

**Special Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, May 25, 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 Special Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call*

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM. Members present were Eileen Liu-McCormack, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber (arrived 8:55PM), Philip Dwyer, Anthony Calabrese, Trisha Pytko, Marc Patten, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn; HYA consultants Dr. Brad Draeger and Dr. Dwight Pfennig, as well as approximately 20 members of the public.

*Business Items*

*Fairfield Public Schools Leadership Profile Report*

Mr. Dwyer introduced Dr. Draeger and Dr. Pfennig as the consultants performing the new superintendent search on behalf of Hazard, Young & Attea Associates (HYA).

Dr. Draeger and Dr. Pfennig, HYA Consultants, presented the Leadership Profile Report. They thanked Dr. Title and his staff for being so accommodating. Data for the report was obtained from individual and group meetings, focus group settings and an online survey. A total of 1504 participants completed the online survey and 31 stakeholder interviews were held with the Board, Town officials, administrators, community members, parents, students, support staff, and teachers. Consistently reported themes were grouped by strengths, challenges/concerns/issues and desired characteristics. Dr. Title received high praise in many of the interviews and survey comments, particularly with his knowledge of the budget and budget process. At the end of the presentation, the final desired characteristics of the new superintendent were listed and included accessibility, excellent financial acumen, teaching and administrative experience and adaptability.

Mr. Dwyer said the powerpoint will be posted to the website.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack thanked the consultants for the presentation and asked, what were some of the highlights of the student feedback? Dr. Draeger and Dr. Pfennig said the students had a great interest in Board decisions, such as when a class is no longer offered; there is tremendous appreciation for the sports, music and drama programs; there is a feeling that field trips have been reduced; some students would prefer options outside of college-prep. The students praised the teachers and the support of the parent community.

Mrs. Maxon-Kenelly asked if there was a sense of different major focal points for elementary and secondary teachers. Dr. Draeger and Dr. Pfennig said the overall theme was that K-12 teachers would like to be more engaged and involved in the decision making; the elementary administrators felt Dr. Title was a role model.

Mr. Patten asked the presenters to address how they might screen candidates using the 20 points listed as challenges and concerns. Dr. Dwight and Dr. Pfennig first ask the candidate if s/he has read the Leadership Profile Report; this is the most important question. Although not possible to address each point, candidates tend to focus on certain points. The need for financial acumen is an important point for this district.

Mr. Dwyer said choosing the next superintendent is the most important decision this Board will make and asked, which top 1 or 2 attributes from parents and teachers are considered the most important? Dr. Draeger and Dr. Pfennig said #1 is communication and #2, or tied with #1, is financial acumen. Teachers need engagement in some form, such as a monthly meeting with the superintendent. The new superintendent should also be an excellent communicator and should listen and learn before making any changes.

Ms. Pytko thanked the consultants for the presentation and said they did a great job in giving the community a voice.

Mr. Dwyer agreed; the consultants were a most professional team and he thanked them on behalf of the Board.

DRAFT

*Public Comment:*

Dr. Gerry Kuroghlian, Old Spring Road: Interested in knowing more about responses to the recruitment question.  
Robert Benjamin, Teacher/Town resident: Thankful for presentation; new superintendent's philosophy as a human resources manager.

Robert Smoler, FEA President: Focus on communication and the value of staff time as a precious resource.

Joan Robb, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Teacher and Resident: Pleased to see that data is at the bottom, students are more than a data point. Students are people, and time is precious.

Frank Sahagian, FWMS Teacher: Great job on the presentation, encouraged the Board to consider the stakeholders during the process.

Dr. Henry Yoon, Riders Lane, City of Stamford Medical Director: New superintendent should value physical and mental-health wellness.

Mr. Dwyer thanked the public and asked the consultants if they had any additional comments. In recruiting the best and the brightest, the Board has struggled with the dynamic of recruitment. Dr. Pfennig said the Board chooses when the finalists are chosen and confidentiality is of utmost importance. In terms of the suggested candidate question, those responses that were genuine were reviewed and taken very seriously, as is any viable candidate.

Mr. Llewellyn asked, what percentage of respondents answered the suggested candidate question seriously? Was there some repetition of names? Dr. Pfennig said there was some repetition, only 2%-3% of respondents gave names.

Dr. Draeger said he would add the wellness element to the report.

*Discussion of Approval of Superintendents of Schools' Amended Contract and Interim Superintendent of Schools' Contract*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Karnal seconded seconded that the Board of Education hereby moves to enter into Executive Session in accordance with CGS 1-200(6) to discuss superintendent employment and the appointment of an interim superintendent.

**Motion Passed 9-0**

The Board entered into Executive session at 9:11PM.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:11PM.

*Approval of Superintendent of Schools' Amended Contract*

Mr. Dwyer moved, Mr. Calabrese seconded that the Board of Education approve the amendments to the Superintendent of Schools' employment contract, effective July 1, 2016, as discussed in executive session. Mr. Dwyer explained the changes made to Dr. Title's contract, which will be in place for July 1-31.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Ms. Karnal seconded to amend the contract language in item 3.d. by striking the words "Chairman of the"

Mr. Dwyer said that he would share the information if Dr. Title does take one personal day off.

Mr. Llewellyn said that the Board had not been previously notified regarding Dr. Title's days off.

**Motion Failed 3-6**

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

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

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the contract language in item 3.e. by inserting the following language following the phrase "dental insurance":

"which shall be the same insurance as that provided for the Fairfield Central Office Administration."

Mr. Llewellyn wanted to avoid assumptions and ensure that the new contract specifies that the new insurance is effective on July 1.

Mr. Dwyer said he believed that Dr. Title would be making the switch, since everyone else in the district is. The contract has been legally reviewed and he opposes the change.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack agreed with Mr. Llewellyn, the language provides clarification.

**Motion Failed 3-6**

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

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

Ms. Karnal asked for clarification on consulting fees should Dr. Title work beyond the 3 ½ days. Mr. Dwyer said the new superintendent would determine if more time is needed; the current daily rate would be used.

Mr. Llewellyn asked how the \$483.17 raise would calculate into overall retirement benefits, does it extend in perpetuity? He is concerned about costs to the taxpayers.

Mr. Dwyer said he did not know, but he assumes that if the language is changed to a one-time bonus it will still be a 6-3 vote.

Mr. Llewellyn said that it would be more conservative to give a one-time bonus.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the contract language in item 2 by inserting “289,902” into the salary line, and then adding the following at the end of the paragraph: “A one-time bonus of \$483.17 shall be paid 7/31/16.”

**Motion Failed 3-6**

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

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

**The Original Motion Passed 6-3**

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

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

*Approval of Interim Superintendent of Schools’ Contract*

Mr. Dwyer complimented Mrs. Gerber for her work with the interim superintendent search.

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded that the Board of Education approve the Interim Superintendent of Schools’ employment contract, effective August 1, 2016, as discussed in executive session, naming Dr. Stephen Tracy to that role.

Mrs. Gerber said the Board has met with Dr. Tracy and agreed he is a good match for the district.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly is looking forward to working with Dr. Tracy.

Mr. Dwyer said 3 applicants were interviewed; the Board reached an agreement with Dr. Tracy that allows him to serve in that role until June, 2017 if needed.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

DRAFT

*Adjournment*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Karnal seconded that this Special Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

**Motion Passed: 9-0**

Meeting adjourned at 10:34PM

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