

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, August 23, 2016**

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 7:36PM. Present were members Marc Patten, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Eileen Liu-McCormack was not present. Others present were Interim Superintendent Dr. Stephen Tracy, members of the central office leadership team, and approximately 15 members of the public.

Public Comment

Eileen Roxbee, Sherman Principal: Thanked the Board for considering the Sherman renovation project.
Sandy Farber, Sherman PTA President: Thanked the Board for considering the Sherman renovation project.

Presentations

Introduction of Interim Superintendent

Mr. Dwyer introduced Dr. Tracy, Interim Superintendent. Dr. Tracy said he looks forward to working with the Board and serving the district for the duration of his employment.

Update on Superintendent Search

Mr. Dwyer said the superintendent search process is moving along as scheduled – the Board has been reviewing resumes and interviewing candidates. It may be that an announcement could happen in September, with the new superintendent in place by the November/December timeframe.

New Business

Update on Facilities Plan and Waterfall Schedule

Dr. Tracy said the Facilities Plan is in line with what was developed a few years ago. Mr. Cullen added that the Town Finance Department requested this update and major changes are outlined in the letter. Mr. Dwyer added that in order to accommodate the September 20 Board of Finance Capital Planning Workshop, the Board of Education meeting was moved to September 22.

Ms. Karnal asked Mr. Cullen to elaborate on Mill Hill’s project. Mr. Cullen said the project is using the new approach by having separate funding pieces to obtain better estimates and proposals. An initial funding request is followed by a project funding request. Ms. Karnal asked – why is the FWHS turf project being moved up a year – is it possible to move some FWHS programs to FLHS and what was being traded to complete this project? Mr. Cullen explained that the turf is over the 12-year threshold and is rapidly deteriorating; it is not possible to move FWHS programs to FLHS; nothing is being traded for this project – each year the waterfall is reviewed and projects get moved, numbers change with better estimates.

Mr. Llewellyn asked, why a \$3M increase for Holland Hill from the previous waterfall chart in 2013 and what was the amount that was approved last year, pre-construction? Mr. Cullen said that the \$9M number was based on a 462 enrollment and the current project is based on a 504 enrollment. Additionally, experience from previous projects has shown that sewer lines and power lines will need replacement; FF&E and locker estimates have improved; and security and safety features are also included.

Mrs. Gerber pointed out that the total amount originally approved was \$9.1M, as detailed in the previously Board-approved Plan from 2015.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if revisions were also made to the Mill Hill and Sherman Phase III projects. Mr. Cullen said Mill Hill increased by \$1.5M. Sherman, due to it’s being in a wetlands zone, has a 12-month maximum threshold of 2% of the building cost, which is approximately \$2.99M. Mr. Llewellyn asked, have we collected state reimbursement for the FLHS

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and Riverfield projects? Mr. Cullen said he could provide definitive numbers on that, but expects that 95% has been received, with 5% being held for the audit phase. Mr. Llewellyn asked – is it a fair question that the most recent 10-year period that was looked at has increased from \$67M to \$83M? Mr. Cullen said yes.

Mr. Patten asked –

- Why was Phase III pushed out so far and then brought back in? Mr. Cullen said the Town asked us to move \$3M for that year due to fiscal reasons, and the Sherman project was the most feasible to move.
- Are ed-specs done separately by phase? Mr. Cullen said yes, the state wants it that way for reimbursement purposes - the annex was done separately with a separate building committee with its own reimbursement; Phase III ed-specs have not yet been done.
- Is there a plan to complete deficiencies and can this be accomplished with \$2.9M? Mr. Cullen said yes.
- What happens if there is an overage and we can't go beyond the \$2.9M? Mr. Cullen said something else would have to be cut; smaller items could be added into the budget with Board approval.

Mrs. Gerber asked if the \$3M for Sherman in the 2021 facility plan might improve with better numbers in the 2017 plan due to the escalation factor. Mr. Cullen said he hoped so and reiterated that we can't go over the \$3M.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about the \$3M in the 16-17 FWMS line, he did not believe this was listed in the previous plan. Mr. Cullen said it was – it was budgeted for the roof; Mrs. Gerber pointed out that it is listed in the 2015-2016 Board – approved facilities plan.

Mr. Dwyer added that the Facilities Plan is generally re-approved every 3-4 years and is not re-approved with each change that occurs. While this is a good benchmark, the Town's overall financing goal could have an impact at any time.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked whether Mr. Mayer requests movement of specific projects, when needed, or if he requests a change to a dollar amount. Mr. Cullen said dollar amounts.

<i>Approval of Minutes</i>

Approval of the Minutes of the June 7, 2016 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 7, 2016.

Motion Passed: 6-2

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

Oppose: Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of the Minutes of the June 21, 2016 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 21, 2016.

Mrs. Karnal asked to read an amendment that was 1.5 pages long. Mr. Llewellyn provided copies for the Board.

Ms. Karnal moved, Mr. Llewellyn seconded to amend the minutes to include statements on an attachment (provided by Mr. Llewellyn) in bold.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the amendment contained any cross-outs of the minutes and Ms. Karnal said no – she's not sure why anyone would object to this since it is what was said.

Mr. Llewellyn read the amendment for the benefit of those who did not have a copy. He said the essence or verbatim is that it was presented that an email came from CAFE to a Board member when it was a conversation that Dr. Title had with CAFE and then an email was sent.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she will vote against the amendment as she has consistently done, when amendments are proposed in the form of a transcript. This purports to be a transcript but is not verbatim. To interchangeably use essence and verbatim makes a mockery of the bylaw; she felt the minutes captured the essence very well.

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Ms. Karnal said the mockery is that people are allowed to not tell the truth and maybe that's why we need it transcribed. There was tremendous confusion and the essence was not captured by Mrs. Gerber.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the essence was captured; the confusion that existed has been clarified; there was no confusion for anyone else. She questioned Ms. Karnal's support for a transcription service as a good use of funds after having argued over the turf field. She did not appreciate comments made about a fellow Board member.

Ms. Karnal replied that she never said there should be a transcriber but wants the minutes captured correctly; confusion remains over who wrote the email.

Mr. Llewellyn said using the term essence or verbatim is irrelevant; Board members should respect one another in presenting things as straightforward; it was represented that counsel had given an opinion in writing and that was not presented in verbatim or essence.

Motion Failed: 2-6

Favor: Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

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

Original Motion Passed: 6-2

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

Oppose: Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of the Minutes of the June 29, 2016 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of June 29, 2016.

Motion Passed: 6-0-2

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

Abstain: Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn

Approval of the Minutes of the July 11, 2016 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 11, 2016.

Motion Passed: 5-0-3

Favor: Mr. Patten, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Calabrese, Ms. Pytko

Abstain: Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Llewellyn

<i>Superintendent's Report</i>

District Initiatives, 2016-2017

Dr. Tracy said the District-wide Improvement Initiatives represent the work that is ahead for this year and are key to the District Improvement Plan. Also, initiatives that were completed and are now part of everyday operations are attached. In October, the Board will be presented with a report on the first year of implementation including baseline data and 2020 targets.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked for more detail on #1 – is that targeted to a specific grade? Regarding the math text – and the ongoing professional development, is that captured under #8? Mr. Cummings said the World Language Program Development is targeted for Grade 3. There is much work to be done for #8; School Improvement Plans address this specifically.

Mr. Llewellyn requested a presentation on Data Teams, as mentioned in #11 and #12. What programs are referenced for #21 and #22 and how did we arrive at those programs? Ms. Leonardi said the focus is on a continuum of reading support – research regarding best practices focused on a structured literacy approach. The Wilson reading program was selected and a significant amount of PD money is in the budget for a 3-year plan; Wilson has a strong training protocol. Mr. Cummings added that the core program implementation will contain Word Worker for phonological awareness as an intervention for early readers.

Mr. Patten, what is the improvement strategy for #10, and what does this mean for the Rounds related to the transition years? Mrs. Parks said previously, the focus was on department-level Rounds – and we are now moving towards a cross-level approach, such as high school staff attending middle school Rounds, in order to focus on effective strategies for student-learning issues. Teachers have also been trained to conduct their own set of Rounds, but the Rounds listed in the Initiatives are district-level Rounds.

Mrs. Gerber asked for more detail on #25. Does this tie in to #23 and how do you communicate with parents who don't use Infinite Campus? Mr. Cummings said the Progress Reports are easier to read and comments for each marking period will be provided. This is an evolving process, for example, revisions will be needed for Social Studies; he is putting together a letter for parents that has system-wide 'work-at-home' expectations; this should be ready for back-to-school night. Elementary schools do communicate with parents through IC, even though it pales in comparison with the secondary level.

Mr. Llewellyn asked – what is the Behavior Module? Mr. Cummings said this tracks suspensions and expulsions.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the timeframe for the Racial Imbalance Plan in #27, and asked if one meeting to address this issue was sufficient.

Mr. Dwyer said the 2nd meeting of October is slated for a presentation of the Plan, followed by a November vote; it is due mid-December to the State Board. Dr. Title presented a version of the Plan to the State Board last spring which included moving a PK program to a school closer to McKinley and increasing the number of Open Choice students. Dr. Tracy said he has been working with Mr. Cummings on Dr. Title's draft.

Mr. Llewellyn asked Dr. Tracy to share the draft; he would like to see some of the ideas and feels more discussion might be needed; he will submit an FOI if necessary.

Mr. Dwyer said that Dr. Tracy will share this when he feels it is ready. Dr. Tracy added that he will work as quickly as possible; he does need time to discuss with the principals and others.

Ms. Karnal asked about #19 – what has been done with hiring protocol and improving teacher absences? Is this for extended leave, or short term absences? Mrs. Leffert said a new hiring protocol was implemented in early May; she didn't want to divulge too much but said the reference checking process was solidified. There continues to be a shortage of short-term substitute teachers and is she working with Mr. Smoler to develop a presentation for the teachers on this topic. Extended leave absences are usually not an issue. Ms. Karnal asked about #20 – how will that be done? Ms. Leonardi said that data from the Effective School Solutions Program will be presented as part of the District Improvement Plan update; additional supports to maintain high levels of mental health will be presented, similar to what was discussed earlier with the tier levels for Reading.

Mr. Patten referenced ongoing initiative 1-18 – is there a follow-up this year for struggling teachers? Dr. Boice said that teachers responded very well to Professional Development for teaching in the Block and are now in a stage of maintaining and improving. Mrs. Parks added that teachers are now looking for specific growth strategies and this is ongoing. Common planning time provides time to work with colleagues teaching similar courses. Dr. Boice added that curriculum leaders also spent time this summer addressing the pacing of some of the curriculum.

Education Legislation Summary

Dr. Tracy reviewed the significant changes in education legislation including Student Data Privacy, Juvenile Justice Reform and Graduation Requirements for incoming freshmen. The Board may delay the Graduation Requirements.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if the Board would receive a recommendation from Central Office regarding the Graduation Requirements, as Policy would be impacted. Dr. Tracy said yes, but the State has yet to send the complete package and he is unsure of the timeline for that.

Mr. Llewellyn commented that it would be good know if all contractors and sub-contractors are in compliance with Data Privacy by October 1st; Dr. Tracy said he would check with the staff.

Mr. Patten questioned the wording in the Graduation Requirements legislation related to school building project grants. Dr. Tracy responded that the language is unusual and would seem to apply to every school.

Summer Projects Update

Mr. Cullen said he was pleased with all of the improvements and was happy to report the district is in good shape.

Mr. Patten asked:

- New boiler replacement at North Stratfield? Mr. Cullen said both new boilers will be replaced due to a defect in one of them, at no cost to the district.
- Does the solar project affect potential renovations? Mr. Cullen said no; solar projects are for schools with new roofs. Companies are adding a rubber membrane that extends the roof life by 5 years. Solar panel companies come to us from the state and we get reimbursement for solar projects. Utility savings vary from \$6K-\$28K depending on the building.
- Why the gym and stage floor repair at Riverfield? Mr. Cullen said the gym floor was damaged by a reservation program that was easily fixed; the stage floor buckled and was repaired at no charge.
- What is the lockdown port-a-bucket? Mr. Cullen said this is a portable toilet to be used during a lockdown.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about remotely monitoring the A/C and why not shut down the systems over the summer? Mr. Cullen said certain components can be monitored such as temperature settings and mode. Systems are never shut down over the summer but can be put on unoccupied mode. Damage such as mold needs to be avoided, high school lab equipment needs to be protected and custodians are also working with sealants.

Committee/Liaison Report

Mrs. Gerber reported for the OHSBC – the bid for the connector will take place in September or October.

Mr. Dwyer reported for the HHBC – planning and design is on time and on budget.

Mr. Patten asked if the HH portables were in place. Mr. Cullen said yes; the electrical connection has been delayed but security fencing is complete.

Open Board Comment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reiterated the Board’s commitment to a Town Hall session.

Mr. Dwyer agreed and said the Board would aim for October. An informal Board vote showed most preferred an evening meeting. There is no need for executive session as noted on the agenda; this meeting may adjourn.

Adjournment

Mr. Patten moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:25PM

*Respectfully submitted by
Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Public Schools
Board of Education Secretary*