

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, September 24, 2015**

**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 7:45PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, Donna Karnal (7:55 PM), Jessica Gerber (9:02 PM), Philip Dwyer, John Convertito, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and John Llewellyn. Marc Patten was absent. Others present were Superintendent Dr. David Title (7:53 PM), members of the Central Office Leadership Team, and approximately 15 members of the public.

*Public Comment*

None.

*Presentations*

*Fairfield Ludlowe High School Building Committee Update*

Mr. Donald, FLHS Building Committee Chairman, said he is receiving positive feedback on the new space; students are enjoying the cafeteria and the new rooms. Phase 3, the windows, will require EPA approval before it goes out to bid. The windows project is expected to occur over two summers and the estimated completion date is the summer of 2017.

Mr. Convertito asked about residual funds. Mr. Donald said 125K is left in the contingency; some money will be returned from the project and construction managers. Some funds for Phase 3 have already been spent.

Mr. Dwyer asked how much money will be returned to the district. Mr. Donald said approximately 100K, but there are still punch list items to be completed.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the nature of the punch list items. Mr. Donald said the list includes concrete and sidewalk issues; these should be complete by the second week in October.

Mr. Fattibene asked if, for Phase 3, there might be budget issues when complying with EPA requests regarding PCBs. Mr. Donald said yes, the project is on its 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> plan submission to the EPA; it may be possible to encapsulate PCBs, but actual removal could get very expensive.

Mr. Dwyer asked if final project acceptance was expected for the 2017-2018 school year and was told yes.

*Energy Opportunities Program at Jennings and North Stratfield Elementary Schools*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Convertito seconded that the Board of education approved the Energy Opportunities Program – Proposed Project at Jennings Elementary School as enclosed.

Mr. Morabito gave some background on the project, similar to the proposal presented a few months ago. United Illuminating will finance the lighting upgrade, up to 4 years at 0%, the net costs after incentives. At Jennings, it is an exterior lighting upgrade; switching over to LED lighting. During the finance period a small savings would be realized. At the end of the financing period, the entire savings would be realized.

**Motion Passed:** 6-0-1

Favor: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Llewellyn

Abstain: Ms. Karnal

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Convertito seconded that the Board of education approved the Energy Opportunities Program – Proposed Project at North Stratfield Elementary School as enclosed.

Mr. Morabito said the North Stratfield project has a faster payback and uses a different company. The scope of work is interior and exterior; LED lighting will result in lower bills. When the financing is complete, the entire savings will be realized.

Mr. Convertito asked why the interior is being considered at North Stratfield but not at Jennings. Mr. Morabito said Jennings has newer fixtures.

**Motion Passed: 7-0**

*First Reading of 2016-2017 School Calendar*

Dr. Title reviewed the regional calendar that was provided at the table. He said he was on the Regional Calendar Committee which established guidelines including a common start date, 2 common Professional Development days with Election Day as one of those days, and common agreements on holidays and February break. Districts retain 5 flexible days. He also reviewed the 2015-2016 Fairfield Public Schools calendar and asked that any changes be brought to him before the next meeting to ensure compliance.

Mr. Llewellyn confirmed that snow days are not built into the calendar, and asked for the number of snow days in recent years. Dr. Title said the number of snow days last year was 4 last but has been as high as 10.

Mr. Fattibene asked if one flex day was used for Veteran's Day and Dr. Title said yes.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if this was in keeping with the Aquaculture and other magnet schools; she also asked about cost savings. Dr. Title said the idea was to have cost savings but with the exceptions, that did not happen. Any cost savings would be minimal. Although the calendars won't be a perfect match with Bridgeport or Norwalk schools, they will be more closely matched. Mrs. Maxon Kennelly asked if schools would be in session for the presidential primary, slated for April 26. Dr. Title said this should be a topic for future discussion.

Mr. Dwyer asked that Board members, if they have any proposed changes, please bring them to the staffs' attention in advance.

Public comment: none

<i>Approval of Minutes</i>
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*Approval of the Minutes of the September 8, 2015 Regular Meeting*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mr. Convertito seconded to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2015 Regular Meeting.

Mr. Llewellyn said he was presenting 2 amendments, as provided in hard copy to the Board at the table.

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the minutes in the following way:

Delete on page 3, on the line starting "Mr. Llewellyn questioned..."

"He is interested in what might be driving the high school discrepancy and asked for a report to the board on how teacher tenure affects achievement."

And add:

"Like Mr. Convertito, Mr. Llewellyn is interested to understand what is driving the discrepancy at Warde. He referenced Mr. Cummings' previous statement about analyzing the impact of tenure on SBAC results by class. He asked when both the Warde and the tenure analyses would be reported back to the board because most members of the board and town would like to understand too."

Mr. Llewellyn said this better communicates with more specificity the nature of the discussion. He will leave it at that.

Mr. Fattibene asked the Chair if any Board member knows whether the proposed amendment is not accurate.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said it is not consistent, didn't question its accuracy.

Mr. Dwyer said he did not receive any indication from Mrs. Gerber that it was or wasn't accurate, so believed Mr.

Llewellyn put forth what he believed was an accurate statement.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said she has asked Mrs. Gerber to provide an estimate on the cost of a transcription service and it was exorbitant. She said Mr. Llewellyn has captured a transcript, but there is no improvement on the essence of the conversation, and she said it is not consistent with keeping things to the essence.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said similarly that she wants to be consistent and supports more detail and transparency. Saying high schools in general versus Warde does change the essence of the conversation, it is more specific.

Mr. Llewellyn said he felt the mention of Warde was a material change. The concept of looking at tenure was Mr. Cummings' concept that he had thrown out to the group. Mr. Llewellyn thought this was a great concept that should be reported back to the group. He questioned the minutes now versus earlier versions of the minutes.

Mr. Dwyer said that the Board should stay to the issue at hand which is the amendment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly felt the statement says the discrepancy is at Warde, rather than between the 2 schools, which she thought was the driving issue; so the original statement is actually more correct.

Mr. Fattibene said these are the Board's minutes. He will consider an amendment to the minutes as a matter of courtesy, as long as it is accurate.

Mr. Convertito said his recollection of Mr. Cummings' statement is that he gave a whole list of things that may impact achievement, not just teacher tenure, and this statement reads much differently.

Public Comment:

*Monique Sudikoff*, Lockwood Road: Requested the Board not have prolonged discussions on minutes and other procedural matters.

*Suzanne Miska*, Ryegate Road: Recent minutes are more essence-driven and should contain more information.

Mr. Dwyer said he will vote against the amendment, not because it's inaccurate, but because the level of detail is not required.

#### **Motion Passed 4-2-1**

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

Oppose: Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Abstain: Mr. Convertito

*(Mrs. Gerber was not present for this vote.)*

Mr. Llewellyn moved, Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the minutes in the following way:

On page 3, following "Mr. Dwyer said it is premature to suggest a target date for a return of this discussion until further study is completed. Dr. Title agreed; the data needs more analysis."

add

"Mr. Llewellyn said that he does not think that the Warde request is off point. He stated that the discrepancy is too wide not to give the board a report on their findings. Dr. Title offered to let the board know when he gets closer to getting information but right now he could not give a timetable on reporting back."

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said to not capture the essence in minutes is to go against the By-Laws. The next Board needs to figure this out because this is absurd. The one part she appreciates regarding Mr. Llewellyn's amendment is adding the fact that Dr. Title offered to get back to the Board.

Mr. Fattibene again asked if any Board member knows this to be an inaccurate statement.

Mr. Dwyer said he will assume it is accurate.

#### **Motion Passed 4-2-1**

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

Oppose: Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Abstain: Mr. Convertito

*(Mrs. Gerber was not present for this vote.)*

Mr. Dwyer said he will approve the overall motion for the minutes, although it is not advisable to have this level of detail. If each board member decides to add their own comments, the minutes will get longer.

**The original motion to approve the minutes (as now amended) Passed 6-1**

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

Oppose: Mr. Fattibene

*(Mrs. Gerber was not present for this vote.)*

<i>Superintendent's Report</i>
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*Certified Staffing Update*

Dr. Title said Mrs. Leffert prepared the enclosed report due to the interest in this topic. Mrs. Leffert reviewed the enclosure; the Master's Step 1 number is traditionally high as many of those are interns or building subs who were with the district the previous year; she added that the difference between retirees and new hires does not account for new positions. There is also a difference with individuals vs. FTEs. Dr. Title mentioned that a growing number of new hires, 70%-75%, are experienced teachers and he pointed out that most of the staff that left, did so due to not meeting district performance standards; only 6 left due to a lateral move in another district.

Ms. Karnal thanked Mrs. Leffert and said the report is helpful and asked whether the district was going forward with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to perform exit interviews with staff. Mrs. Leffert said that is a topic that is currently being researched and more information should be available by December. Dr. Title said that there are roughly 1000 certified positions with 40 or so administrators.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack wanted to understand the FTE ratio and turnover in the new hire experience chart. Mrs. Leffert said it is more complicated than showing staff replacement; some positions are shared among buildings based on need; some move to part-time, etc. Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked about the trend in staff turnover and Dr. Title said that it has remained fairly consistent. Mrs. Liu-McCormack said different trends are interesting, like regarding STEM teachers. Mrs. Leffert said the state defines the shortage areas each year. Mrs. Liu-McCormack said that's good to know.

Mr. Fattibene asked if each number on the new hire experience chart represented a newly hired certified staff member and was told yes. Mrs. Leffert added that some of the Master's Step 1 new hires were interns or subs; a student teacher is not an employee. Current teachers who earn a Master's degree are not reflected here. Mr. Fattibene asked, in the resignation category, if any teacher voluntarily said they were leaving due to not meeting district standards and was told no.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the nature of the Bachelor's; are those the 'difficult to hire' areas? Mrs. Leffert said no, that more experienced staff is typically found for those areas since there are fewer certifications in them; the Bachelor's may be in areas that have more opportunities such as elementary and PE; Fairfield is fortunate to have over 1000 applicants that want to work here and not all districts have that luxury. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the new 6<sup>th</sup> year candidates; their options to participate in the Administrator Academy and to fill in-house administrative positions. Mrs. Leffert said the 6<sup>th</sup> year does not always represent a 6<sup>th</sup> year in Administration; it may be in Reading Instruction or something else. Teacher leadership opportunities and leadership training exist throughout the district.

Mr. Convertito asked if the district is recruiting for any other shortage areas. Mrs. Leffert said that curriculum leaders are focused in this area and are tapping into candidate sources. Dr. Title added that Fairfield is hosting the regional recruiting fair.

Mr. Llewellyn said he didn't recall getting a Change in Staff Report in a couple of months and asked when it can be expected. Mrs. Leffert said it would be out shortly. Dr. Title added that the report includes all staff; certified and non-certified.

*Financial Review of the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year*

Mrs. Munsell reviewed enclosure 6a, the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year Financial Statement as of July 31, 2015. She said the Budget Transfer chart is in a new format as requested by Mr. Llewellyn; the rows now match the summary object numbers on the 2-page financial report. The final column shows that \$.51 was returned to the Town after a concerted effort to put as much money as possible into the medical retention fund to cover the shortfall. In addition, the excess cost reimbursement of 764K, was significantly higher than anticipated and mitigated the medical retention shortfall.

Mr. Convertito asked if all the blue columns zeroed out and was told yes.

Mrs. Munsell also reviewed medical retention enclosure 6b. She discussed the \$500K Town expenditure to the BOE for medical retention and the resulting balance. The IBNR calculation has not yet been received from the actuaries.

Mr. Convertito confirmed the final cash balance in column 14 was 2.03M.

Mr. Llewellyn thanked Mrs. Munsell for adding the numbers in column 1 on the budget transfer chart so they can be mapped back to the book. He had several questions on legal expenses and said it would be helpful to break down Support Services, line 305, to show legal expenses. Mrs. Munsell said a detailed legal expense report by category was recently provided, but Mr. Llewellyn said he would like to see it on the same sheet. He also said it would be helpful to add 2 columns; Column 0 for 'as appropriated' and Column 9 for 'total expenditures.' Mrs. Munsell said that is already provided on the attached report, but Mr. Llewellyn said it would better to have it all on one sheet.

Mr. Llewellyn asked about budgeting for retirees. Dr. Title said that is done based on an estimate. Last year, the district budgeted for 19 and there were 39; that savings was put into medical retention. Mr. Llewellyn clarified that these numbers reflect 14-15.

Mr. Fattibene requested a definition of unliquidated encumbrances from enclosure 6b. Mrs. Munsell responded that prior year funds can't be committed after June 30; it is the net of invoices to be paid and monies returned. Mr. Fattibene asked if a medical retention fund shortfall is also expected next year. Dr. Title said it is based on the experience as the district moves through the year; one of the biggest drivers for the increase in the current budget was the need to put more money into health insurance, as seen in column 15. Mr. Fattibene questioned a number that he believes is off by \$2, Mrs. Munsell said she believed they would find the \$2. Dr. Title said it may have been a transcription error.

*Holland Hill Update*

Dr. Title said he is aware that Holland Hill is crowded and that music is on a cart. All district portables are currently being used by students, and moving a portable might not even be feasible. While this is not unprecedented, it is not an ideal situation and Mr. Cummings and Mrs. Cretella are working on solutions to lessen the impact. Prioritizing the class size was important; if music were to be placed in a classroom, there would be some very large class sizes.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked if Dr. Title had met with the Holland Hill community. Dr. Title said he will meet with the Holland Hill PTA tomorrow morning. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly requested a timeline for ed-specs and other project milestones. Dr. Title said ed-specs will be presented in the spring and a funding proposal will follow by June 30. If approved, a building committee can begin work. Additionally, a redistricting committee will report back to the Board in March. Right now the project is based on a 462 capacity; several Board of Finance members have asked why a 504 capacity was not being used. Town bodies seem to be aware of the need for this project.

Mr. Llewellyn asked when is the soonest that the renovation and addition could be done and students could be in the building and what is the cost to move Riverfield portables to Holland Hill? Dr. Title said the earliest construction start date would be the summer of 2017. It may not be feasible to move the Riverfield portables but he will get more information on new portables before the next BOE meeting.

Mr. Dwyer said it is very expensive to move a portable and not cost-effective; he went through this process with the YMCA.

*Committee/Liaison Report*

Mr. Convertito said the Redistricting Committee had a productive meeting with the consultants, the next meeting is this upcoming Tuesday at Sherman School and public comment will be at the front end of the meeting but will be limited to 15 minutes.

Mr. Fattibene urged the committee to provide more than 15 minutes for Public Comment.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the guiding principles and priorities, and whether these would come before the Board for approval. Mr. Convertito said this is the beginning framework, and he presumes that any new guidelines would have to come back to the Board for approval.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said this is a sensitive topic and it is early in the process. She has heard many rumors flying around, but nothing has been decided. The scope as it stands right now is very narrow, although of course that could change. A consultant has been retained for racial imbalance but not for redistricting. She urges everyone to do this calmly and step by step.

Mr. Dwyer clarified that the Superintendent retains consultants and not the Board.

*Open Board Comment*

Ms. Karnal reported that the cafeteria at Fairfield Ludlowe looks great.

Mr. Dwyer reported that Mr. Coyne's retirement party was well attended and was a great event.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said she was happy to hear that the elementary schools have reported some SBAC reports, and IReady should be reported shortly, but strand data has not yet been received. Anything we can do as a district to request that the state provide more detailed information would be helpful.

Mrs. Gerber reported that she was at the FWMS Open House and the World Language teachers are very happy with the new World Language program.

*Adjournment*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Ms. Karnal seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

**Motion Passed 8-0**

Meeting adjourned at 9:40PM

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