

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, January 28, 2016**

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.

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

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:34PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, Marc Patten (arrived 7:35PM), Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly (arrived 7:40PM) 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 25 members of the public.

Mr. Dwyer said documents at the table are in response to Board questions from the previous meeting.

Student Reports

Ms. Agrello and Ms. Shuster reported for Fairfield Warde High School: Mid-terms are over and students are preparing for course selection. Solar panels are being installed on the roof and should be completed by late February. The AMC, American Mathematics Competition, takes place February 2 and student surveys are going out.

Mr. Nene and Ms. Frango reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School. The 9th Project Runway is in the planning stages; the Juniors Parent coffee meeting took place; marking period 3 is beginning, students will be taking the AMC as well, and also the National Latin Exam will be administered soon; the sophomore dance is coming up.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked what it takes to move forward to the next level for the AMC. Mr. Nene said it requires a score of 100 or above to move on and is very challenging.

Old Business

Approval of By-Law Amendment Article V, Section 6

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the By-Law Amendment Article V, Section 6.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly felt this improved clarity for the public.

Mr. Calabrese supports the amendment; he would also be in favor of a public comment at the beginning of the meeting that allows the public to speak on both agenda and non-agenda items, possibly for 15 minutes, but he understands that it had been abused in the past.

Mr. Llewellyn referenced the enclosure and asked what is the difference with the red vs. the black line? If a person wished to comment after hearing the Superintendent Report, for example, would not be able to? Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said in terms of this agenda – items 7, 8, 9, and 10 would not have public comment, but a person wishing to comment on those items could comment at the beginning of the meeting. This is more conducive to running an efficient public meeting.

Mr. Dwyer added that every item of the agenda can be discussed at the beginning of the meeting, and voting items of interest also have public comment.

Mr. Llewellyn – What about a curriculum presentation? There is no ability to comment on that? Would like folks to be able to weigh in on the District Improvement Plan results, for example, and there is no vote there. Either add Public comment at the end, or leave it the way it is and add that people can comment on both agenda and non-agenda items.

Mr. Dwyer said a curriculum presentation is usually followed by a first read and then a vote, so the ability to comment exists for that.

Mr. Patten said his interpretation is that the only time for public comment on items other than old or new business is at the beginning of the meeting. For example, there is no opportunity for the public to comment on committee and liaison reports, and this clarifies that.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the guidance here is clear, public comment is allowed for old and new business only. Ms. Karnal recommended tightening up the language since Board members are still unclear. Mr. Llewellyn felt this is more restrictive. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly disputed that; she said it is clearer. Mr. Patten said the new language is more streamlined.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the motion and in A.2. strike “agenda” and insert “both agenda and non-agenda”

Mr. Llewellyn says this was stripped from the public a year ago; Westport has this.
Mr. Calabrese could not vote in favor without a time attached.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to amend the amendment and add the following phrase at the end of the first sentence in A.2.: “for no longer than 15 minutes”

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said this is a good compromise and gesture.
Mr. Dwyer said this could make the meeting longer and delay the business portion of the meeting.
Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly opposes the amendment to which this amendment is attached.
Mr. Patten said he will vote against this; there shouldn’t be a time limit for public comment on agenda items.

Motion Failed: 2-7

Favor: Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Mrs. Liu-McCormack moved, Mr. Llewellyn seconded to amend the amendment and add the following phrase at the end of the first sentence in A.2.: “with non-agenda items being limited to 15 minutes”

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said this addresses Mr. Patten’s valid concern on limiting public comment on agenda items.
Mr. Dwyer said this opens the door to commenting on personnel with no way to protect staff; he would consider this if there were a constitutional way to protect staff, but he would rather not have that dialogue at the table. He does not support this amendment.
Mr. Llewellyn disagreed with that argument - a comment could be made about staff when related to an agenda topic. Mr. Dwyer disputed this; he could rule someone out of order for doing this.
Mrs. Liu-McCormack said this does not address the issue and won’t change the personal attacks, which have been allowed to happen in the past few months. Doesn’t think this is going to change that.

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Mr. Llewellyn’s original amendment (to amend the motion and in A.2. strike “agenda” and insert “both agenda and non-agenda”)

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to postpone indefinitely consideration of Enclosure No. 1, Article V Section 6.

Mr. Llewellyn said that we were hasty last year in the changes. There is better language, we shouldn't be cobbling things together.

Mr. Dwyer does not support the motion.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said this is what she was trying to avoid – she did not want the Board tinkering with this at the table and she is in support of voting this in now.

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Original Motion (to approve the By-Law Amendment Article V, Section 6)

Motion Passed: 6-3

Favor: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of Policy 5514 – Students – Administration of Medication in the Schools

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve Policy 5514 – Students – Administration of Emergency Medication in the Schools”

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she received no questions. The Board of Health does not need to be listed as an approver.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval to Delete Policy 5515 – Students – Protocol for Administration of Emergency Medications by Non-Nursing School Personnel

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the deletion of Policy 5515 – Students – Protocol for Administration of Emergency Medication by Non-Nursing School Personnel.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said this will avoid redundancy; the policy is rendered obsolete.

Motion Passed: 9-0

New Business

Adoption of a Recommended Budget for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve an operating budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year in the amount of \$165,393,561 as presented, to be forwarded to the Town of Fairfield.

Dr. Title referenced the PSAT's for 9th grade students – He said this will not be implemented in 16/17; the administration would like to study this option and see if it is the right approach. He requested the budget not be amended for that small amount, as chances are that more assessment costs will be incurred.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly appreciates hearing that and respects the staff for taking more time for reconsideration.

Mr. Llewellyn

Page 158, 159 – Please clarify the \$1.98M projected IBNR in Column 5? Mrs. Munsell explained that number is based on the June 2015 IBNR that AON provides in September; the district estimates the June 2016 IBNR by using that with the change in claims.

Does the \$500K reserve stay in our operating budget if not needed? Dr. Title said funds are transferred over as needed; details with the Town have yet to be worked out; operating budget money is transferred to medical retention to pay the bills. It is too early to tell if the \$500K is needed for this purpose; this will remain in our budget until it is needed.

Will premiums for the CT Partnership be paid out of the medical retention fund? Dr. Title said yes, this is the agreement with the Town; we are paying rates to the new carrier and paying off claims to the old carrier. Mrs. Munsell said that is also the vehicle for employee payments.

Have all unions voted and ratified this move? Dr. Title said not all units need to vote, but there are MOU's with all bargaining units.

In terms of CT Partnership paperwork, have we been accepted? Dr. Title said the legislation states that if all employees go over to the new plan, then we are guaranteed acceptance. Mrs. Munsell said we are well on our way and currently filling out paperwork and meeting via conference call.

Mr. Patten referenced the playground reports and felt they were lacking recommendations; he asked that future inspection reports that involve recommended expenditures be in writing.

Mr. Calabrese said he knew both playground inspectors that were referenced and he trusted their judgment. He also explained that a rating of '1' identifies an urgent repair.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack - What is the percentage of the budget allocated to Special Education at elementary, middle and high school? How do we allocate spending? The trend seems to be going up? Dr. Title said this number is calculated by the state. Ms. Leonardi added the overall percentage number usually stays between 22-24% of the overall budget and is not disaggregated. The state calculates this through the ED001 and the formula generates a rate; while the percentage can fluctuate it generally remains in that range.

Ms Karnal asked if the number of people utilizing the services is constant. Ms. Leonardi said the prevalence rate is 11%. We are seeing increases in referrals, particularly with mental health.

Public Comment:

Sue Miska, Ryegate Road: Concerned with playground ratings and the Math text. Requested presentation on Special Education and 401(a).

Kelly McWhinnie, Church Hill Road: Urged the Board to pass the budget as presented.

Ms. Karnal requested clarification on pricing for IReady vs. STAR, for both Math and English - Would IReady give us the same price for Math and Reading? Dr. Boice said for this year, the RESC contract for STAR does provide both Math and Reading, but we are only using the Reading; Math is therefore not mentioned in the paperwork. IReady is what we are using for Math. Next year, we will be using STAR for both Math and Reading. Mr. Cummings said he had only budgeted for STAR, and wasn't sure if IReady could offer both at the same price.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack – Said that she thought the iReady results were helpful, wondered if STAR provided the same. What is the feedback on STAR? Is there a correlation to SBAC? Mr. Cummings said there is a learning curve and the staff has seen the benefits. He stressed that this assessment is one data point of many and is advantageous due to the impact on instructional time. Dr. Boice said there is a correlation to SBAC.

Mr. Patten commended and thanked the staff for their work with the budget and he fully supports it.

Mr. Llewellyn said he didn't know if dollars are being spent in the right places and meeting the needs of the students. He said IReady should be kept for another year for continuity; it is important to keep common assessments for more

than a year or two – what would be the estimate to do that? Ms. Byrnes said a good estimate would be to add 5% to the \$48K number from last year, and Dr. Title agreed.

Ms. Pytko – Would STAR be kept in addition to this? Mr. Llewellyn said yes.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the budget to include iReady in 2016-17 for \$48,000, to be funded through \$6336 of savings from the PSAT assessment that has been removed; and \$41,664 from the \$500,000 reserve in the medical retention fund.

Mr. Llewellyn said it is imperative to keep a common assessment to have baseline data.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack agreed it makes good common sense from a statistical point of view and said she liked the IReady test and the supporting materials regarding results, and would like a review of the new Math curriculum.

Dr. Title said the SBAC was given in Math last spring, will be given this spring, and will continue next year; this will provide 3 consecutive data points. Is concerned that giving both STAR and IReady will be double testing all students in Math in fall, winter and spring. Additionally, the PSAT money will no doubt be needed, and it is important to signal to the Town that we are being prudent and conservative when budgeting for the unknowns in the health insurance account; does not recommend taking any money from the \$500K that is budgeted for volatility.

Ms. Pytko – what is the need to have both tests if both are based on the common core and one will favor more instructional time?

Mr. Patten agreed and is not in favor of over-testing and does not recommend taking money from medical retention.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the Board should listen to the staff. We are talking about 2 tests done multiple times per year.

Mr. Patten asked about the SBAC trial. Dr. Title said there was a pilot year and no results were given to us. In October, we received data by subject, grade, and school – this is the baseline data for SBAC and was provided to the Board.

Mr. Llewellyn said the data he received on this didn't show the strand level. Will the same level of detail be supplied for SBAC as it was for the CMT's? Dr. Title said the terms are different for SBAC – the data is referred to as Claims, and this will be presented at the status update in April. Claims are different and are not nearly the level of detail as the strand data in the CMT's, it is more highly aggregated like large categories.

Mr. Llewellyn said IReady does have detail and he would be happy to drop STAR to keep IReady; he felt there was a big enough cushion in the medical retention fund to do this.

Public Comment on amendment:

Sue Miska, Ryegate Road, Would like to see the tests compared. \$46,000 is not much to find in a large budget.
John Convertito, Oyster Road: You're talking about one data point amongst many. Follow the judgment of the professional staff; does not support the amendment.

Dawn Llewellyn, Fairfield Resident: Urged the Board to use IReady as a benchmark, it has more detail.

Kelly McWhinnie, Church Hill Road: Does not support another standardized assessment to chase data.

Bob Smoler, FEA President: Overabundance of testing at the expense of instructional time is damaging. Inadvisable to take funds from a self-insured plan.

Motion Failed: 3-6

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Original Motion (to approve an operating budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year in the amount of \$165,393,561 as presented, to be forwarded to the Town of Fairfield) **Passed: 8-0-1**

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Patten, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: None

Abstain: Mr. Llewellyn

Mr. Dwyer encouraged Board members to promote the budget at upcoming town meetings.

Dr. Title thanked the Board for its support; the Board had input and we listened to the objections and high priorities.

The budget reflects a team effort, and the District Improvement Plan gives us a roadmap to develop a budget. March 8 is the next official budget meeting with the BoS and BoF.

Approval of the 2016 National Youth Tobacco Survey

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the 2016 National Youth Tobacco Survey.

Dr. Title said the survey impacts FWHS only – 2 classes at each grade level. Not that impactful and approval is recommended.

Mr. Llewellyn – Procedurally, shouldn't this be a First Read? Dr. Title said yes, but this is requiring a quick turnaround and is fairly routine.

Mrs. Gerber supports moving this forward, it is an important questionnaire.

Mr. Patten and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly agreed.

Mr. Llewellyn wanted to ensure that there is an opt-out for parents to use. Mrs. Parks said there is.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack – How long is the survey and what will the Opt-out students do in the meantime? Mrs. Parks said it takes about 35 minutes and teachers will know the opt-outs ahead of time to plan for that. Mr. Ebling said this is for a small number of students – 80 in total. Typically, not too many parents opt-out.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the cover letter assures student privacy and she was curious about the monetary award. Mr. Ebling said he wasn't sure how much that would be for.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the January 12, 2016 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 12, 2016.

Motion Passed: 7-2

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

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Llewellyn

Superintendent's Report

Quarterly Financial Report

Mrs. Munsell thanked the Board for the budget approval and reviewed the Quarterly Financial Report as of December 31, 2015. Midway through the fiscal year, Fairfield Public Schools' total expenses are projected to be within budget. While there are many unknowns, we have benefitted from the lack of snow, warm weather and introduction of therapeutic services for psychiatric and behavioral issues.

Mr. Llewellyn

What is the breakdown of line 305, support services, professional technical? Mrs. Munsell said she had already provided that. Mr. Llewellyn said if going forward that could be broken out that would be great.

What does the \$877K on page 1, teaching staff, represent? Mrs. Munsell said we use these categories to balance our salary accounts when there is a vacancy – this is done on a monthly basis. The money is moved down to staff replacement and the accounts counteract each other.

Does the \$877K represent 100 FTE's? Mrs. Munsell said not necessarily; it is cumulative.

Committee/Liaison Reports

Ms. Pytko said the SEPTA meeting is on Feb. 10, REHAB Associates will be presenting; Saturday night is the Fairfield YMCA Family Fun night for children with special needs and their families .

Mrs. Gerber reported that, as the Board knows, from an email she sent to them, the FLHS Building Committee did get a proposal from Gilbane, and is now planning to go to the Town for additional funding. Mr. Llewellyn asked if there is a final budget number on this and Mrs. Gerber said yes, it is included in the information that she previously provided to Board members – it is \$3.5 million.

Mr. Dwyer reported that the Board of Selectmen approved Holland Hill. It will start with an initial building committee composed of people who can meet weekly during the day in order to move the project forward. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly was happy to hear that Tom Quinn was going to be on the building committee.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Liu-McCormack hopes that program reviews will be given in the coming years. We need greater clarity in how we are spending our money. She still has questions. When she can't find clarity she asks questions. She appreciated the staff coming up with \$3.5 million that allowed us to invest in programs. She will continue to push for further clarity in programs and financial aspects.

Mr. Patten advised Board members to advocate for the budget at town meetings, on Facebook and to see it through to the end.

Mr. Calabrese agreed; we all do need to support this budget.

Mrs. Gerber – thanked Dr. Title and the staff for the budget presentation and for responding to all of the detailed questions so quickly. She is looking forward to the implementation of the District Improvement Plan and to supporting the budget.

Adjournment

Ms. Pytko moved, Mr. Patten seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:07PM

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Public Schools
Secretary*