

Approved 1/25/2018

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, January 9, 2018**

**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 7:14PM. Present were members Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Leeper, Christine Vitale, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Jennifer Jacobsen, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Nick Aysseh (arrived 7:16PM) and Jeff Peterson. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, FLHS student representative Isabella Schichter, FWHS student representative Paul Rivera, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 20 members of the public.

**Voting Summary:**

**Old Business**

*Approval of the 2018-2019 BOE Capital Projects*

Ms. Pytko moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Capital Projects” Motion passed 9-0.

*Approval of the 2018-2019 BOE Capital Non-Recurring Projects*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Capital Non-Recurring Projects” Motion passed 9-0.

**New Business**

*Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Association and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Leeper seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Association and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021.” Motion passed 6-3 (Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly in favor; Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson against).

**Approval of Minutes**

*Approval of Regular Minutes of December 12, 2017*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 12, 2017” Motion passed 9-0.

*Approval of Special Minutes of December 14, 2017*

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Vitale seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of December 14, 2017 as amended” Motion passed 8-0-1 (Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Pytko abstain).

**Adjournment**

Mrs. Gerber moved/ Ms. Leeper seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:35PM

## Detailed Minutes:

### Student Reports

Mr. Rivera reported for FWHS: Warde hosted a wrestling tournament for 20 teams and came in first; the gift card drive was successful; the 5 Carillon concerts were well attended; the Achievement Gap Task Force held a fundraiser and will attend the NEASC conference; mid-terms are now backed up one day.

Ms. Schichter reported for FLHS: Six successful Candlelight concerts were enjoyed by all; the Western Region Music Festival takes place this weekend; students are preparing for mid-terms and have been delayed for 1 day; the senior volleyball tournament has been postponed until after mid-terms.

### Public Comment

*Janine Alianiello*, Mill Hill Drive: Requested Mill Hill traffic study before construction.

### Budget Presentation

Dr. Jones presented the 2018-2019 Superintendent's Proposed Operating Budget for the amount of \$173,956,991; a 3.1% increase over 2017-2018. The theme for the budget is *Moving Forward to 2020*.

At \$17,002, Fairfield has the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest PPE in Southern Fairfield County. The district has generated additional funds by increasing PK tuition, consolidating bus routes, increasing billable costs (SPED tuition), and making changes to health insurance. Since 2014, Educational Cost Sharing Revenue has been reduced by \$2.4 million, equivalent to 32.6 full-time teachers. Recent mandates that may affect the budget include loss of TEAM funding, alternative education opportunities, mandatory preschool, change in high school graduation requirements, services for gifted/talented, among others. Fixed cost increases include contracted salaries, Pupil Personnel Services, benefits, transportation, and tuition – totaling \$5,324,951. Several program improvements include ELL Academy, Special Education and Student Support Programs, reconfiguring positions to create 11 Elementary Program Facilitators, and a focus on STEAM.

Mr. Peterson and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked for more information on the ELL Academy. Dr. Jones said more information will be presented next week. The program will utilize current ELL teachers and 3 support positions, based at 3 specific sites.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about ESS program elimination and Medicaid revenue. Dr. Jones said ESS will convert to 5 in-house positions; the funding will move from contracts to salaries. A placeholder of \$100K is being used for Medicaid revenue.

Mrs. Jacobsen had several questions regarding site-based budgeting. Dr. Jones said each site has different needs; principals use their discretion.

Mr. Dwyer thanked Dr. Jones for the presentation and asked Board members to send questions in advance.

### Old Business:

#### *Approval of the 2018-2019 BOE Capital Projects*

Ms. Pytko moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Capital Projects.

#### Mill Hill Project

The Board had significant discussion on the Mill Hill Project including whether it would be built to a 504 enrollment. Mrs. Gerber questioned whether the size of the project would affect the preliminary funding. Several members asked

Approved 1/25/2018

about the ed specs approval process and the formation of a building committee. Mr. Cullen said the initial funding would not be affected whether the project was built to a 504 or not. Mr. Dwyer said after BOE approval, the project must then be approved by BOS, BOF and RTM prior to the formation of a building committee. The BOE can work on approving the ed specs in parallel with the Town approval process. Mr. Cullen added that ed specs are very important for the committee charge, and should be initiated this spring. If built to a 504, the project cost could rise to \$25M. Mrs. Gerber asked how there could be such a large increase, as only a few months earlier, Mill Hill had been projected to cost \$18.7 million.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked regarding the public comment -- will a traffic consultant be part of the initial project study. Mr. Cullen said that would depend on whether the bus loop or parking lot was affected. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly also asked if this would include the surrounding roads; Mr. Cullen said yes. She asked about the timing of Mill Hill versus Holland Hill, which had been on a fast track. Mr. Dwyer said that at the moment he was not seeing the stress on Mill Hill that had been seen at Holland Hill. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked when the ed spec conversation would take place. Mr. Cullen said that it should take place by June.

Ms. Pytko and Mr. Aysseh questioned the state's reimbursement rate. Mr. Cullen said the reimbursement rate changes every year; Fairfield is currently in the range of 25.4%. It is important to submit the project documentation to the state by June 30 in order to begin the reimbursement process, otherwise the district will have to wait another year.

Ms. Vitale said pre-investigative work on the site, outside of the building committee, could assist the Board with project decisions early on. It may be that Mill Hill is not the right school for an addition. Mr. Cullen said any pre-investigative work would have to be funded by the BOE. Typically, the building committee hires various engineers to do such work.

Several Board members mentioned concern over the rise to \$25M, and would like more information on where this number came from. Mr. Cullen said it is not just the ledge affecting the cost; there are many other factors.

Mr. Aysseh stressed the importance to approve the project's initial funding. The building committee will adhere to the Board's ed-specs; he asked if \$25M was a realistic number; could potentially going to a 2-story building reduce the cost? Mr. Cullen said it has the potential to be a very expensive project with site implications, based on recent projects at Stratfield, Riverfield and Holland Hill. He wasn't sure whether a 2-story build would affect the cost.

Mr. Aysseh cautioned on rushing into ed specs with regard to Racial Imbalance and the need for a 504 build. Mr. Dwyer disagreed, and said ed specs can be approved without a redistricting plan.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said there is no debate that renovation is needed – the question is about the addition - how can ed specs be created without answers to the \$1.5M initial funding work to be done by the engineers? She asked for guidance and a recommendation from Dr. Jones, as well as a cost breakdown on building to a 504 or 462, with regard to redistricting.

#### Sherman Project

Mrs. Vitale questioned the cost of air conditioning. Mr. Cullen suggested that could possibly be considered a maintenance item. If the project cost escalates over the cap, Planning and Zoning would request that something be broken out.

#### *Public Comment:*

*Janine Alianiello, Mill Hill Drive:* Suggested requesting the town engineer's opinion regarding Mill Hill.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

Approved 1/25/2018

*Approval of the 2018-2019 BOE Capital Non-Recurring Projects*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the 2018-2019 Capital Non-Recurring Projects.

Mr. Peterson asked about the tech grant. Mr. Cullen will check with Ms. Byrnes.

*Public Comment*

*Kathleen Joy Ross, Beach Road: Technology infrastructure.*

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

**New Business**

*Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Association and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Leeper seconded that the Board of Education approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Association and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021.”

Mr. Aysseh requested that future negotiations allow more time for Board members to review information prior to the vote.

**Motion Passed: 6-3**

Favor: Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Against: Ms. Pytko, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson

**Approval of Minutes**

*Approval of Regular Minutes of December 12, 2017*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 12, 2017

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

*Approval of Special Minutes of December 14, 2017*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Vitale seconded that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of December 14, 2017 as amended.

**Motion Passed: 8-0-1**

Favor: Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Aysseh, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson

Abstain: Ms. Pytko

**Superintendent Report**

Dr. Jones reported on several burst pipes at FLHS and Mill Hill, due to the weather. Staff worked hard to resolve those issues.

It was a joy to attend all of the holiday concerts and other special events in the district throughout the month of December.

Approved 1/25/2018

The SAT handout was provided at the Board's request. Dr. Rasmussen added that the questions listed at the end of the handout can be categorized as continued learning. The STAR analysis has not yet been done, as it is the first year for that assessment.

Mrs. Jacobsen said it would be helpful to have a subgroup analysis, particularly to address the achievement gap.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked for clarification on who was identified as Algebra 1 students. Dr. Rasmussen said the emphasis is to see continued improvement at levels beyond Algebra 1, so that students become good problem solvers.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked whether the LA subscore data was useful to the department. Mr. Chiappetta said the SAT has changed over time. The long-form writing has been done away with. Writing is now assessed on a more technical basis. What has been helpful is to determine the types of questions that students are getting wrong. Reading in Social Studies and the Sciences is also helpful subscore data. College Board presentations and mini-online courses have been very helpful for teachers.

### **Committee/Liaison Reports**

Ms. Pytko reported for Health Department: Jill Mitchell procured free epi-pens for the district, saving \$25K.

Ms. Pytko reported for SEPTA: Grant decisions will be made on January 31. Mr. Mancusi said the district has contracted with a Medicaid vendor to process Medicaid claims, and the position has been posted. More information will be provided to staff in the next few weeks.

Mrs. Vitale reported for PTAC: Encouraged teachers to apply for grant money. Financial support is being given to the Achievement Task Force in support of their upcoming trip. State PTA is accepting nominations for teachers and administrators of the year.

Mrs. Gerber reported for the OHSBC: The BOS disbanded the committee last week.

Mr. Aysseh reported for the HHBC: The next meeting is on Thursday at Town Hall.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reported for the Policy Committee: The 2018 meetings have been scheduled. More will be added if necessary, in order to address the graduation requirements.

Ms. Leeper reported for the RTM: The administrator's contract was approved.

### **Open Board Comment:**

Ms. Leeper toured several schools and was very appreciative to Mr. Hatzis, Ms. Tiley, Mr. Formato, and Ms. Roxbee. She also attended Warde's concert and it was a real treat.

### **Adjournment**

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

### **Motion Passed: 9-0**

Meeting adjourned at 9:35PM

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