Mrs. Liu-McCormack would like to reconsider and fully vet this. Six months is a long time; some kids can cover a year's worth of work in six months; some will graduate without the benefit of all nineteen of the music teacher's instruments.

Ms. Karnal asked if we could get state reimbursement for portables if they were paid for out of this year's budget and Dr. Title said no. He said teachers are sharing space in many places with less than perfect conditions. The staff is entrusted with lessening the impact of that on instruction. Ms. Karnal asked if portables exist that have restroom facilities and was told yes. Dr. Title said security is one downfall of portables, which is why they're looking at trying to get the fencing in asap.

Mrs. Gerber said that no one on the Board is happy with the deficiencies at Holland Hill. The Board has been discussing Holland Hill for months, and some Board members have explicitly stated that they want to examine redistricting and reduce the scope of the project, and she asked the Board to unite as soon as possible to move this project forward as a 504 school.

Mr. Fattibene raised the issue that the building committee may hire a different architect than the one initially hired to do the conceptual design. He asked about the environmental hazards study that was done for each school and how far out the enrollment projections go. Dr. Title said in addition to a chlorine scan done at each school, the environmental hazards study also addressed short term issues and corrective actions were taken. In order to receive state reimbursement, enrollment projections must be at least 8 years out. Mr. Cummings said new 10-year enrollment projections should be ready by January 1.

Mr. Llewellyn said whether the Town spends 250K now or later, it is still the same cost. No one ever said Holland Hill should be delayed and he was in favor of accelerating the portable process for this school year. Just like last year, money can be found if you choose to find it and a redistricting analysis is our fiduciary duty. He recommended inviting Representatives Walsh, Bateson, and Mitola from the BOF, RTM and RTC to present their analysis for proceeding with a 504 capacity. He mentioned the 100 empty seats at Riverfield again and asked if classrooms could be shifted there. The analysis of redistricting is our fiduciary duty. No one has said we should delay this. Dr. Title said June 30 is a state deadline and the project should be moved forward so that it can be fast-tracked.

Mrs. Gerber said, in terms of the idea of not needing to add space, some Board members are on record with multiple statements at multiple Board meetings that additions do not need to be made. She clarified that renovations were not being challenged, but additions were.

Mr. Llewellyn said that being unsure is different than 'not' and an analysis should still be done, that's why they talked about redistricting.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if there would be state reimbursement for the \$250K for the portables if it came from the current budget and Dr. Title said no. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said that fiduciary responsibility is important and stated that Mr. Llewellyn and Mrs. Liu-McCormack were very clear that they wanted a redistricting committee. Six Board members visited Holland Hill last year and were well aware that a 504 is needed. Board members need to do their preparation.

Mr. Convertito asked about reimbursement from the Town and Dr. Title said it would not be reimbursable as a stand-alone item. Mr. Convertito said the BOE needs to justify the 504 capacity to the RTC, not the other way around. He asked for a motion to add an item to the agenda.

Mr. Dwyer said he will discuss with Dr. Title on getting that done properly so that Holland Hill can move forward as fast as possible.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said she has been consistent with her view on the need for renovations and has looked at both Mill Hill and Holland Hill; she's seen it herself. Her question is how many added classrooms, if any, are needed. It is

worthwhile to examine redistricting given that we do have seats across the district. Secondly, she is only now hearing the outcry from parents and believes the portables are needed imminently. Nobody had given the Board a petition. She believes that if the education is being impacted it needs to be addressed imminently. We're investigating the situation regarding whether or not Holland Hill needs to be a 504 school. A petition is a compelling argument.

Mr. Fattibene said he didn't think any BOE member questioned the need for the Holland Hill renovation, but the process involves questions regarding the ability and the timing of what actually gets done. Every member also recognized the need at Mill Hill, but the capacity question is a larger issue. If we build all of our schools to 504 we may have problems of over-capacity and may even need to look at closing an elementary school. He doesn't want to leave the Board with future problems. He asked Dr. Title if the state reimbursement would be reduced if the project is built over-capacity and was told it would be a very small reduction of approximately 1% or 2%.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the Holland Hill voices were heard loud and clear last year. She was critical of Mrs. Liu-McCormack's suggestion to adjust the budget by \$250k based solely on the reduced number of musical instruments offered, while other deficiencies did not move her. That makes the decisions we make look suspect to other Town bodies.

Mr. Convertito finds the whole thing to be extremely disingenuous; this has been on the radar for 4 years; the question is: What do we do from here?

Mr. Patten asked Mrs. Cretella about the state of her school. Mrs. Cretella thanked Dr. Title, Holland Hill staff, parents and the BOE members who toured the school. Last year she showed the Board a map of the school that showed all of the building shortcomings. She said every single available space is being used. Holland Hill had 20 classrooms last year; this year it has 21. She believes strongly that her staff can and will deliver the curriculum, but does not want the newly-elected Board to approve a band aid solution that could impact whether or not the full project moves forward.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said she was very moved by the parents and the Holland Hill petition and said that if Mrs. Cretella was indifferent about adding portables now then perhaps we should not add them. She believes the louder the outcry the louder the need. She asked Mrs. Cretella if she would support the acceleration of obtaining portables. Mrs. Cretella said she does not want any of her comments to be misconstrued; she strongly advocates for her building but does not want to do anything that would get in the way of moving the project forward; she believes in the Superintendent's plan.

Public Comment:

Jason Li, RTM District 8: Supports the decision to move the project forward as a 504.

Jennifer Meehan, Szost Drive: Read her daughter's letter to the BOE.

Dorene Herron, Forest Avenue: Encouraged the Board to do the project right.

Christy Vitale, Longview Avenue: Encouraged the Board to move the project forward.

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill: Encouraged the Board to move the project forward.

Rafael Gonzalez, Youngstown Road: Compelled the Board to move quicker.

Neal Fink, Crest Terrace: Recommends not opening the current year's budget. Capacity recommendation is in the purview of the Board.

Mr. Dwyer thanked the public.

<i>New Business</i>

Review of Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded to move item 7A on the agenda (Review Second Year of Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans) to the November BoE meeting.

Mr. Fattibene asked how long this item would take and was told approximately 30 minutes.

Ms. Karnal asked if there was room on the November agenda and was told yes.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Discussion of 2016-2017 Budget Ideas

Mr. Dwyer requested Board input for the upcoming budget season. The Board responded with the following ideas:

Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly

1. Commitment to Elementary Math Textbook.

Eileen Liu-McCormack

1. Commitment to Elementary Math Textbook.
2. Development and 'beefing up' of STEAM (STEM with Arts) Program in MS and HS to include computer programming and robotics.
3. Deliberate effort to restore full funding to World Language and make it deeper, skill-oriented.
4. Grammar introduction – roots, suffixes and prefixes incorporated into the curriculum. Should be equally delivered throughout system. Grammar and vocabulary equally delivered throughout elementary.

Marc Patten

1. PD for 5th grade to 6th grade transition to ensure students are more prepared for middle school.

Donna Karnal

1. Middle school to high school transition is also important and there should be focus here.
2. Advanced/Honors English course offered in middle school.

John Convertito

1. SAT Prep Class (online) funding – concerned with disparity of those students who can't afford the SAT prep class.

John Llewellyn

1. True-up actuals with budget to make the numbers more realistic. For example, there are variances in salary.
2. Preview anything added or new ahead of budget season, e.g. staff, programs, new technology, as opposed to seeing things for the first time as they hit the budget.
3. Does PSAT flow into next year – does the state pay for this?
4. Provide more detail in Professional Development to get it flushed out. For example, 17% was moved out of that to cover other costs and PD is critical to teachers.
5. Provide, ahead of time, costs associated with the implementation of District Improvement Plan.

Phil Dwyer

1. Continued commitment to building the World Language Program, K-12.

Dr. Title appreciated all the input and said the focus will be on the District Initiatives and the implementation of the District Improvement Plan. He reminded the Board that some of the items have a multi-year implementation process.

Approval of Dr. Title's Teaching Position at Sacred Heart University

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education allow Dr. Title to accept a paid teaching position at Sacred Heart University on his own time on Friday nights and Saturdays for the spring 2016 semester.

Mr. Dwyer noted that while Board approval is required per superintendent contract, Dr. Title would be teaching on his own time.

Mr. Fattibene said he could not in good faith support this; the Superintendent's job is a difficult one that requires more time than the ordinary employee. It is a contract position, and the wording of the contract stipulates that this approval is necessary. As a Board member his duty is to the district, and he is concerned that the continuing time commitment with

teaching could cause a conflict and he feels it is not in the best interest of the district.

Mr. Convertito is happy to support this. It is a graduate level course that offers a chance to share expertise and is to the district's advantage and benefit.

Mr. Llewellyn cannot support this. He did support it the first time because it was a one-off. He felt the job would be a significant time commitment, if done properly, and would be setting a precedent. Where does one draw the line; first teaching, then perhaps consulting. The contract language states the Board needs to have the power of approval.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly felt the fall semester teaching did not negatively impact his work. The bonus is that Dr. Title will get to know the staff at Sacred Heart.

Mr. Patten supports this and said another bonus is that Sacred Heart candidates can be somewhat vetted ahead of time.

Ms. Karnal asked Dr. Title if he felt that this impacted his time in regards to his day job. Dr. Title said no. It is a graduate class in data analysis and school improvement; he felt it enhanced his ability; plus he is able to be a scout for potential administrators. He still has most Friday nights, every other Saturday and all Sundays to do the work of the district in addition to the hours he puts in all week.

Mr. Dwyer will support the motion as Dr. Title supports the district 150% and accomplishes the goals that have been set.

Public Comment:

Adam King, Unquowa Road: As a Fordham education student, most of his professors were superintendents and principals.

Motion Passed: 6-3

Favor: Mr. Patten, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15 pm.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 24, 2015.

Mrs. Gerber mentioned that the minutes with Draft (2) at the top are the ones being voted on. The only difference with the original set of minutes is that Mrs. Liu-McCormack's name was inadvertently excluded from the first paragraph.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Superintendent Report

Dr. Title said he was proud of all the AP scholars and directed the Board's attention to the AP Scholar Report that was provided. He also recently attended a Warde/Ludlowe field hockey game and was amazed at the number of students and parents in attendance, especially given the rain and wind at the time; the new turf field was a thing of beauty. He mentioned that John Reisert is a nominee for the National Tennis Coach of the Year and will compete in the regionals. He is a fine teacher and coach.

Committee/Liaison Reports

Mr. Convertito said the Redistricting Committee met last Tuesday with approximately 85 members of the public. The committee will focus on the framework for guidelines and principles for the next meeting scheduled for October 15th.

Mr. Dwyer reminded Mr. Convertito to forward all materials resulting from the meeting to Meg Brown for inclusion in the agenda.

Mr. Llewellyn confirmed with Mr. Dwyer that there will be a first read.

Mr. Fattibene said there were 3 referrals to the Transportation Committee which are under consideration and recommendations are forthcoming.

Mr. Dwyer said Mr. Fattibene has been very dedicated with his transportation committee investigations.

Open Board Comment

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board of the CAFE conference and sign-ups.

Mr. Fattibene confirmed that his reservation will be given to a new Board member and the district is funding the conference.

Adjournment

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Karnal seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:07 PM

Respectfully Submitted
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education
Secretary