

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, June 9, 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 7:36PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, Marc Patten, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, John Convertito, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Others present were Assistant Superintendent Karen Parks, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 15 members of the public.

Following the pledge, Mr. Dwyer asked for a moment of silence in memory of Amy Nessel, and in support of the Faiga family.

Public Comment

None

Old Business

Approval of World Language Curriculum

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the World Language Curriculum, Grades 4-12.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack supported the curriculum and requested a timeline be placed in the District Improvement Plan for advancing World Language down to the KDG level.

Mr. Patten supports the curriculum and thanked the staff.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly appreciated the work that was done.

Mr. Llewellyn challenged the administration to put a measurable timeframe on World Language and felt money could be found in the existing budget. Later in the meeting, Mr. Dwyer said the World Language timeframe is already written into the District Improvement Plan, but Mr. Llewellyn felt more detail was needed.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Approval of World Language Textbooks

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Patten seconded that the Board of Education approve the World Language Textbook for French 10 and French 20 as outlined in the May 15, 2015 memo from Dr. Boice.

Mrs. Karnal asked for the deciding factor in choosing the text and was told that the EMC texts fit best with the thematically based curriculum, are updated monthly, and contain other resources.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly mentioned that other districts have moved away from texts, and she appreciated the extra material.

Mr. Llewellyn expressed concern that there was insufficient grammar instruction in the book. Mrs. Cowenhoven and Mrs. Frankel said grammar is taught within the context of the theme; every unit has grammar.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack felt the endorsed text was more cultural and she would rather wait and purchase the right textbook that would have more clarity and organization.

Mrs. Gerber felt the cultural aspect provided context and is invaluable for learning a language.

Mr. Patten understood that no text is perfect; if the teachers felt this was the one most closely aligned to the curriculum, then he will support it.

Motion Passed: 7-2

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

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Llewellyn

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the World Language Textbook for Spanish 10 and Spanish 20 as outlined in the May 15, 2015 memo from Dr. Boice.

Ms. Karnal asked whether the texts were comparable in price and the length of time the texts are used. Mrs. Frankel said the texts were comparable in price and Dr. Boice said the texts are usually used for the length of the 6-7 year curriculum cycle.

Motion Passed: 7-2

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

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Patten seconded that the Board of Education approve the World Language Textbook for Latin 10 and Latin 20 as outlined in the May 15, 2015 memo from Dr. Boice.

Motion Passed: 7-2

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

Approval of Policy 4217

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve Policy 4217 – Personnel – Certified – Non-Certified Conduct.”

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly explained that there are no substantive changes in the policy.

Mr. Llewellyn asked for clarification regarding the different types of personnel referenced, including coaches. Mrs. Leffert said personnel is paid staff, coaches are certified staff.

Mr. Fattibene said the change he requested at the previous meeting in the 3rd paragraph, replacing ‘only as’ with ‘if’ was not included; the change to ‘if’ allows the policy to be more broad.

Mr. Fattibene moved, Mr. Llewellyn seconded to amend the policy and replace the words “only as” with the word “if” in paragraph 3 of the policy.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Convertito said the wording is intended to be limiting with a stricter focus and parameters; this is usually what the Board wants.

Mr. Dwyer asked Mrs. Leffert to comment on the staff impact of the word change and she said the word change allows a broader interpretation.

Mr. Llewellyn supported the amendment and said the children should take precedence.

Mr. Convertito asked whether the amendment to the policy would be grammatically correct and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said no.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she would support the change if HR supported it.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack supported the change and felt it was a safer option for the district; she asked if the personal lives are off-limits even under a circumstance where an employee is endangering another.

Mr. Convertito emphasized that the intention was to limit that statement to those 3 bullets; the only way to cover everything is to say the district can inquire into the personal lives of personnel.

Mr. Llewellyn said the Board always says to trust the administrators; administrators should be trusted to use discretion when looking into the personal lives of personnel.

Mr. Convertito said he was talking about trusting the Board.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said this policy does give administrators leeway in these 3 bullet points; a new bullet point should be added to give any additional notice, rather than the word ‘if’.

(Amendment) Motion Failed: 4-5

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

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

Mr. Patten is against having volunteers named in the policy but will support it.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the Policy Committee is working hard to be proactive and to reduce redundancy within policies.

Mr. Dwyer asked if a CAFE Policy audit will be done this coming year and Mrs. Parks said yes.

Mr. Convertito said that people come into the school for many reasons; a policy should exist that forces all to adhere to a certain conduct.

Mr. Dwyer said non-profits frequently have policies adhering to both paid and unpaid workers.

Public Comment:

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road: Unclear policy for volunteers.

Trudi Durell, Woodcrest Road: Grammatical error in policy.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack felt that 'appropriately dressed' was too vague; the language was subjective and puts the principals in an awkward situation.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said that the administration can be trusted to enforce this; there are far too many instances where teachers dress appropriately but not in 'business casual dress,' such as a PE teacher wearing sweatpants, or teachers dressing up in colonial garb for Colonial Day. Trust the administration.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the policy and move the final sentence of the policy to the end of the second paragraph.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said that sentence was put there deliberately.

Mr. Convertito said when volunteers fill out a form to volunteer, they fall under the purview of the Board; the sentence should stay.

Mr. Fattibene disagreed and said the policy was problematic.

Mr. Patten felt the sentence should not be moved.

Mr. Llewellyn withdrew his motion with the approval of Mrs. Liu-McCormack, which the Board approved by unanimous consent.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack proposed adding 'business casual subject to exceptions as approved by the principal'.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said there are too many exceptions, such as dress-up day and reminded the Board that a policy like this one has never previously existed and the mode of dress is not a problem.

Mr. Convertito asked for a comment from the union rep. Mr. Smoler said language already exists in the contract referencing 'appropriately dressed', and he is unaware of any problems with this; the principals have this within their purview and it does not have to be legislated. Mr. Convertito asked Ms. Leonardi if inappropriate dress could be reported in the on-line anonymous reporting tool and was told yes.

Mrs. Gerber asked Mr. Hatzis to comment. He said he would feel comfortable approaching staff with inappropriate attire; this is all included in the contract; although he has had very few issues in the past.

Mr. Fattibene said he would not support the policy.

Mrs. Parks said the intent of the policy is set forth in the first paragraph and the district will enforce the policy. Trust the administration to know what appropriately dressed means.

The Motion on the Original Policy Passed 7-2

Favor: (Mr. Patten, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Llewellyn

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Fattibene

New Business

First Reading of Long-Range Facilities Plan

Mr. Cullen said the waterfall was modified as requested by the Board at the May 19 meeting.

Mr. Fattibene confirmed that Mill Hill has more of a space deficiency than Holland Hill.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the \$85k roof project and space deficiencies and was referred to the Facilities Plan booklet for more detailed information.

Mr. Convertito said he toured both Mill Hill and Holland Hill and felt there was a greater space deficiency at Holland Hill. Mr. Cullen referred him to the Facilities Plan booklet for more detail.

Mrs. Gerber mentioned that portables factor into the deficiencies.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack mentioned redistricting and asked which buildings need to be fixed now. Mr. Cullen said the Plan started 10 years ago, and there are new requirements for fresh air and fire protection among others.

Mr. Llewellyn asked for next steps regarding the plan. Mr. Cullen explained that after BOE approval, the First Selectman appoints a building committee, and seed money is requested approximately 6-8 months later.

Mr. Dwyer explained that this is a planning document that the Town uses; nothing moves forward until approved by this Board.

Mr. Llewellyn suggested deferring this conversation to the fall due to vacant seats; a proper analysis is needed as well as the Town's view.

Mr. Convertito said he would be happy to discuss redistricting but both schools need renovating and the plan has to be prioritized.

Mr. Fattibene asked if it might be possible to renovate both facilities at the same time if both projects were scaled back; this would avoid the divisiveness of choosing one project over the other. Mr. Cullen said it was possible but cautioned that the existing core facilities at each school do not meet existing enrollment.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack supported this concept.

Mr. Dwyer and Mr. Convertito confirmed that if only the core facilities are renovated, the portables will not be eliminated.

Mr. Llewellyn stressed that vacant seats can be filled via redistricting; he understands that the buildings need to be brought up to code, but there might not be a need to add classrooms.

Public comment:

Trudi Durell, Woodcrest Road: Holland Hill deficiencies.

Jason Li, RTM District 8: Asked Board to visit Holland Hill.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road: Cost effectiveness of renovations.

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill Road: Redistricting discussion should also involve ramifications at secondary level.

Mr. Dwyer said this will be up for action at the next meeting.

Approval of UI Energy Opportunity Program

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Dwyer seconded that the Board of Education approve the Energy Opportunities program – Proposed Projects at Burr Elementary and Fairfield Woods Middle Schools.

Mr. Morabito explained the UI program that provides incentives for the district to save on the electric bill. The program has been implemented before and has proven to be a money saver.

Mr. Convertito asked for the expected rate of return, the frequency the program is offered, why the program is offered at newer buildings, and budget implications. Mr. Morabito responded that each project is under a 48 month payback at the current electric rate; the program is offered every year but there is a cap; Fairfield Woods is not a completely new school; UI has criteria for this program including energy usage profiles and lighting upgrades. Mrs. Munsell added that the program is an offset and is not included in the budget.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if there were any risk of not receiving the rebate. Mr. Morabito said there is a bill for the finance charge but no cash is put out.

Ms. Karnal said she would have appreciated receiving this information sooner. Mr. Morabito explained the process involves a proposal that was just completed last month; the approval is needed now as incentives can dry up. He further explained the offset; the savings in the bill is equal to the finance charge, so the net is a wash.

Mr. Patten asked if any other schools would qualify for this upgrade and whether Stratfield is one of those schools. Mr. Morabito said that it takes a lot of work to audit the building for this program; Stratfield has energy efficient lighting.

Ms. Karnal asked if energy efficient light existed at FLHS. Mr. Morabito said the renovations are limited in scope; there is a combination of high efficiency lighting at FLHS.

Mr. Fattibene asked if there is enough light with the decreased wattage and Mr. Morabito said yes; indirect lighting as well as improved light disbursement will provide adequate lighting.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Food Service Program and Financial Survey

Mrs. Munsell introduced the Whitsons team: Mr. Gersbeck, Ms. Evitts-DePaolo, Ms. Emery, and Mr. Stango. Whitsons has proven to be a partner with the district and they have done a great job. The Whitsons team spoke to the new breakfast program at several schools, recent marketing promotions including produce of the month and new food offerings. The goal for next year is to provide nutrition awareness and become more involved at the elementary level.

Ms. Karnal asked how Whitsons communicates with the students. Ms. Evitts-DePaolo and Mr. Gersbeck said the students give feedback to staff and a survey is planned next year at the secondary level. The staff also provides feedback.

Mr. Fattibene noticed the reduction in elementary meal counts. Ms. Evitts-DePaolo said this has been noted and Whitsons has to focus on this.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said the meal safaris sound interesting. She asked about portion size, second helpings and the amount of food items such as cookies and ice cream that are sold. Ms. Evitts-DePaolo and Mr. Gersbeck responded that the state allows students to get more fruits and vegetables, but the portion size of the meal must meet the Healthy Hunger-Free Act guidelines. Sugared beverages are not sold due to the beverage law, ice cream is only sold on Fridays, and the cookies are whole grain and smaller in size than they used to be.

Mr. Patten asked if the items created on sampling days are incorporated into the menu and was told yes.

Mrs. Gerber asked what happens when a student's balance runs out and whether the student will still be allowed to eat lunch. Mrs. Munsell said the policy has not changed; elementary students can go over the balance; a previous communication issue that occurred at the secondary level was resolved; principals have been reminded that they can have their own practices in place to handle these situations.

Mrs. Munsell reviewed the Whitsons income statement and said there is no risk of being in the red; Whitsons guarantees a profit of 170K before district expenses.

Mr. Dwyer confirmed the last column shows the anticipated year-end results.

Mr. Llewellyn said it appears that the 90K management fee and the 50K admin fee would be waived or reimbursed and asked when the guaranteed profit gets renewed.

Mr. Dwyer clarified that the federal government made some changes to the food service procurement process; the state approved the RFP and contract but is now trying to implement the federal government changes so all the districts are on hold until the state figures it out.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if there is a guarantee for next year and Mr. Gersbeck said that is negotiated based on next year's projected costs such as labor. Final review on the final budget will be reviewed with Ms. Munsell and will be put in writing for approval. He further explained that the RFP and contract will remain the same; the only difference will be the management fee and guaranteed return. Mr. Llewellyn asked whether Fairfield was unique with the lower elementary meal count and if the PTA has to use Whitsons for catering events. Mr. Gersbeck responded that most of the participation increases were expected at the secondary level and that daytime food sales should go through Food Services Department, per the program.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the district expenses on the income statement and she asked how many original staff was retained. Mrs. Munsell said district expenses show actual vs. projected; one district employee manages the Free and Reduced Lunch program. Ms. Evitts-DePaolo said a majority of the staff was retained.

Mr. Fattibene asked about the projections and Mr. Gersbeck said those are based on meal counts and analyzed by the percent of students eating.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked why the profit/loss line was negative.

Mr. Fattibene explained the management fees will be waived.

Mr. Dwyer said some of the management fee will be reduced to meet the guaranteed profit of 170K.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack would like a better understanding of the negative numbers. Mrs. Munsell said she will review changing the format of the income statement to avoid further confusion.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting indefinitely.

Motion Failed 4-5

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

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

Mr. Convertito moved, Mr. Patten seconded to extend the meeting to 11:20PM.

Motion Passed 6-3

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

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

Public Comment

Sue Miska, Ryegate Road: Questions about income spreadsheet, contract renewal.

Mr. Llewellyn asked for a breakdown of the district expenses of 102K in the last column.

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Convertito seconded that the Board of Education approve participation in the Healthy Food Certification Program for the school year 2015-2016 with the exclusion of the sale of food and the sale of beverages not listed in section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes: (1) sold in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; (2) such sale is at the location of the event, and (3) such food is not sold from a vending machine or school store.

Mr. Convertito asked what the effect would be if the motion were not approved. Mr. Gersbeck said it will affect the program as this generates a lot of money. If the district goes off the school lunch program, \$175K would have to be made up somewhere and would most likely be in the price of the lunch.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked whether any other districts are not part of this program and Mr. Gersbeck said he was not aware of any; the Healthy Food certification generates \$47K. Mrs. Liu-McCormack also asked whether it might be possible to eliminate an apple from each lunch and save \$.10 per lunch, in lieu of saving \$.10 by being on the Healthy Food Certification Program.

Mr. Llewellyn said the guidelines have to be followed or the district risks losing 175K.

Motion Passed 8-0-1

Favor: Mr. Patten, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Llewellyn

Abstain: Mrs. Liu-McCormack

First Reading of Policy 4217.5

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly introduced the policy and said CAFE language was initially used and then tweaked.

Mr. Llewellyn asked whether there is anything in the policy that is not already a statute. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly was not sure and asked for any comments on the policy prior to the next meeting. Mr. Convertito said he did not believe so.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dwyer asked the Board to take the minutes approvals out of order by starting with 7.C. The Board agreed.

Approval of Minutes of May 7, 2015 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 7, 2015.

Motion Passed 6-3

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

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of Minutes of May 19, 2015 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 19, 2015.

Motion Passed 5-2-2

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

Oppose: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal

Abstain: Mr. Convertito, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of Minutes of May 19, 2015 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 19, 2015.

Motion Failed 4-4-1

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

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

Abstain: Mr. Convertito

Approval of the Minutes of April 7, 2015 Regular Meeting and April 21, 2015 Special Meeting

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to postpone action on items A and B (approval of the minutes of the regular Meeting of April 7 and the Special Meeting of April 21) to the next Regular meeting.

Motion Passed 7-2

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

Oppose: Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer

Mr. Fattibene made a point of order regarding civility of Board members.

Mr. Dwyer recognized Mr. Fattibene and updated the Board on the Superintendent's return.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she attended the PTA Council Awards. She congratulated the winners, thanked the Board members who had attended, and said it was a wonderful event.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 11:20PM.