

**Special/Budget Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, January 24, 2017**

**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/Budget Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call*

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Special Meeting to order at 7:35PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, Marc Patten, Donna Karnal (arrived 8:37pm), Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 10 members of the public.

The Board received replies to questions from the previous budget meeting. The document will be referenced throughout the meeting.

Mr. Dwyer said the Board will continue budget discussion per the order on the agenda and suggested any recommended changes be discussed at 9:15pm.

Ms. Pytko, page 70-71, Why are we proposing a reduction in subs? Seems very optimistic compared to the actual. Mrs. Leffert said long-term absences are unpredictable. Monies get switched from payroll into sub accounts for long-term absences and can recoup salaries from the salary account.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly - Do multiple absences, not long-term, factor into the School Improvement Plans?

Ms. Leffert said most staff does not abuse leave and she referenced the response in the Question Packet.

Mr. Llewellyn

1. page 51 – Why the increase at McKinley, seems out of line with the others. Mrs. Leffert said that is attributable to staff movement and grant dollars.
2. Page 56, 57 – Why the disproportionate increase for several admin staff? Ms. Leffert said there is an anomaly for one year in the step increase schedule; this is not an adjustment, it is the contracted amount. Mrs. Leffert will provide the salary schedule.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack – Is the step schedule a hard salary? What about merit-based pay? Mrs. Leffert said this is strictly what is in the salary schedule; there is no merit pay.

Mr. Llewellyn

1. Page 58 – Why the 12% increase for Info Tech? When was this change effective? Mr. Dwyer said information was received earlier on this adjustment. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly added that there was also a change in job description, which the Board had been notified of. Mrs. Leffert said the change was effective in September.
2. Page 67 – Why the disparity between budgeted and estimated expenditure? Do we need more staff? Is there a concern? Ms. Leffert said salaries are captured from unpaid leave due to long-term absences.
3. Page 71, line 51985 –Why the increase? Ms. Leonardi said the summer is approximately 2 weeks longer this year for students with extended year services; some is for the adjustment for other services. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked where the pay date falls and was told July 1.
4. Page 72, The 306 number in pension represents a 16% increase which seems large. A chart with the number of those pension-eligible and paid over last 4 years, the number of 401a, number that qualify for matching, and credit would be helpful. Dr. Jones gave the non-certified

numbers; 359 are in-town pension and 19% are in 401a. Mr. Dwyer said the Town provides those numbers.

5. Page 73, #303 – Is ESS benefitting students and staying at the same rate? Ms. Leonardi said students are benefitting; data shows improvements, some students have still been outplaced; could not put this in place in the middle school given the hard budget choices.

Mr. Calabrese - Are we budgeting enough for this account? Ms. Leonardi said yes.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, page 73 - Why was the program assessment line reduced – wasn't the PSAT 9<sup>th</sup> grade testing amount supposed to be used by alternate items? Dr. Boice said some of that was used for World Language testing; other assessments were not in the DIP so a different account was used.

Mr. Llewellyn, page 75/line 62 – What is this for? Ms. Leonardi said this had been mentioned earlier and includes services such as full-time registered nurses.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

1. Would like more detail on her question regarding budgeting for utilities. Mr. Cullen said many things affect utilities at schools and variables are hard to pinpoint – they include any change such as boilers going offline.
2. Page 75, at Burr and NSS – Are we budgeting too low? Mr. Cullen said Burr's controls have greatly improved and NSS has new boilers and is using natural gas.

Mr. Calabrese noticed that the projected and actual numbers are very close and he thanked Mr. Cullen for the hard work, especially with the solar projects; he trusts these numbers. Mr. Cullen said the preventative maintenance is working well.

Mr. Llewellyn – Where is the Food Services information, previously provided in the back of the budget book? Mr. Dwyer said this is normally reviewed in June and is not part of the operating budget. Dr. Jones said she would provide this information.

### *Pages 103-115*

Mrs. Liu-McCormack

1. Page 113, line 317 – What is the transportation increase for? Dr. Jones said it is the contract increase.
2. Can we make the routes more efficient? Dr. Jones said this is being reviewed, including the interpretation of the law. Any possible savings would be too late to incorporate into this budget.
3. What about new apps and available technology? Dr. Jones said the software is being upgraded. Mrs. Munsell added that while it is the same software – the upgrade is more robust and will integrate better with Infinite Campus.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, pages 39 and 113 – Why the discrepancy in transportation? Ms. Munsell said the difference is training.

### *Support Information, 121-163*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly is thrilled with 6-day rotation; a small investment with a big pay-off. She hopes it will be helpful for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade with all its pull-outs.

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board of upcoming BOS meeting for non-recurring projects.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack – What are the number of hours allocated to various disciplines, such as elementary STEM? Would be interested in a data analysis of this. Dr. Jones said this is difficult to parse out. Mr. Cummings said for elementary: 70 minutes/day for math – which is high among peer groups,

Language Arts is more integrated into Social Studies and Science. Have not formally had another study, but conscious of integrating disciplines. No cost associated.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, page 147 – Noticed changes on the schedule for Science, Tech Ed and Developmental Guidance. Dr. Boice said the schedule is a balancing act with Board presentations. The other consideration for Developmental Guidance is the need to first develop a social/emotional learning framework.

Mr. Llewellyn

1. Page 153 – How is non-repairable different from annual refresh? Ms. Byrnes said the annual refresh is planned, non-repairable is the emergency repair/replace fund.
2. What was spent on non-repairable and acquisition of equipment? Ms. Byrnes will provide that list and the waterfall – there are over 7000 computing devices.
3. How many requests for document cameras? Ms. Byrnes said one request was received; PTA 's have purchased this item for less than \$100.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly – Can Chromebooks be used for the SBAC? Ms. Byrnes said yes.

Mr. Patten, page 119 – What accounts for the changes in lines 1108, 1111, 1112 and 1115? Ms. Munsell said most likely salary changes - she will confirm this.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack, page 119 – What is included in lines 1117 and 1200? Is transportation included? Dr. Jones referenced page 118 for what is included – she will provide this information.

Ms. Karnal

1. Page 119, Why do the numbers appear so drastically different in line 2640? Ms. Leffert said the HR dept. has had changes in staff members, but no new FTE. Mrs. Munsell said the account also includes subs, she will provide a breakdown of what is included here.
2. What does the change in line 1200 cover? Ms. Leonardi said it includes staffing, PT, and other services.
3. Is 2140 separate from that? Which lines add up to the \$1.5M? Ms. Leonardi said 2140 includes the purchase of revised speech and language testing materials as required.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack, page 119 - Can we divide these program numbers into mandated and non-mandated for Gifted, Sped, ELL, WFC, etc.? Would like to see what the performance is for the investment. Ms. Leonardi said all students are in regular-ed, it would be difficult to parse out and would be misleading to the public. She was asked to parse this out by department/program a few years ago and it was a bit of an artificial exercise; it may lead to more confusion.

Ms. Karnal, page 74 – What is the breakdown of legal fees? Ms. Leonardi said the figure on that page is for the district. Mr. Dwyer said this has already been provided; he asked Ms. Munsell for an update as of December 31.

### *Discussion of Budget and Suggested Changes*

Mr. Dwyer asked the Board for comments on suggested budget changes and asked, has the textbook line been reduced too much? Town bodies should be made aware of a possible increase in this line item next year. Dr. Jones said it will have to go back up next year if the Science materials will be purchased. Each line will be reviewed.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly expressed her concern about the textbook cost and said it was worth mentioning to other Boards as a possible sizeable increase for next year.

Mr. Dwyer – In addition, we are not budgeting for classes on the bubble; this should be highlighted.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack – Is thinking about exchanging maintenance projects for curriculum; will wait to get clarification from her questions at tonight’s meeting and might be broad rather than specific.

Mr. Dwyer said specifics will be needed to price out suggested changes.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said BOE is the only Town body that can budget by line item – formal motions will be expected on Thursday.

Mr. Llewellyn said suggested changes can be broad; he referenced the Quarterly Report.

Mr. Patten began a discussion on extra PD – Is it possible to take a school day and convert it to a PD day? Mrs. Leffert said this would be at the discretion of the superintendent. Dr. Jones said there aren’t enough extra days, there may be a special election which will take a day; also, where PD is placed on the calendar is important relative to effectiveness. Thinking about a few early dismissals. Mr. Patten said he will not recommend this change.

Mr. Llewellyn, page 85, #321 – Is this an allocation of teacher salaries? Dr. Boice said it includes hourly curriculum writing, implementation guides and presenters. PD and curriculum development fall under Program Implementation.

Ms. Karnal, page 103 – Why is #313 missing from some schools? Mrs. Gerber referred her to the question packet for a full explanation. Mr. Cullen referred to page 155 for a list of items for line 313.

*Public Comment:*

Linda Erickson, Fairfield Resident – Sherman is not a 504 school, that should be changed in the budget book.

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill Road – Asked Board members to please notify PTA Budget reps of any changes or amendments to the budget so that they can be aware in advance.

Mr. Dwyer said the question/answer packets will be posted to the website. Thursday’s agenda includes an item for next year’s calendar due to the special election, pending BOS action.

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

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

Meeting adjourned 9:30pm.

*Jessica Gerber  
Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary*