

**APPROVED**

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tuesday, January 11, 2011

Minutes of the Executive Session and the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, January 11, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the Executive Session to order at 7:05 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu and Mrs. Catherine Albin (arrived 7:15 p.m.). Ms. Stacey Zahn was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, First Selectman Ken Flatto and Attorney Dick Saxl.

2. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education convene to Executive Session to discuss the acquisition of real estate leases and Fairfield Woods Middle School Litigation.

Motion carried: 7:0:0.

3. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow to adjourn the Executive Session at 7:17 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

4. Vice Chairman Mrs. Pamela Iacono called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Brand, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu (arrived 7:40 p.m.), and Mr. John Mitola (arrived 8:09 p.m.). Ms. Stacey Zahn was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 50 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

5. Mrs. Iacono led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

6. Presentations

A. Update on K-8 Gifted Program-

Mrs. Anna Cutaia-Leonard and Dr. Gary Rosato presented a proposal with recommendations for enhancements to the Gifted and Talented Program which include identification criteria, curriculum and instructional approaches. The recommendations would be phased in over the next few years.

Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard and Dr. Rosato provided historical background on the elementary and middle school program. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that a key component of the proposal is the definition of gifted. The gifted student is a child who shows high performance capability in intellectual areas and needs differentiated instruction or services not ordinarily provided by the regular education program. A program with guiding principles and goals has been developed which supports their academic and socio-emotional needs. Dr. Rosato stated that this proposal is being presented to the Board for implementation in September. This is a framework to build on; work still needs to be done on some of the individual components that are listed in the framework. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard highlighted the proposed identification procedures and timeline. The assessment for gifted education starts in October with all 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students given the Naglieri by their classroom teacher. In January the CogAT is administered to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. In March students are identified who made a particular cutoff in either one of those assessments. Teachers and parents may request a review for any student not identified at this stage. This process is referred to as a Request for Review. Requests for Review are based on a standard process and benchmarks. At this time a student profile folder is opened and additional data is gathered. In May a district team reviews all student folders to determine eligibility for inclusion in the Gifted Program. The identification process for K-2 is

solely a Request for Review process. The K-2 identification committee at the school level will determine eligibility based on district-wide criteria. A plan will be developed for students to include differentiated instruction in the regular elementary program or any possible enrichment options. Programming for grades 3-5 is changing. It is going from a Language Arts or Math based program to a multi-disciplinary based program two hours once a week facilitated by a gifted teacher. This change does not result in additional FTEs but does result in a re-shifting. Rather than a school being allocated a .3 Language Arts and a .2 Math, they will be allocated a .5 gifted teacher who will serve all students. Another change is providing direct service of gifted education for grades 3-5 as opposed to grades 4 and 5. Dr. Rosato commented on the middle school portion of the proposal. For the last 7 to 8 years there has not been a dedicated program focused on the gifted and talented students at the middle level. The proposed program includes components to appeal to students at the middle level. Students will have an opportunity to work collaboratively with the gifted teacher and their peers on an enriched unit of study; there will be opportunities to participate in independent, interest driven research studies facilitated by the gifted teacher; and in 8<sup>th</sup> grade identified students will have the opportunity to participate in a Spring Seminar research project with their peers. In addition, the gifted teacher will serve as a resource to the classroom teachers, working on such things as curriculum, professional development, identifying students, etc. Dr. Rosato stated that during the unified arts period students would be allowed the choice to opt in to a dedicated gifted program one day a week or they could opt out. Four days a week students would participate in unified arts classes, and on the fifth day they would be scheduled to work with the gifted resource teacher on topics they would design with their teacher. Students who do not want this option could simply opt out. Dr. Rosato reviewed the 2011-12 budget for the gifted program and stated that the cost to bring about these changes would be an increase of \$25,871 to the gifted program.

Mrs. Brand commented on the description that is being used to identify gifted students. It should include more than just intellectual.

Board comments and questions followed regarding the proposed Gifted Program.

B. Medical Reserve Fund – Aon Hewitt

Representatives from Aon Hewitt reviewed the renewal process and how they arrive at their recommendations for funding our medical costs. Board members received four sheets with a break down for the Fairfield Public Schools. The first page outlined the historical claim experience for medical, prescription drug and dental coverage for the latest 17 months of paid claims along with headcounts. The sheet showed the latest 12 months of paid claims which is the figure used as a basis to project forward, whether it is 2010-11 or 2011-12. In January 2010 using the latest 12 months of paid claims known at the time, the budget is projected forward for 2010-11. Now 12 months later there is actual claim experience for those 12 months, and the budget will be updated in terms of the actual numbers compared to the budget that was set last January. The updated projection for fiscal year 2010-11 is \$23,454,694. The number set in January 2010 was \$23,744,868, a change of \$290,174 or 1.2% lower than projected. Anthem provides the claims to Aon and they report them to the Fairfield Public Schools. They include claims that are in excess of an individual stop loss claim. Stop loss is purchased to protect the Fairfield Public Schools against large claims. The individual stop loss limit is set at \$150,000, which means that Fairfield's plan is responsible for the first \$150,000 of a claimant's claims. Anything above \$150,000 is paid by the medical vendor. Taking out the \$172,836 claims in excess of the stop loss limit, brings the net claims to \$14,719,373. Now that we have claims for the latest 12 months, we need to project what those claims are going to be for July 2011 to July 2012. An annual trend is developed by the actuaries and bumped up for inflation. A cost of \$131,378 has been estimated to comply with the Health Care Reform and that component is added in along with administrative charges, network access fees and the stop loss charge, for a total estimated cost of \$19,778,310. The 2010 budget for medical was set at \$18,077,179,

which is a \$1,071,131 increase or 9.4%. Working through the prescription drug and dental components brings a total required change of \$2.2 million or 9.4%.

Mrs. McWain reviewed the Medical Insurance Profit & Loss Summary since 2008-2009. This shows the balance on hand as of July 1, what is added from the operating budget, and what is added in the wage/benefit reserve for new staff. Also added to that total is other revenue that is received from employee contributions, retiree payments, Cobra, FMLA/LOA payments, grants, rebates and Food Services. That provides a total income picture for a given year. ITT Hartford Medicare Supplement is a retirement plan that our retired teachers and some retired non-certified employees are in. They contribute to the plan either in full or almost in full, and we collect the money and send it to ITT Hartford. The expenses are the numbers that we receive from Aon. The balance as of June 30 is what we have in the bank at year end. We are required to hold in reserve what is known as IBNR, incurred but not reported claims. In 2008-09 we had a balance of \$2,379,178 after taking out the amount in reserve. Last year we were at \$3.3 million, and this year we are estimated to be somewhere around \$1.9. This is just a snapshot showing how we move from year to year in the funding of our medical retention fund. Mrs. McWain stated that in the 2011-12 budget we have proposed to cover all of our anticipated expenses, to cover our IBNR and to have the amount of money required in reserve at year end.

Board questions and comments followed.

7. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Education/Business Meeting of December 14, 2010.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

8. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-

- ◆ Mrs. Albin – No report
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that George Coleman has been named Acting Commissioner of Education. The State Department of Education is in limbo for a while because 8 members of the 11 member State Board of Ed are up and need to be appointed by the Governor. (The Board appoints the Commissioner.) CES now does enrollment projections and facilities planning. CES held a ground-breaking for a new addition that will address students with developmental disabilities, emotional disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. The RESCS met with Representative Andy Fleischmann, Co-Chair of the Education Committee, to go over the legislative agenda. Board of Health-Currently the district is working with the nursing and health departments on protocol regulations and recommendations for a shift in policy about administration of medication.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that CAGE sent out an email asking all Board members to become informed with what will be going on at the State Legislature; it will be a very important year for school districts. On February 16 our new Governor will be presenting his budget, and on February 17 he will present a webinar on his budget. March 9<sup>th</sup> is CAGE's Day on the Hill.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene – No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Iacono reported that the Special Projects Standing Building Committee has been putting together a funding request for the Sherman project. Even with the full funding request, we would probably only be able to afford the kitchen work, the enhanced special ed areas, the administration security enhancements in the front of the building and possibly the HVAC system. The Committee is charged with not spending more than 50 percent of the assessed value, which would be about \$1.9 million to potentially work with, and that is if the town bodies approve the full dollar amount. There probably will not be money to take the stage out of the APR and move it to the gymnasium and certainly none of the work outside such as the bus loop. Lockers would be an add alternate. Mrs. Iacono reported that central office is working diligently to get the RTM members copies of the Operational Audit Report, the MGT Enrollment Projections and a DVD of the presentation to the Board of Ed. She reported that she attended the Board of Finance meeting last week along with Mr. Kery and heard the town-side audit presentation. The report basically

stated that there are no areas to cut on the town-side. This will be another difficult budget process.

Mr. Mitola stated that at the January 24 RTM meeting MGT will give the same presentation to the RTM, and they will be able to ask questions. Traditionally, the Board of Selectmen and members of the Board of Finance attend those meetings.

- ◆ Mr. Kery reported that the Facilities, Technology and Long-Term Planning Committee met last night and discussed questions members had about the enrollment projections and some of the larger issues as they relate to the report received from MGT. The Committee is hoping to bring the Long Range Facilities Plan to the full Board in February as well as thoughts from the Committee that the full Board would need to weigh in on in terms of the challenges as a result of the information received and the best way to move forward. PTA Council met and gifted and talented was the pulse of the meeting.
- ◆ Mr. Liu reported that the Fairfield Woods Middle School Building Committee is doing an amazing job.

Mr. Bill Sapone, Fairfield Woods Building Committee Chairman, stated that at this point the project is on time in terms of the construction schedule as well as on budget with the funding. The project is going out to bid for construction within the next few weeks. The demolition work was done over Christmas break so ground or bricks have already been broken. The area is cleared and prepared for the footings once the contractor has been selected. He stated that there is a pending litigation that may come up but he is hopeful it will not be a problem. The schedule is to have the classrooms, the cafeteria, the media center, all internal work, and all ADA compliance work done by the first week in September. The PE addition and gym will be follow-ons the will be worked on through January/February of next year. This time next year the construction work should be just about done with clean up and final landscaping being done.

- ◆ Mr. Mitola – No report

#### 9. Superintendent's Report-

Dr. Title reported that the Board was to receive his budget tomorrow, but due to the weather it looks like everything will be closed tomorrow, so the Board can expect the budget on Friday. The budget will look very different in form than it has, and Mrs. McWain and her staff are doing a remarkable job.

#### 10. New Business

- A. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve the plans and specifications for the Fairfield Woods Middle School Project #051-0122EA, Phase 2 (FFE) as presented.

Jeannette O'Connell from Tai Soo Kim gave a brief presentation of the FF&E plans. Prior to this meeting, she noted that representatives from Tai Soo Kim met with Jan Byrnes, Sal Morabito, and Greg Hatzis to review the plans and get their approval and also the go ahead from the Building Committee. She briefly reviewed the plans, the type of furniture that will be required and what was selected for the spaces.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- B. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education amend the Educational Specifications for the Roger Sherman Elementary School Annex Project to eliminate Smart Boards.

Mr. Mitola stated that Roger Sherman did not get the Smart Boards which were part of the ed specs so this is to complete the loop by amending the ed specs.

Mrs. Iacono offered a friendly amendment to add the words "the request" after to eliminate: "that the Board of Education amend the educational specifications for the Roger Sherman Elementary School Annex Project to eliminate the request for Smart Boards." This was acceptable to the mover and second.

Mrs. Iacono commented that the project ran out of funds to buy the Smart Boards at Roger Sherman. The Osborn Hill PTA purchased Smart Boards at that building so their ed spec has been met, but the ed spec that is currently written for Sherman with the inclusion of the Smart Boards cannot be met.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- C. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Liu that the Board of Education accept the Osborn Hill Elementary School Annex Project #051-0119E as complete.

Mrs. Iacono stated that the project is complete, and the Board needs to accept it as complete in order to get reimbursement.

Board questions followed.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- D. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education accept the Roger Sherman Elementary School Annex Project #051-0120RE as complete.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- E. First Read of Policies-

- #1430 – Public Performances by Students
- #5330 – Bullying

Policy #1430 – Public Performance by Students

Dr. Title stated that this policy revision came about because students have been asked to perform at such events as the Bridgeport Sound Tigers, the Bluefish, or something of that nature, and by the way the policy is written it would be prohibited since they sell alcohol in the arena. This policy incorporates some language to carve out exceptions.

Board comments and questions took place. A suggestion was made to change the word isolated to chaperoned. This policy will be on the January 25 Board of Ed agenda for approval.

Policy #5330 – Bullying

Dr. Title stated that this policy revision is based on changes in the state law and to strengthen the definition of bullying. This has been reviewed by CAFE and the Policy Committee.

Mrs. Brand stated that this was reviewed by the Policy Committee, and there was also a member of the community at the meeting who had some questions as to whether or not this was as comprehensive as it should be. The Committee wanted to bring this revision forward because it is much more explicit than it has been, and it can be amended further at a future date. Mr. Fattibene commented that it is his understanding this language updates the policy to conform to the current statute. The thought was to move this forward to comply with state statute and if we want to look at it later the Policy Committee can do that.

F. Report of Textbook-

Dr. Rosato presented one textbook entitled Trigonometry. It is designed for kids who want to take a fourth year of mathematics but are not on the track to take pre-calculus or calculus. This course currently does not have a text. The curriculum has been reworked and the teachers have been using a variety of other materials that they have created over time.

G. Preliminary Operational Audit Discussion-

Dr. Title stated that on December 14 everyone received the audit report for the first time. At that time he told the Board that he would read the document, analyze it and get back to Board in time for the first March meeting at which time he would have a recommendation on each of the recommendations in the audit. He stated that he needs to determine if what is in the report is accurate and if the recommendations that involve savings are accurate. The report may identify areas of savings, but upon further review we may find that those savings are not nearly what they portray them to be. It could be that the suggestions are accurate, may yield results but are not viable. Finally, is it educationally wise to do these things, would the savings incurred cause damage to the school system? Some of the ideas in the audit are not new. We have identified some areas from the audit that do not have a major impact on the instructional program but are good practices that can be put in place. In the budget document there will be a crosswalk of these 6-7 areas identified by the audit and what actions we are taking that are consistent with recommendations from the audit to address an issue that will result in savings or some other change. We are thoroughly examining this document, if we can put a recommendation into play, we will but will need to take our time on it. It was never the expectation that every recommendation be done immediately; they need to be phased in.

Board questions and comments followed.

11. Public Comments and Petitions-

Laura Amicucci, Sturges Road, thanked the Board for their ongoing support of the music program and those on the Board who were able to attend the Candlelight Concert and the Carillon Concert this year.

Akshay Gupta, 166 Bailey Road, commented on his experience with the pilot program that has been put in place for the gifted program. He commended the team that put this together, it is definitely an improvement. While he commends what is being done there are still improvements that could be made.

12. Open Board Comment-

Mrs. Iacono stated that she attended the FLHS Candlelight Concert and it was amazing. She encouraged anyone who has not gone to go to a concert.

Mrs. Brand thanked Barbara Pollock and the Fairfield Arts Council for the art that has been put up in the Board Room. These posters represent student work across the district. Mrs. Brand stated that she has been pursuing getting student work in the Board Room for the past year.

13. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:51 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.