

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, June 23, 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 7:37PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, John Convertito, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Marc Patten was absent. Others present were Deputy Superintendent Karen Parks, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, and approximately 25 members of the public.

Mr. Dwyer noted that a Special Meeting is planned for July 9 to address additional discussion on the District Improvement Plan, if needed, as well as any outstanding items from tonight's meeting.

*Public Comment*

Sara White, Wilton Road: Support of Holland Hill renovation.

A member of the public who did not address the Board at the microphone, requested from his seat, to speak about the May 19 minutes. Mr. Dwyer ruled that per past practice, public comment is disallowed on administrative matters. Board discussion ensued.

Mr. Fattibene challenged the Chair's ruling per the By-Laws and said there is no distinction on which agenda items can have public comment. Mr. Llewellyn and Ms. Karnal supported Mr. Fattibene.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly respected the past practice of the Board; the sitting Board has not taken public comment on the minutes in the last 2 years.

Mr. Convertito read from the By-Laws and stated that while public comment on the minutes was not disallowed, it was not the correct time, procedurally, to address the issue.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack felt the Chair's ruling and the subsequent discussion resulting from it created inefficiency.

Mr. Dwyer ruled that the Board can change past practice by overruling the Chair when the minutes are addressed later in the meeting. Mr. Fattibene agreed to move on and address this point later in the meeting.

Kelly Jacobson, Fairfield Resident: Concerns about public comment at BoE meetings.

*Presentations*

*Update on FLHS*

Mrs. Gerber introduced Mr. Donald, Chairman of the Fairfield Ludlowe High School Building Committee. Mr. Donald handed out an executive summary with milestones and issues. The project is on schedule to complete the roof, classroom, and cafeteria expansion by September. Discussion is ongoing with the EPA regarding the windows. Mr. Hatzis and the team are preparing contingency plans should the need arise.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if the 6 day work week will cost extra and was told there is allowance for that in the construction budget or within the contingencies. Mr. Llewellyn asked about the project budget and whether leftover funds will go towards the windows. Mr. Donald said there won't be enough contingency funds to begin the abatement of the windows without going back to the Town bodies; the hope is that encapsulation will be accepted.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if any additional change orders were likely and was told that nothing major was expected.

Mr. Convertito asked for an explanation of owner and construction manager (CM) contingencies; he also asked about door hardware and which contingency that was. Mr. Donald said the construction manager contingencies are within the scope of what they can control, and the owner contingencies fall under design and unforeseen issues; door hardware is an owner contingency as it falls under design.

Ms. Karnal asked about the hardware change order and keys. Mr. Morabito said the hardware is both a CM and owner contingency as the door hardware accommodates the location as a polling place. The keys are not an unusual change order. This ensures the doors are keyed in an appropriate manner and have the correct function for the intended purpose.

Mr. Dwyer said eventually all the keys will be master keyed. The windows are still part of the ed specs that allows for state reimbursement. He asked Mr. Donald about the timing of revisiting the funding request to complete the windows. Mr. Donald said he had discussed this with the BOS and thinks early fall is ambitious due to the ongoing discussions with the EPA; he has kept Town bodies aware of this.

Mr. Llewellyn said he thought the windows were moved from the ed specs as a separate project. Mr. Donald clarified that the verbiage allows for the windows to be done if funding permitted.

<i>Old Business</i>
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Board of Education Handbook

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve the Board of Education Handbook as revised May 7, 2015.

Mr. Dwyer said he incorporated some changes as requested

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the handbook is a useful tool particularly for new Board members.

Mrs. Gerber supports the motion and said the new Handbook is simply a revision.

Mr. Fattibene moved, Mr. Llewellyn seconded to delete the last 7 lines from the bottom of page 17 beginning with 'the essence...'

Mr. Fattibene and Mr. Llewellyn felt this was interpretive language.

Mr. Dwyer said this language was approved by a prior Board and he believed it is part of state law and is not subjective. The idea for the manual came from a CABE conference.

Mrs. Gerber further clarified that this was original language and was not added.

Mr. Convertito said he does approve of either motion and feels the handbook is duplicative.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack agreed with Mr. Convertito and felt some of the language was leading.

Mr. Llewellyn supports striking the language, and also supports doing away with the document in its entirety, instead perhaps doing an index.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the purpose was meant to be a helpful reference tool for new Board members.

Public Comment on the amendment: None

**Motion (Amendment) Fails: 4-4**

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

Oppose: Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Mr. Llewellyn referred to pages 7 and 8 regarding the master calendar, and moved to change item 2, which is February, item 3 which is March, item 11 which is November, and item 12 which is December to read '2 Regular Meetings are scheduled.'

Mr. Convertito first asked for a sense of the body in going forward with the handbook before making any changes.

Mr. Llewellyn withdrew his motion until a sense of the Body was obtained.

Mr. Dwyer clarified that if the main motion fails, the handbook will be voted down.

Mr. Convertito said he has never referred to this document, he always goes to the individual source.

Mr. Fattibene felt it is a handy document but that interpretive elements should be expunged. He questioned whether the Board has to approve it.

Mr. Dwyer felt that it is a handy guide for new Board members, candidates and the public. He suggested postponing the topic to a separate meeting so that Board members could say which sentences should be struck.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack suggested an index by topic, and Mr. Llewellyn agreed.

Mr. Convertito moved, Mr. Fattibene seconded to send the Handbook to the Policy Committee.

**Motion Passed: 5-3**

Favor: Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

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

Mr. Dwyer said Policy Committee Chair will make sure this doesn't take precedence over other more pressing matters.

*Discussion and Possible Action on the District Improvement Plan (DIP)*

Mr. Dwyer received unanimous consent from the Board to not put forth a motion at this time and to first have a discussion regarding the DIP. He suggested the public be allowed to comment after half an hour of Board discussion.

Mrs. Parks mentioned that Dr. Title sent the Board a memo that explained why some suggestions were not incorporated into the DIP. She also reviewed each suggestion that was incorporated into the DIP; a timeline was created on page 4; Mr. Fattibene's comments were included on page 9; nationally normed tests were included on page 19; category language was updated; and Mr. Llewellyn's comments were incorporated on page 29.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack, addressed Strategic Actions (SA) 2-4 and 2-6; they overlap and should be joined for the benefit of 'all students'; best practice models should be applicable to everybody; if the Walter Fitzgerald Campus (WFC) is highlighted, then all areas needing improvement should be highlighted. Mrs. Parks said that SA 2-6 addresses specific work to be done at the WFC.

Mr. Llewellyn said he believes the WFC needs to be improved but the statement should be removed until an analysis is done; he reminded the Board that he has been asking for this.

Mr. Dwyer said the statement should be left in to show a commitment to do better by our students; the statement does not include a mention of opening it up to other districts.

Mr. Fattibene asked to change the language on page 29, section 2-6 so that it now reads, "Use best-practice models to improve the alternative high school program to engage every student in a challenging and rigorous program." The Board approved this by unanimous consent after several comments:

Ms. Karnal wanted to ensure that only students within district are the subject of 2-6 and felt that language stating that specifically should be included.

Mrs. Maxon Kennelly felt that would be redundant since the entire Plan is only for students within district.

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board that per policy, non-FPS students may not pay tuition to attend FPS.

Mr. Llewellyn said previous language in an earlier draft included attracting students from other districts and he wanted to add explicit language to ensure this was not part of the Plan; Mr. Convertito said the administration was already responsive to the changes that were requested. Mr. Llewellyn asked that the minutes reflect that this item regarding WFC, if changed, would have to come back to the Board. Mr. Dwyer said he would do that.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the bullet point is needed based on compelling evidence that this school needs focus.

Ms. Karnal said the statement should reflect that every school in the district needs improvement.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said SA 2-6 is too broad and ambiguous.

Mr. Convertito said the data points cover all students; the Student Indicators are for all students.

Mr. Dwyer asked Mrs. Parks to comment on the discussion. Mrs. Parks said the first step in the process is to ensure the Board supports the Plan. Specific Actions all have associated costs and affect staff. The Board will be asked to prioritize the SA's. Each year, the data that is available will be reviewed.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about setting intermediary targets.

Mr. Dwyer said if Board members submit priorities by July 9, those could become part of the District Initiatives for that year. Mrs. Parks said the 5-year target is not always reached via a straight line. Priorities are needed to build the budget.

Mr. Fattibene asked to change the language on page 9, Part 3 to read, "District improvement is necessarily a continuous process. As such this District Improvement Plan must be reviewed by the Board of Education periodically, and at least annually. No later than the first BoE meeting in October of each year the superintendent shall present the implementation status of the District Improvement Plan together with any recommended modifications for consideration and affirmance of the Board of Education. The administration will prepare a public update each fall on the progress of the Student Performance Indicators and the Specific Actions completed during the previous year."

Approved by unanimous consent with seven members present (Ms. Karnal was out of the room at this time).

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reiterated that the Board is being asked to submit SA priorities by July 9.

*Public Comment:*

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road: DIP vote should be postponed until the Superintendent is in attendance.

Tricia Donovan, Fairfield Resident: Strategic Plan vs. Long-Range Plan; Plan priorities.

Tricia Pytko, Castle Avenue: Number of assessments and over-testing; rubrics.

Jan Reber, Beaumont Street: Right to public comment; data dissemination to parents.

Dawn Llewellyn, Fairfield Resident: High school survey; honors class enrollment.

Kelly Jacobson, Fairfield Resident: Dissemination of information to parents.

Kelly McWhinnie, Church Hill Road: Support for WFC.

Mr. Dwyer asked the Board if the vote on the DIP should be postponed.

Mr. Llewellyn said test results should be provided to parents and rubrics should be standardized.

Mr. Convertito asked why IReady is not being disseminated. Mrs. Parks said her understanding is that scores are shared at conferences so that teachers may offer an explanation of the confusing reports.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said some parents, herself included, aren't getting any results shared, even at conferences. Mrs. Parks said one of her concerns is the disparity between secondary and elementary levels regarding Infinite Campus dissemination of information; this is an initiative that is being worked on.

Mr. Dwyer said the District Initiatives List will continue next year.

Mr. Llewellyn expressed concern that there is a feeling that parents couldn't understand IReady reports. He asked that the Board get copies of these reports before the next meeting.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly will follow up with Mrs. Parks regarding the addition of Performance Indicators 11, 12, and 13, as she might disagree with the SAT being included in the DIP.

Mr. Dwyer mentioned recent legislative action regarding the SAT and PSAT. Mrs. Parks explained that the PSAT is aligned with the common core and Khan Academy and will now only be offered during school hours. The new commissioner is supportive to substitute the SBAC with the SAT; the legislature did pass a bill about this, Connecticut has requested a waiver.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if mandated PSAT testing would impact the budget and was told yes, but not in the coming year.

Mr. Llewellyn requested that the climate survey on page 39, #18, be broken down to the 6 major domains. He is concerned with the outliers. Mrs. Parks said that each school has a School Improvement Plan where the weakest areas are identified.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded a motion to postpone approval of the District Improvement Plan to the July 9 Special Meeting.

*Public Comment: None*

Mr Fattibene asked if the Board will receive a new document for discussion and was told yes.

Mr. Dwyer said there were 2 changes by unanimous consent and there may be other changes by the staff based on the discussion.

Mr. Convertito made a point of order, there is no motion on the table, so there should be no motion to postpone.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked if changes will still be possible at the July 9 meeting. Mr. Dwyer said Board members may submit amendments to the document via motion at the next meeting. It would be appreciated if substantive changes were received in writing so the Board may review the request more fully.

Mr. Llewellyn asked why the Board priorities are needed by July 9 and felt the staff should recommend priorities to the Board first.

Mr. Dwyer said the staff needs time to organize the priorities of the Board and he encouraged the Board to send in their top ten priorities.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked if the district is doing a Long-Range Strategic Plan and Mr. Dwyer said the only document that is currently being worked in is the DIP; there is no requirement in the By-Laws for a Strategic Plan.

Motion to postpone withdrawn with unanimous consent from the Board.

#### Approval of Long-Range Facilities Plan

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve the Long-Range Facilities Plan per Enclosure No. 2.

Mr. Cullen said he provided the list of deficiencies that generated so much discussion last time and put the capacity numbers at the top.

Mr. Convertito asked why there is an urgency to approve this; the plan may be useless for financial planning if redistricting is discussed and ed-specs are changed. Mr. Cullen said approval will ensure the Town is aware of the Board's priorities for the upcoming financial summit.

Mr. Dwyer said the Plan includes other projects and the Town does ask the district what the long-range Plan is in order to mix the BOE projects with the Town projects; the last plan is several years old. Not adding classrooms saves \$5 million. He said if Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Patten and Mr. Convertito were willing to join an ad-hoc committee on redistricting he would appoint one.

Mr. Convertito referenced the reduction of classroom space noted in the June 17 memo and based on that, the waterfall placeholders appear to be inaccurate.

Mr. Dwyer suggested that part 1 of the memo would not require redistricting, but Part 2 would.

Mr. Llewellyn asked that current occupancy rates and enrollment numbers be used; he felt that including ECC enrollment understated capacity by 6 or 7 classrooms. He requested an analysis on redistricting to understand where to

invest the dollars. Mr. Cullen said the 2010 occupancy rate number was used since that was when the deficiency report was completed.

Mr. Dwyer said MGT uses 23 students per classroom for planning and FPS uses 21 students per classroom. This document is not asking the Board to make a multi-million dollar investment, it is intended to set out a broad planning proposal. Mrs. Parks confirmed that the district is recommending Holland Hill before Mill Hill.

Mr. Convertito said both facilities need core renovations and he is comfortable moving ahead with placeholders with the caveat that we are looking at redistricting.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly agreed; a clear commitment is needed and she is looking forward to hearing from the ad hoc committee.

Mr. Fattibene said all are in agreement with the needed core renovations and upgrades, the concern is that one school goes first. He suggested overlapping Holland Hill and Mill Hill, if feasible, to try and deal with both in a timely manner.

Mr. Dwyer said the Town would weigh in on that. The plan currently shows Mill Hill beginning its project just as Holland Hill is finishing its project.

Mr. Convertito suggested there are unknowns; he believed that the timing of the Mill Hill project might slide up with redistricting.

Mr. Dwyer said he will put together an ad hoc committee for redistricting and asked Mr. Fattibene if he was prepared to move this forward with placeholders.

Mr. Fattibene said no, he would prefer to use the old plan and maintain that path.

Mr. Dwyer interrupted the meeting to ask the staff about essential voting items due to the late hour.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Convertito seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:20PM.

**Motion Failed 5-3**

Favor: Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

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

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:45PM.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly confirmed that the meeting extension is limited to topics 5c and 6b.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked if the minutes may also be addressed.

Mr. Dwyer said the motion is currently at 11:45pm, the minutes can be addressed if time permits.

**Motion Passed: 7-1**

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mr. Dwyer

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked which facility was more deteriorated. Mr. Cullen said they were comparable.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Convertito felt very strongly that after seeing both facilities, Holland Hill was decades behind Mill Hill.

Mr. Llewellyn asked how racial imbalance factors in. Mrs. Parks said this has not been addressed yet, many questions remain.

Mr. Dwyer said that Dr. Title inferred that the state might give more time than the 120 days if the Board makes a statement regarding the possibility of redistricting. Dr. Title will report the racial imbalance plan to the Board.

Mr. Convertito, from a legal point of view, is reluctant to look at redistricting as a way to solve racial imbalance.

Mr. Fattibene said Mill Hill has a higher space deficiency than Holland Hill.

Mrs. Gerber has also seen both facilities and said Holland Hill is in serious need; she disagreed with Mr. Fattibene saying those space deficiency numbers are from 2010; Holland Hill's have gone up while Mill Hill's have gone down.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack recommended leaving the current placeholder and returning to this plan after the redistricting has been assessed.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said one of the Mill Hill portables is used for storage and one is used as a computer lab. Holland Hill is on the cusp of increasing by 1 or 2 sections next year. The Town needs and expects direction and the school community deserves a message from this Board.

Mr. Dwyer said the motion on the table is to approve the Long-Range Plan as it exists.

Ms. Karnal asked why portables still have costs listed on page 25. Mr. Cullen said those costs are for portable maintenance, there are currently 11 portables and they have to be maintained until removed.

*Public Comment:*

Trudi Durrell, Woodcrest Road: Implored Board to vote tonight.

Kelly Dunn, Tuckahoe Lane: Support of Holland Hill.

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill Road: Support of Holland Hill.

Mr. Llewellyn said there are 2 different issues, which school goes first and whether to approve the plan in front of us; he can't support the plan without a proper analysis.

Mr. Convertito said other changes are included in the waterfall including the FLHS windows and he urged the Board to approve it; changes can be made after an analysis is done.

Mr. Llewellyn commented that the windows project is also a placeholder.

Mr. Dwyer clarified that the FLHS windows number is a placeholder but the project is not.

**Motion Passed: 7-1**

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Mr. Llewellyn

Mr. Llewellyn asked for a corrected memo from Mr. Cullen with updated numbers on occupancy rates based on more recent enrollment numbers.

*New Business*

*Financial Report and Approval of Budget Transfers for the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year*

Mr. Convertito moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve line-item transfers for the 2014-2015 fiscal year as detailed in the Financial Statement per Enclosure No 4.

Mrs. Munsell gave a brief overview and said the financial status as of June 18 is included with a 1 page budget transfer sheet including a projection for June 30.

Ms Karnal asked if the amount in school substitutes seems high and Mrs. Munsell said it is consistent with what has been reported within the last few years. Ms. Karnal asked if school equipment amount was entirely for cafeteria tables and was told it was.

Mr. Fattibene asked about the higher electric number and Mrs. Munsell said market prices were paid for the first two months after a change in provider. He also asked what caused the school substitute projections to be off by such a large amount. Mrs. Leffert said there is always a negative number in the substitute line, it is impossible to predict when staff will have a leave of absence; the substitute line is offset by the certified salary line.

Mr. Convertito confirmed with Mrs. Munsell that the Town negotiates with the electric company.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked about the high number of retirees. Mrs. Leffert said there were more retirees than expected this year.

Mr. Dwyer asked for a vote due to the approaching 11:45 time and said additional questions on the budget transfers can be continued at the July 9 meeting.

**Motion Passed: 8-0**

<i>Adjournment</i>
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The meeting ended at 11:45PM.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Jessica Gerber  
Fairfield Board of Education  
Secretary*