

JUN 14 2011

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, May 24, 2011

APPROVED

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, May 24, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East-2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education 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, Ms. Stacey Zahn and Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:45 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 150 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

2. Mr. Mitola led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-
 - ◆ Mrs. Albin – No report.
 - ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that Six to Six held its last meeting of the year on Thursday. They are finding that every time the kids leave in the spring and come back in the fall they lose ground and are starting from scratch every year. They are doing their best to address this with programs during the summer, but it is still a challenge. CES meets next week, and the Board of Health meets on June 13. There is a new member on the Board of Health, Ms. Carolyn Shea.
 - ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that the Finance subcommittee met twice to discuss the budget prior the Board's budget meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for June 6. SEPTA gave a grant to CASEY's Place, which is a place for young adults 18 and older who have special needs to meet on Friday nights to socialize. A group of these young adults and their supervisors came to the SEPTA meeting to say thank you. A Friend of SEPTA award was given to Donna Spigarolo, special ed teacher at Roger Ludlowe Middle School. The evening ended with a presentation from representatives from the Fairfield Police Department who have started a crisis intervention team so that when there is a problem and they meet with someone who has special needs they will be aware and take a different approach. On May 27th SEPTA will be feeding Operation Hope, and tonight they held a fundraiser at Friendly's where they are getting 15% back, thanks to the Riverfield PTA who set this up. The next meeting will be June 8th.
 - ◆ Mr. Fattibene – No report.
 - ◆ Mr. Kery – No report.
 - ◆ Mr. Liu announced that Sue Brand has been awarded the Fairfield PTA Council 2011 Deanna O. Kiernan Award. The award will be presented on June 1st at Fairfield Warde High School at 7 p.m. in the Library.
 - ◆ Mr. Mitola – No report.
 - ◆ Ms. Zahn reported that the High School Scholarship Foundation wasn't able to do a spring fundraiser this year so they will have their fall fundraiser, An Evening to Honor Excellence, on November 6th and everyone will be getting invitations.

4. Superintendent's Report-

Dr. Title reported on the RTM meeting last night. The RTM took up two items, the Holland Hill oil tank and the Tomlinson façade work. The Tomlinson façade work was postponed to a date certain of June 27. The Holland Hill oil tank was discussed at length, focusing on whether the replacement tank should be underground, above ground, in the school, or not in the school and what size. An agreement was reached that the money would be appropriated, we would bid alternate prices for the different options and we would agree that the Board of Selectmen would pick which of the replacement options they thought was in the best interest of the Town and we would abide by that.

Dr. Title reported that the Strategic School Profiles were just received. Normally the Board receives these in November, but there was a mix up at the State this year with their data systems and they have

just been released. The rule is that they have to be distributed to the Board at the first meeting after they are received. It is now old data so to have a presentation would be moot, the data is for 2009-10.

5. Old Business

- A. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve the budget adjustments for 2011-12.

Mr. Mitola stated that Dr. Title presented his original recommended budget adjustments at the May 16 Board meeting. He was asked to come back with some alternatives for pay to participate. The Board received that information on Friday, and it was posted online Friday afternoon.

Mr. Kery offered a friendly amendment, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve budget adjustments for 2011-12 as listed in the document revised 5-24-2011.

Dr. Title gave a brief overview of the recommended adjustments that he came up with as alternatives to pay to participate in sports: the preschool tuition will raise \$20,000 in revenue which will offset the preschool costs, a reduction of \$20,000 in maintenance support services, less new software will be purchased for a reduction of \$30,000, the implementation of a parking fee at the high school for \$40,000, two additional teacher retirements for \$70,000, and \$35,000 per high school was identified that could be absorbed with a slight impact at the sub-varsity level. No sports would be eliminated but a two sub-varsity games, one home and one away, would be eliminated. The purchase of some new uniforms and equipment would be postponed. All of this totals \$250,000. He recommended these options as alternatives to pay to participate. This document dated 5-24-2011 removes pay to participate that was on the 5-12-2011 document. These new adjustments are all listed on page 3 of the revised document. Everything else is the same as originally proposed and the subtotal is the same.

Board questions and comments followed regarding eliminating two sub-varsity games, the parking fee at the high school, clarification of the preschool tuition revenue, the identification of the new software will not be purchased, the number of students who take advantage of the late bus and if it would be possible to blend the times so the middle schools and high school could use the same late bus.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to amend the motion and propose the following cuts which are on the document distributed to the Board. Budget book pages 46-49 extra clerical totaling \$3,718, pages 46-49 lunch aides totaling \$31,450, pages 49-50 middle school liaisons totaling \$132,373, possible maintenance cuts totaling \$197,500, page 67 reduce BOE services to \$0 for a savings of \$2,250, and page 68 the IIT at Dwight for \$41,597 for a grand total of \$408,888.

Mrs. Brand stated that if this is successful, it will replace the proposed World Language cuts; grades 4 & 5 for \$279,461 and grade 6 for \$94,227. Mrs. Brand stated that this is an attempt, if possible, to maintain World Language. This is a blend of what was said at the table during the previous budget meetings. Mrs. Brand reviewed the document and explained her reasoning for each item.

Board questions and comments followed regarding the reductions in extra clerical support, lunch aides, middle school liaisons, the IIT at Dwight, and the proposed maintenance cuts.

Public Comment-

Bill Dunn, Tuckahoe Lane, expressed concern with the loss of lunch aides and that not having extra supervision in the lunch room might be very dangerous for students with allergies.

Vote on Amendment failed: 3:6:0. Mrs. Brand, Mr. Liu and Mrs. Dow voted in favor.

Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand to amend the motion and cut \$342,000 that is being allocated for grandfathering and use that toward World Language.

Mr. Liu stated that when the Board voted for grandfathering there really wasn't an alternative. Now we are facing a \$2.8 million cut and programs being reduced. It is time to reevaluate. That money would be far better used toward program and will have a direct impact to getting our kids a better education.

Board discussion followed.

Vote on amendment failed: 3:6:0. Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand and Mrs. Dow voted in favor.

Back to the Main Motion.

Board members shared their thoughts on the budget process this year, how deep the cuts were and the possibility of starting the process earlier next year since there might be the possibility that further budget implications will arise and we may need to start considering some other way in which to reduce the overall cost of wages and benefits and the possibility of trying to reach some agreements in those areas so we don't have to face this again next year and discuss things worse than reducing services in the World Language program. We have to maintain the school system and we can't do it on air alone.

Mrs. Brand commented on possible funding from the State and asked if the referendum is successful in restoring the \$800,000 that World Language be reinstated as a top priority.

Dr. Title stated that World Language would be his first priority in terms of any restoration were the referendum to be successful.

Public Comment-

Mike Farlow, Howard Street, urged the Board to vote for this as written.

Anne Pasco, representing the FEA, stated that she is disturbed that in all probably a year from now we will be sitting in the same room faced by the same kind of environment. She is not very optimistic that what is being cut this year, the clerical staff from the writing labs, Spanish, etc. will be restored because you are going to be looking for money to fund what you are maintaining and moving forward.

John Convertito, Oyster Road, stated that he doesn't have any answer as to where to cut or not to cut because you shouldn't have to cut to this severity. His hope is that the newly formed political action committee FACES, Fairfield Against Cutting Educational Spending, will help boost you along this road.

Vote on Main Motion carried: 7:2:0. Ms. Zahn and Mr. Liu voted in opposition.

- B. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve Policy #5518 – Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Response

Public Comment-

Nancy Von Euler, Daves Lane, thanked the Board for their support of this policy. She also thanked Ms. Leonardi for some really amazing work on this. She reminded the Board that policy and regulations are just a first step, and this issue will continue to require your attention and your commitment in order to make the difference that it can.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- C. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve Policy #6200 – Curriculum

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- D. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve Policy #6221 – Family Life and Sex Education

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- E. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve Policy #6132 – Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- F. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve Policy #6513 – Home Schooling

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

6. Public Comments and Petitions – None

7. Open Board Comment -

Mrs. Iacono reported that the Special Projects Standing Building Committee met last night, and the Sherman project is not on track. The project needs to go before the Town Planning and Zoning Commission and the Conservation Commission and those meetings will not take place until the end of July/early August. Since the project can't get started until sometime in August, it won't be finished at the commencement of the upcoming school year. The Committee discussed the possibility of getting the kitchen work done for August/September. They also discussed doing the work on the administrative wing, but there is no swing space. With regards to the HVAC system, roofing work can't be done while kids are in the building and the other issue with the HVAC is that there is a 6-10 week lead time on ordering the equipment. Mrs. Iacono stated that she sent an email this morning to the Chairman of the Committee and copied the Acting First Selectman, Sherri Steeneck, and Board of Selectmen member Jim Walsh to ask if there was any way to fast track this with the other Town commissions. There is a possibility that nothing will happen until next summer.

Mrs. Brand commented that there is a Tools for Schools program and she is hoping that we are staying on top of that. She also commented that a referendum is coming up and she knows that Dr. Title sent an email out and everyone appreciates where the lines are. Sometimes those lines can get crossed, and she thinks there was some crossing recently and she just wants to be sure that they are maintained and we are professional in how we handle ourselves.

8. Mrs. Iacono moved; seconded by Mrs. Dow that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary