

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, January 10, 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 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 7:37PM), Marc Patten (arrived 8:45PM), Donna Karnal (arrived 7:42PM), Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, Ludlowe student representatives Sean Oppenheimer and Catherine Behjati; Warde student representative Ashley Agrello; members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 40 members of the public.

Student Reports

Ms. Agrello reported for Fairfield Warde: Wished the Board and Dr. Jones a Happy New Year; students are prepping for mid-terms; Warde hosted the recent wrestling tournament that included 17 schools; Warde also placed first at the recent basketball tournament - Sean Conway was noted as MVP, and Marcel Parsons made the All-Tournament team; the fall drama production of 'Antigone' was a success as were the concerts; auditions for 'Oklahoma' begin in a few weeks.

Mr. Oppenheimer and Ms. Behjati reported for Fairfield Ludlowe: Wished the Board and Dr. Jones a Happy New Year; the second LGBT Forum was held; The CT State Dept. of Education recently ranked Ludlowe as #1 in Textiles and Design. Mid-terms begin next week, course selection night is January 25.

Presentations

Presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed 2017-2018 Operating Budget

Dr. Jones presented the Superintendent's Proposed 2017-2018 Operating Budget for **\$168,757,490**; a 3.12% increase over last year. The budget was crafted, being mindful of the community, to focus on priorities to accomplish the District Improvement Plan and to maintain great schools. Headmasters, principals and senior leadership had an initial budget request that was \$2M more than what is being presented. The district is using a new methodology for calculating retirees, and is using the Milone & MacBroom Projections to calculate staffing. Education Cost Sharing (ECS) has been reduced and additional state reductions may occur. The six budget drivers are increases in contracted salaries, health insurance, pension/retirement, physical therapy and student services, contracted transportation cost, and magnet and special-needs tuition. She thanked staff, and in particular, Mrs. Munsell, for her assistance with the budget.

Mr. Dwyer reviewed the Town budget process and the tentative schedule of meetings.

Mr. Llewellyn questioned the \$400K for magnet school funding and asked whether Bridgeport can bill for previous years' tuition. Dr. Jones said the \$400K also included special education tuition.

Mr. Dwyer said the legislation allows for tuition billing when one year's advance notice is given.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if the 8.1 FTE reduction was for non-certified employees. Dr. Jones referred to the budget book.

Ms. Pytko referenced ECS and asked if we might lose even more.

Mr. Dwyer said further reductions are possible. Dr. Jones added that she is hopeful that will not happen.

Mr. Dwyer mentioned that all 3 Town bodies approved the use of \$800K in the 2015-16 medical retention fund balances to be used to fund the balance for this year's insurance.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board to submit any additional budget questions in a timely manner.

Old Business

Approval of Proposed 2017-2018 Capital Non-Recurring Projects

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Calabrese seconded that the Board of Education approve the Proposed Capital Non-Recurring Projects for 2017-2018.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to table this vote until after the operating budget is approved on January 26.

Mr. Llewellyn felt the operating budget should be addressed first. Given the climate at the state level, some projects could be deferred; he advocated waiting until after the budget is approved – it could be placed on the February 14 agenda.

Mr. Dwyer said waiting puts the project timing in jeopardy; difficult to do capital projects when school is in session.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said the operating budget is the priority; she agreed with Mr. Llewellyn that this could be delayed one month.

Mrs. Gerber said if this is postponed until February, it won't go to the other bodies until April and that is problematic.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she is open to finding a better process, but until other Town bodies change the schedule, there is no reason to delay.

Ms. Karnal asked if anyone had reached out to other Town bodies about this. The priority should be where we can best serve the students.

Mrs. Gerber said if the Board members who made this motion had given some notice regarding it, the other town bodies could have been notified, but no advance notice was given. This schedule works better for all Town bodies.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said safety is a student priority and is part of the educational program going forward.

Ms. Karnal said she never used the word 'safety' and said the Chair can reach out to other Town bodies before next Tuesday.

Mr. Dwyer said the Board must first decide if the motion is tabled.

Public Comment:

David Becker, Board of Finance Member: Prefers current approval timeline; older process caused projects to back-up. Noted that many figures are already known via the capital planning workshop.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked whether projects could be removed after approval. Concerned that these projects will impact the operating budget.

Mr. Dwyer said yes, at a future meeting, although it is important to recognize the difference between capital money and operating money; this is bonding money; the impact on the operating budget is de minimis. The bodies that handle the financing could decide to postpone the projects.

Motion Failed: 3-5

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

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

(Mr. Patten was not present for this vote.)

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to divide the six items in the motion.

Mr. Llewellyn said, given the size of the increase, certain things may not be as critical; such as the HVAC, as was shown in the follow-up information.

Ms. Karnal supported the division and asked why projects are grouped as a whole; asked if there was an advantage to this method.

Mr. Dwyer said the booklet has been done this way for well over 5 years. Mr. Cullen added that there is no advantage, however, one of the projects does require a building committee.

Motion Failed: 3-5

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

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

(Mr. Patten was not present for this vote).

Original Motion Passed: 5-3

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

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

(Mr. Patten was not present for this vote).

Approval of Policy 3520.13 – Student Data Protection and Privacy/Cloud-Based Issues

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve Policy 3520.13 – Student Data Protection and Privacy/Cloud-Based Issues.

Motion Passed: 8-0

(Mr. Patten was not present for this vote.)

Approval of Policy 5125 – Student Records – Confidentiality

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve Policy 5125 – Student Records – Confidentiality.

Motion Passed: 8-0

(Mr. Patten was not present for this vote.)

New Business

First Reading of Policy 5145.14 – Students – On Campus Recruitment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked the Board to forward any questions prior to the next meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the December 13, 2016 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 13, 2016.

Motion Passed: 5-0-3

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

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

(Mr. Patten was not present for this vote.)

Superintendent Report

Update on Racial Imbalance Plan

Dr. Jones said she was grateful for the support she received from Mr. Dwyer and Dr. Title – both accompanied her to Hartford to present the Racial Imbalance Plan to the CT State Board of Education (CSBE). CSBE is asking for benchmark details, and wants to ensure that we are having discussions on redistricting and engaging the community in the process. A timeline is being created and will be forwarded when complete.

Mr. Dwyer complimented those parents who traveled to Hartford for public comment – that made a difference. He added that CSBE wants some measure of an investigation into a magnet program and redistricting.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the community was engaged – is there something more specific? How do we formulate a timeline?

Mr. Dwyer said CSBE is requiring a more robust conversation on the magnet program – to include the Town and the host school. Dr. Jones added that the timeline will reflect past events as well as plans moving forward.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked what the CSBE thought of the plan; she is not clear on what is needed.

Mr. Dwyer said CSBE conditionally approved the PK and Open Choice options, and now wants proof that we are investigating the magnet program and redistricting. Also open to new ideas.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said this brings us full-circle to redistricting – are we getting ahead of ourselves by creating extra capacity?

Mr. Dwyer said when this comes back to the Board for revision – those items can be addressed.

Mr. Llewellyn asked Mr. Dwyer if CSBE would like to see us at 15%. What happens if the first 2 options– PK and Open Choice - are conditionally approved? Do we go back in 120 days for approval?

Mr. Dwyer added that by state regulation – impending balance occurs at 15% above the average; CSBE does not dictate how to solve the problem. While CSBE likes the PK and Open Choice, their end goal is to solve the issue. This will be on a future agenda to meet the 120-day deadline.

Dr. Jones also updated the Board as follows:

- Is working with Mr. Tetreau on the reduction in ECS funding.
- Met recently with Holland Hill Building Committee members, Mr. Dwyer, FPS staff, the architect, and the construction firm to review ed-specs and conceptual drawings. Feels we are moving in the right direction, but the work is just beginning.
- Attended both of the high school concerts and they were magnificent.
- The Brown Bag Luncheon takes place on Thursday, January 12th.
- Had a great visit at the Early Childhood Center and thanked the staff for being so welcoming.

<i>Committee/Liaison Reports</i>

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the CAFE audit is now 7 shy of finishing the massive pile of mandated changes – one of which relates to graduation. She recommended holding on to the graduation policy until it gets addressed by the state. After the mandated changes, the suggested changes will be reviewed. She asked Board members for input regarding any policy they feel should be addressed. The PTAC has grant monies available; as an example, FLHS and FWHS recently were approved for a grant to provide a Valentine lunch at the senior center – as a way for teens to perform community outreach.

Mrs. Gerber said the Board of Selectmen recently voted for the less expensive option for the Osborn Hill connector, and this will move forward to the BOF on February 7th.

Mr. Dwyer said both he and Mrs. Gerber supported the brick option for the OHS connector. The ‘less expensive’ option will cost the Town more money in the long run – as panels will have to be replaced sooner.

Ms. Pytko said the next SEPTA meeting at McKinley will cover the topic ‘The ABCs of Your Child’s IEP’.

Mr. Dwyer updated the Board on the Holland Hill project. The current estimate is at \$21M; Mr. Quinn thinks that \$2M will come out of that project cost and there is no proposal to change the ed-specs.

Ms. Pytko asked about the timing of returning to the BOF and said she was under the impression that the ed-specs would be changed, is the BOF expecting us to change the ed-specs before HHBC presents to them?

Mr. Dwyer said we have no authority over the HHBC.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked, in comparing this project with Riverfield - did Riverfield have the same nature of site work as Holland Hill? What would the process be if the BOF wanted to officially convey a request that the ed-specs be changed?

Mr. Dwyer said the site work at Riverfield also came in more expensive than anticipated. The final approved budget for Riverfield at \$14.6M and was value-engineered back. The BOF Chairman should consult Dr. Jones and copy the BOE Chairman if they would like something considered.

Mrs. Gerber asked whether HHBC received a revised set of drawings. When is the next meeting?

Mr. Dwyer said there are new drawings, but the HHBC has not met on those plans yet. The next HHBC committee meeting date has not yet been set. He reiterated that there is broad support for this project; wants to do this in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Ms. Pytko, Mr. Patten and Mrs. Gerber all praised the high school holiday concerts and said they were amazed at the music staff.

Mrs. Gerber mentioned that a FWMS student will appear on “Chopped” on Tuesday night.

Mr. Dwyer said the list of committee/liaison assignments was left at each seat.

Adjournment

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

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:25PM

Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary