

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, June 26, 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.

Voting Summary

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 7:41PM. Present were members Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Leeper, Christine Vitale, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Jennifer Jacobsen, Nick Aysseh, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and Jeff Peterson. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 15 members of the public.

Chairman Dwyer asked the Board for unanimous consent to move item 6B to the beginning of the meeting, which the Board agreed to.

New Business

Approval of the Holland Hill FF & E Plans and Specifications

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Aysseh seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the plans and specifications for the Holland Hill FF & E” Motion passed 9-0.

Old Business

Approval of FPS Educator Evaluation Plan Revisions

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Aysseh seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the FPS Educator Evaluation Plan Revisions dated June 2018.” Motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Aysseh moved/Ms. Pytko seconded to add an item to the agenda regarding K-2/3-5 grade reconfiguration. Motion failed 4-5 (Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson in favor; Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against)

New Business

Financial Report and Approval of Budget Transfers for the 2017-2018 School Year

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mr. Aysseh seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the line item transfers for the 2017-2018 fiscal year as detailed in the Financial Statement per Enclosure No 2” Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the *Special Minutes* of June 7, 2018 and June 12, 2018, and the *Regular Minutes* of June 12, 2018” Motion passed 9-0

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Vitale seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:10PM. Motion passed 9-0.

Adjournment

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:57PM.

Detailed Minutes

Mr. Dwyer requested and received unanimous consent to move agenda item 6B (Holland Hill FF&E) ahead of item 4 (CABE E-Meeting Presentation).

New Business

Approval of the Holland Hill FF & E Plans and Specifications

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Aysseh seconded that the Board of Education approve the plans and specifications for the Holland Hill FF & E.

Holland Hill Building Committee Chairman, Mr. Quinn, reported that Holland Hill is on schedule and within target for the FF&E budget. FF&E was projected at \$200K, and is currently at \$202.4K. Future savings are expected to be an offset.

Mrs. Gerber explained that the approval is a technicality required by CSDE. Mr. Aysseh thanked Mr. Quinn and the building committee for an outstanding job.

Motion Passed : 9-0

Presentation: CABE E-Meeting

Ms. Leeper and Mr. Aysseh said the E-Meeting presentation is a result of the Finance Committee's exploration of a paperless environment for Board agendas and minutes; not only in keeping with 21st century learning, but also to reduce costs.

Ms. Lisa Steimer/CABE presented the E-Meeting software, a web-based service to assist the Board with a paperless and searchable environment for Board agendas, attachments and minutes. Developed by the Kentucky School Board, 21 Connecticut districts use the program. CABE offers the program at \$3K for the first year, followed by \$1.5K each year thereafter. A demo of the software showed both a Board and public view. Listings of meetings, agendas and minutes would be completely searchable and could be grouped according to Board Goals. Board access to agendas, enclosures and minutes would be managed online by district staff, and published to the website when ready for public view. Personal or district-assigned tablets/devices could be used. A print function is available throughout the program and data is backed up by 2 servers. If approved, E-Meeting could be prepared for FPS use by the beginning of the school year.

Mr. Aysseh said the Board by-laws may have to be updated due to the advances in technology, and accessibility on the website. For example, agenda distribution to newspapers and libraries no longer happens. Also, copies intended for the public are often left untouched and thrown away.

Dr. Jones said the FPS Technology Department is currently working on migrating the FPS website to an ADA-compliant site, necessitating a change in the way Board materials are posted. Ms. Leeper added that other similar programs are more expensive, and this is a cost-effective solution. When requested, paper copies could be provided.

Mr. Dwyer asked each Board member to comment on using this program. All expressed interest but some requested follow up prior to making a decision:

- Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she was missing the piece on why a program was needed at all – why not just continue the current method, and not print?
- Mrs. Jacobsen asked how prior year data and information would be archived and who would the contact be for tech support?
- Ms. Pytko said she would require a district assigned tablet or device, but prefers paper.
- Mr. Peterson requested a more detailed explanation of ADA compliance.

This item will be on the August agenda.

Old Business

Approval of FPS Educator Evaluation Plan Revisions

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Aysseh seconded that the Board of Education approve the FPS Educator Evaluation Plan Revisions dated June 2018.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly expressed a sincere hope that this represents meaningful change to assist the district with instructional improvement and evaluations. Mr. Dwyer agreed but added that it must still comply with the state requirements.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Discussion of Board Goals

Mr. Dwyer requested input from Board members on Board goals. All goals will be considered without filter and should be submitted in writing to Mrs. Brown and Mr. Dwyer by August 1. Board members will rank the compiled list, helping to frame the August discussion. Mrs. Gerber will provide an example of Board goals by circulating the previous 2 sets of adopted Board goals. The Board will receive an email reminder within the next few days.

Mrs. Vitale said she would like to revisit the goal of communicating with the public.

Mrs. Jacobsen will submit several, but mentioned that she would like to collaborate more with other town bodies such as Planning and Zoning.

Discussion of Structural Change Ideas

Mr. Dwyer said Enclosure No. 1 is a summary document and includes his understanding of structural change items (many of which are interconnected) that are still under consideration to set a pathway for next spring. The Board has a responsibility to enhance education while improving the efficiency and operation of the district. Ms. Jacobsen said all ideas listed in the memo can be looked at through various lenses including logistical and financial, but the primary lens should be educational value.

Item 1: K-2 and 3-5 Grade Configuration Model

Mrs. Gerber and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly had previously requested more information on the grade reconfiguration and have multiple questions including expected costs, impacts to the feeder pattern, consideration of the smaller McKinley class sizes and impacts on CLC classes. It would also be helpful to know about successful and/or unsuccessful implementation of this model in other districts. Dr. Jones said there is no difference in educational quality between this model or a K-5; it is a matter of preference and opinion – each one has pros and cons. Mr. Aysseh said this being a CSBE forced solution to racial imbalance makes it an invalid option. He proposed adding this item to the agenda so the Board could vote to remove it from consideration.

Mr. Aysseh moved, Ms. Pytko seconded to add an item to the agenda regarding K-2/3-5 grade reconfiguration.

Motion Failed: 4-5

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson

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

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly felt the motion was inappropriate; the public did not have proper notice. Her vote was not an expression of support for the idea, rather she would form an opinion after a listening to what the district had to say about it.

Discussion continued on this item as being implemented district-wide as opposed to limiting it to 2 schools - McKinley and Jennings. Dr. Jones said this was never intended or suggested as a district-wide option, and was only a response to Racial Imbalance.

Mr. Dwyer said this model was previously looked at with a reported \$1.2M in savings. Dr. Jones said staff would not be able to provide the district-wide data the Board is looking for on this model, and requested the Board's clear direction on whether to hire a consultant. An experienced consultant to research this model would cost approximately \$20K - \$25K. For the 2-school model, much of the logistical work has been done already by Milone and MacBroom, and staff could prepare rough estimates on transportation costs.

Mr. Aysseh requested the 2-school option be removed completely and wanted it noted in the minutes. Mr. Dwyer agreed that the Board's discussion indicated the 2-school option would not be considered and would be removed as an option. He also noted Board consensus that further discussion of this item as a district-wide model is not supported and will not be discussed further.

Item 2: Magnet Program

Mr. Dwyer said the Board never intended to have a magnet school. The correct term is magnet program – in which an existing school would house 50-70 students from other schools. The idea is that a magnet program would bring in more students to improve the racial imbalance ratio.

Dr. Jones added that the only reason a magnet program is being considered is to solve racial imbalance. Survey results showed 70% were interested in a STEAM magnet. If the Board chooses to implement a magnet program, considerable community input will be required; choosing to implement a magnet school for its educational value is a completely different question.

Board members requested more information on this item and would appreciate knowing more about what IB is and the costs involved. Ms. Pytko suggested researching a STEAM magnet program as an option. Several board members questioned whether there was space available at McKinley to house this program.

Item 3: Redistricting & Item 5: Racial Imbalance Plan

A majority of the Board felt a redistricting conversation at this time would be premature, given the unknown size determination of the Mill Hill project. Mrs. Gerber said that neither Burr nor FWMS had a redistricting plan in place when those projects were first approved. Mrs. Jacobsen reiterated that the size of Mill Hill must first be decided prior to any conversation about redistricting. If the Board wishes to change how redistricting is addressed in the Racial Imbalance Plan, an amendment should be submitted.

Mr. Aysseh said redistricting should be discussed as an option that will be pursued. Otherwise, the Plan should be amended. All options should be explored to show due diligence to the state, even though some options may not be popular with the public. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly agreed with having robust discussion on items stipulated in the Plan's timeline, but disagreed with the assertion that redistricting will be the solution - the Plan's timeline makes it clear that redistricting is premature until Mill Hill's completion. McKinley's racial imbalance numbers improved this year and the trend may continue; our past practice has been to request more time to make more progress.

Mr. Dwyer said he told the CT State Board of Education (CSBE) that Fairfield BOE wants to consider all options and considers redistricting a last resort. CSBE understands that committing to a redistricting plan in 2019 does not mean that it will be implemented at that time. The CSBE understands that construction for Holland Hill and Mill Hill will have to be complete with 504 seats and 24 classrooms in each school. That said, CSBE may press the issue on racial imbalance for McKinley, as it has been ongoing since 2007.

Mrs. Vitale said redistricting is in the Racial Imbalance Plan. We as a community need to be more open and transparent. The reason to redistrict would be to solve racial imbalance, respond to facility utilization and solve other issues. It is important to notice the public that redistricting is being considered.

Dr. Jones said the commitment to discuss redistricting is in the Racial Imbalance Plan. She must appear in person before the CSBE and report on the discussion. The district is in a different place than previous years, because CSBE

is frustrated. A possible concern is one line in the state budget, which talks about construction funding and racial imbalance – this has never before been in the budget. At some point, will the state tie construction reimbursement to non-compliance?

Ms. Pytko said the former Redistricting Committee reported a preference that students remain in neighborhood schools. Mr. Dwyer agreed but said things have changed since that committee, including the installation of a new Board.

Item 4: WFC/ECC Facility Issues

Ms. Pytko said ECC outgrowing its facility is the most pressing issue.

Mrs. Gerber was unaware of any concerns at WFC. Mr. Dwyer said WFC is a leased facility and the concerns center on its maintenance. The staff do a great job delivering quality service; the idea is to find a permanent space. Dr. Jones added that the facility is leased and the district is not investing in it – the students there do not have an equitable facility.

Item 5: Class Size Guidelines

A majority of the Board did not support increasing class size guidelines and felt there was no need to discuss any further.

After a roundtable discussion on how to proceed with these topics, Mr. Peterson said the Board needed to refocus and schedule Special Meetings that include the entire Board. The purpose of the memo was to get structure for further discussion. Dr. Jones asked for direction regarding timing; her draft schedule of meetings for 18-19 was not well-received, and no one offered a new schedule or additional comment. Staff need advance notice to respond and/or present appropriately.

In terms of racial imbalance, Mr. Aysseh, Mr. Peterson and Ms. Pytko indicated their interest in investigating the ramifications of not complying with CSBE.

New Business

Financial Report and Approval of Budget Transfers for the 2017-2018 School Year

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Aysseh seconded that the Board of Education approve the line item transfers for the 2017-2018 fiscal year as detailed in the Financial Statement per Enclosure No 2.

Mrs. Munsell said projected balances continue to be estimates until expenditures are finalized and the fiscal year is officially closed in August. Improvements in several areas including substitutes, wage and benefit, transportation, electricity and legal expenses resulted in a more positive outcome than originally projected and Dr. Jones distributed that funding; it is included in each category where it will be spent, and can be seen in the \$40K balance and transfer sheet.

Dr. Jones thanked and congratulated Ms. Munsell for managing the budget in a most challenging budget year; starting the year without a state budget and navigating through all the moving targets. She also thanked the Executive Team for tightening their budgets all year long. Initial projections for SPED showed a \$2.1M deficit and that improved significantly. The hope is that next year the number won't be as large. The Board was kept apprised of what was frozen and what was returned. The maintenance and technology funds were restored. The 10% allocation was returned to the principals for school use. Both high schools are adding innovation spaces, middle schools are taking advantage of flexible furniture and innovative spaces, and elementary schools are adding STEAM related items.

Motion Passed: 9-0

DRAFT

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the *Special Minutes* of June 7, 2018 and June 12, 2018, and the *Regular Minutes* of June 12, 2018”

Motion Passed: 9-0

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Vitale seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:10PM.

Motion Passed: 9-0

Committee/Liaison Reports

Mr. Peterson reported for the BOF: The Town Debt Issuance Policy was placed at Board seats. It is a long-standing practice that is now in writing.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reported for the Policy Committee: Thanked Dr. Jones for notifying the Board that the graduation policy would be addressed at a future meeting. There is no need to rush it and staff can move forward with some planning. Mr. Dwyer added that he and Mr. Aysseh plan to meet with the Superintendent over the summer to discuss community work in regards to graduation requirements.

Mrs. Gerber reported for FLHSBC: The windows project starts up again next week.

Mrs. Gerber reported for the Mill Hill Building Committee: The RTM approved the Mill Hill Building Committee and a meeting schedule will be distributed shortly.

Mrs. Vitale reported for the Sherman Building Committee: The committee is up and running.

Open Board Comment

Mr. Peterson took a moment of personal privilege to recognize former FWHS Freshman English teacher Mrs. Kolaric, who recently passed away.

Public Comment

Robert Lamonica, Woodridge Avenue: Request Board consideration of not complying with racial imbalance law and using community pro-bono attorneys.

Adjournment

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

Motion Passed: 9-0

Meeting adjourned at 10:57PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education, Secretary