

**Regular Meeting Minutes  
Fairfield BoE, February 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 7:38PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, John Convertito, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and Marc Patten. John Llewellyn was absent. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, student representatives Tyler Shuster and Suzanne Finnerty, and approximately 20 members of the public.

*Student Reports*

Mr. Shuster reported for Fairfield Warde High School: course selection for 2015-2016 is underway; the voluntary AMC math exam will take place tomorrow; noted author Paul Volponi will be a guest speaker via skype; a civics class will be visiting Hartford next week to meet with local legislators; Girls Basketball is in the FCIAC semi-finals, the Wrestling Team earned 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the CIAC class L tournament; a Red Cross Blood Drive will take place on March 11; and students are looking forward to college decisions.

Ms. Finnerty reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School; Cheerleading won FCIAC; Boys Indoor Track had a runner qualify for State Open and New England's; the Girls Ski Team will compete in State's next weekend; clubs are thriving; AP testing will take place in May and information has been distributed; construction noise has improved; the snow has complicated parking and entrance traffic.

*Public Comment*

Trudi Durrell, Holland Hill Parent: Requested consideration of Holland Hill renovations.  
Monique Sudikoff, Lockwood Road: Pleased with section 5 of Food Allergy Policy.  
Jason Li, Sunnyridge Ave, RTM District 8: Requested consideration of Holland Hill renovations.

*Old Business*

Approval of By-Law Amendment: Article VI

Mr. Patten moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the By-Law amendment to Article VI, per Enclosure No. 1.

Mr. Patten distributed a timeline of the By-Law amendment and discussed its history. He also provided information on Robert's Rules.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack moved, Mr. Fattibene seconded to postpone the motion to the next Regular Board meeting.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said all members should be present for this vote.

Ms. Karnal supported the motion.

Mr. Dwyer did not support the motion as it has been postponed twice already.

Mr. Fattibene disagreed with Mr. Dwyer and said one Board member is not more important than another.

Ms. Karnal said the delay won't make a difference.

Mr. Convertito supported the motion.

Mr. Dwyer said the motion was headed toward a tie vote and so will support the motion, with the caveat that should the March meeting end up with one absent member, the vote should proceed.

**Motion Passed: 8-0**

First Read of Policy 5516 – Students – Students with Health Care Needs – Life Threatening Allergies and Glycogen Storage Disease Management Policy

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly reintroduced the policy and said it addressed the spirit and letter of the state statute; the majority of changes are in the prevention section, and she referenced new language on page 7, section D “Food in Schools – Generally.”

Mr. Patten asked where the section was that caused some contention and was told it was removed; the language that was kept can be reviewed on page 6 under C1.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack did not like the use of the word “shall” on pages 2 and 3, and asked if we should be dictating to families. She preferred the word “should.”

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly responded that those statements are part of the preamble to set up the structure of the policy and are not actually the policy itself, but will make a note of it.

Mrs. Gerber requested the overall cost of the wipes to implement the policy and was told this is being investigated.

Mrs. Parks added that the committee was told that the protein-soluble wipe is the only acceptable wipe to eliminate the allergen. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly added that hand washing is an option; Mr. Cullen responded that the principals would have to assess the hand washing timeline for an entire class.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked whether the policy would apply to all classrooms, or only to those rooms where students have nut allergies. Mrs. Parks said it would apply to all classrooms and Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly explained that this will be a consistent policy district-wide and will be reviewed annually.

Mrs. Gerber asked if the policy were approved, when would it be implemented and how would parents be notified. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the Administrative Regulations would address those issues. Dr. Title said the policy appears to have new language that bans peanut and tree nuts beyond elementary as of September 1, 2015, to coincide with high school lunch; Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said yes, and the new wording appears in section D.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the policy might result in food-free classrooms. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said that was a possibility and that the district team would be charged with implementing best practices.

Mr. Patten asked who would comprise the multi-disciplinary team. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly responded that the administration operationalizes the policy; she would like to see the Board of Health with a more active role.

Mr. Convertito mentioned that the multi-disciplinary team is dictated by CSDE guidelines for life-threatening allergies.

Mr. Fattibene discussed a recent study showing that even healthcare professionals are at odds over allergies; he quoted from an article that stated the philosophy of peanut allergies is changing; and he said the state guidance is that the district should have a plan; the state guidelines do not make the elimination of allergens in the classroom mandatory.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly referenced a study that included toddlers; the state statute must still be addressed; the focus is primarily on those 1.5 children per class that are currently diagnosed; there is a requirement to have protocols to prevent exposure to food allergens.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked whether a team was currently in place and was told no. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said that nothing in the state statute mandates that a team needs to be in place; our doing so is a result of the policy before the Board.

Dr. Title added that firmer costs are needed as well as the time element estimate. He will run a trial in a few classrooms to see how this may affect instructional time, as well as begin conversations with the secondary level as they have not been heavily involved in this discussion.

Mr. Convertito said he expects changes to the policy after implementation, but something is needed in place now to make it operational. He asked the Board to move forward.

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board that this will be a voting item on the next agenda.

*Public Comment:*

Tricia Donovan, Fairfield Resident: Allergy study on infants.

Tina Brown, Quaker Lane: Policy Questions.

Kelly Dunn, Tuckahoe Lane: Policy implementation.

<i>New Business</i>
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Discussion of Long Range Facilities Plan

Dr. Title spoke to the Long-Range Facilities Plan update and mentioned that savings can be had for both Mill Hill and Holland Hill, using lower capacity numbers as illustrated in the enclosure; he clarified that the Sherman improvements are for fire suppression, building code and other core improvements; not to increase capacity. Sherman's annex also needs to be connected to the main structure. The Holland Hill floor plan shows that every room is fully utilized, and there is one classroom that is shared by 4 teachers; if a section needs to be added next year, those 4 teachers would have to be placed elsewhere.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly noted Holland Hill's increasing enrollment in KDG; she asked where those professionals sharing space would be placed if that room were needed, and wondered how gifted, strings, and band all share space. Mrs. Cretella said she didn't know where the displaced teachers would go, but that the art room would be the next considered space; and gifted, strings, and band are on a rotating schedule. Dr. Title mentioned that the larger classes will get additional support; Mr. Rafferty is addressing this plan together with Ms. Cretella.

Mr. Convertito asked how services can be rendered in a hallway without violating HIPAA; Mrs. Cretella said a screen is used for privacy. He also asked about security for the portables; Dr. Title said he didn't want to disclose too much in public, but added that fencing is part of the plan.

Mr. Patten asked how a classroom could be divided for 4 teachers and was told a combination of dividers and book cases divided the room.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked about growth at Holland Hill and questioned why the increase. Mrs. Cretella said residency to attend is proven through Central Office registration procedures. Dr. Title added that there are no programs at Holland Hill that allow non-resident students to attend.

Ms. Karnal questioned deficiencies and asked if new building in the area was included in the Mill Hill enrollment projections; Dr. Title said the projections were based on many factors including new building in the area.

Mr. Convertito questioned whether the 504 capacity used in the Facilities Plan actually equated to 526 students; Dr. Title said that the formula used in the Plan does not max out the classroom size; 504 uses an average of 21 students/classroom.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack had more questions on deficiencies and questioned the available capacity at Riverfield, Burr and Dwight; she thought that those schools have excess capacity of around 250. Mr. Cullen said Burr has a 504 capacity and Mrs. Gerber said Dwight has a 378 capacity. Riverfield is being renovated as a 504. Holland Hill is short 50 seats; Mill Hill is all right if we use the portables. Dr. Title explained that the Long-Range Plan includes a formula for how deficiencies are calculated; both Mill Hill and Holland Hill need work; there is a need to update the infrastructure and eliminate the portables. Mrs. Liu-McCormack questioned the room deficiencies that have been mentioned, and how they're determined. Mrs. Liu-McCormack said she's puzzled by the waterfall and how we allocate things; she needs to think about this more. Mrs. Cretella added that Holland Hill's deficiencies are actually worse, as enrollment has increased since the deficiencies were calculated.

Mrs. Gerber said that the core capacity of a building is more than classroom space; it also includes the APR, the gymnasium, and the use of other spaces to render services.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked Mrs. Liu-McCormack to further clarify her earlier statement on empty seats at other schools. Mrs. Liu-McCormack responded that she is in full support of renovating, but asked whether capacity had to be added when excess capacity exists; she said it's a question of allocation, and asked Mr. Cullen what the cost would be to renovate core facilities without adding capacity. Mr. Cullen stated that the existing Holland Hill building capacity from 1956 is 315 students, which does not include the portables. Dr. Title felt that Mrs. Liu-McCormack's implication is the development of a redistricting plan. Mrs. Liu-McCormack said we need to explore and understand the numbers to decide if redistricting is an option. Mr. Dwyer stated that staff needs direction regarding redistricting, as it will involve

staff time. Mrs. Liu-McCormack said she needs numbers to determine the direction on redistricting, she said we may need to get more creative.

Mr. Convertito questioned the number of classrooms at Sherman, asked about connecting the annex, and mentioned he is not opposed to redistricting as long as Mill Hill and Holland Hill get needed renovations; Mrs. Roxbee said the portable is not counted as a classroom space; the proper classification is a 22 classroom building. Mr. Cullen said connecting the annex to the building is included in the \$3M cost.

Mr. Patten said he would revisit redistricting.

Dr. Title requested a sense of the Board regarding which project should be first and outlined some changes in the waterfall chart: Fairfield Ludlowe High School windows are not in the waterfall; the Town is splitting the security in 2 pieces which would change the years where the money is spent; the Fairfield Warde turf may not need to be done in 2016/17 and something else may take its place; if Sherman is pushed back a year or two, the annex connectivity to the building may become a capital non-recurring project; a lower capacity placeholder number will be replaced for Mill Hill and Holland Hill. He reminded the Board that the Town has to review the chart to determine the debt repayment estimate.

Ms. Karnal asked about the implications of the downward trend in enrollment after 2015/2016. Dr. Title said portables take a long time to correct; problems need to be fixed, but he does not want to overbuild.

*Public Comment:*

Kristin Nierman – Acorn Lane: Mill Hill shared space and portables concerns.

Trudi Durell, Holland Hill parent: Holland Hill enrollment.

Tricia Donovan, Fairfield Resident: Mill Hill building maintenance.

Mr. Convertito asked about after-school use of Holland Hill. Mr. Cullen said it is heavily used.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack asked if Mill Hill was ever placed ahead of Holland Hill on the waterfall. Mr. Dwyer said the previous Board approved the Long-Range Plan with Holland Hill placed first, although an alternative, unapproved Plan was drafted showing Mill Hill first. As soon as the Plan is approved, the waterfall chart will be adjusted accordingly for new projects and changing costs.

Ms. Karnal asked about timeframes for projects and Mr. Dwyer said it is a balancing act; the Plan could be back on the agenda in April.

Mr. Chase, Mill Hill Principal, spoke to the shortage of building space and the use of portables; classroom 17 is split down the middle for MST and LAS; although the enrollment has declined, the space is still very tight and forces educators to share space; storage space is also limited; OT/PT instruction is provided on the stage.

Mr. Convertito asked about room 177; Mr. Chase said that is a very small room that has always been used; it is more in line with office-size space.

Ms. Karnal asked about the APR; Mr. Chase said it is used for the cafeteria as well as assemblies. Mr. Cullen said that Mill Hill has one of the smallest kitchens with only one serving line.

Dr. Title asked about classroom 10; Mr. Chase said it is used as a computer lab but doesn't have any connectivity; it has a laptop cart with folding tables. Dr. Title mentioned that Holland Hill, Jennings and Sherman do not have dedicated computer rooms.

Mr. Patten asked about the possibility of moving the portable classroom to the computer room at Mill Hill. Mr. Chase said that would not have been appropriate to do for one year; he also mentioned that the conference room is a narrow space used for meetings and can hold up to 16 people; staff meetings are typically held in the library.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked about the deficiencies in the gymnasium and elsewhere; Mr. Chase said that APE is taught there with OT/PT sometimes joining in. Dr. Title said this instruction should have dedicated space with equipment.

Mr. Convertito noted that the Sherman front office block freed up classroom space.

Mr. Dwyer asked the Board for direction.

Mrs. Gerber recommended touring Holland Hill and Mill Hill.

Mr. Fattibene stated that visiting these schools is necessary.

Approval of Mill Hill Roof Project

Ms. Karnal moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education accept the Mill Hill Roof Project No. TMP-051-PZVB as complete.

Mr. Cullen said this was excellent project completed under budget. Dr. Title added that this is a step necessary for reimbursement.

**Motion Passed 8-0**

*Approval of Minutes*

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 20, 2015

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 20, 2015.

**Motion Passed 7-0-1**

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

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 28, 2015

Mr. Convertito moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 28, 2015.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly questioned a statement on page 3 regarding funds for protein soluble wipes. After discussion regarding a possible amendment to the minutes by Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Convertito withdrew his motion and the Board agreed by unanimous consent to postpone the vote on the minutes until the next Regular meeting.

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 29, 2015

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mr. Patten seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 29, 2015.

**Motion Passed 5-1-2**

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

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 10, 2015

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of February 10, 2015.

**Motion Passed 7-0-1**

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

*Superintendent Report*

Online Incident Reporting Platform

Ms. Leonardi gave a background on the threat assessment intervention and prevention (TIPS) program that will go live on March 16; it will be fully presented to the Board on March 10.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly mentioned the short window to present to PTA's. Ms. Leonardi said all PTA's will get the same documentation and talking points.

Mr. Fattibene asked if it is a software program. Ms. Leonardi said it is a web-based platform that runs through the company's server. The district climate team reviewed it and assessed other options; they liked it because it is anonymous and discreet, it allows for tracking the timeliness of the investigation, and it has data reports.

Mr. Convertito asked if this was the same platform announced in January was told yes.

Dr. Title updated the Board on the capital non-recurring project town approval; a special meeting has been called to address several issues that came up regarding the bond resolution; the March 3<sup>rd</sup> BOF meeting will address the capital non-recurring projects; the Jennings boilers are included.

Dr. Title added that over \$35,000 has been spent trucking snow out of parking lots to make the driving more visible; the snow removal issue continues to be addressed.

Mr. Patten asked about snow removal costs and Dr. Title said the district is fully responsible for snow removal costs.

*Committee/Liaison Reports*

Mrs. Gerber said the Osborn Hill request for contingency money was approved by the RTM; the only outstanding issue is attaching the walk-way; it is unclear when that will go to the RTM. The FLHS Building Committee Chair will go before the BOS in March for the funding request.

Mr. Patten said he attended a very comprehensive SEPTA event that addressed financial planning for children with special needs; SEPTA is having a fundraiser on March 2 at Chips restaurant.

*Open Board Comment*

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly congratulated the staff for a job well done at the a capella concert she attended.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack said the Board should join in on curricula discussions; she would also like to hear from staff about the need for texts, resources, or a change in curricula.

Mr. Dwyer updated the Board on the FSAA arbitration award, which supported the administrators' last best offer. He also reminded the Board of the February 28 Special Meeting to discuss programs, finances and facilities.

*Adjournment*

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

**Motion Passed 8-0**

Meeting adjourned 10:32PM.