

**APPROVED**

ENCLOSURE NO. 1

OCT 11 2011

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, September 13, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Tim Kery, Ms. Stacey Zahn, Ms. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:39 p.m.), and Mrs. Catherine Albin (arrived 7:53 p.m.). Mr. Perry Liu was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Warde High School Student Representative Stephanie Teixeira and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 35 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Mr. Mitola led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 23, 2011.

Motion carried: 5:0:1. Ms. Zahn abstained.

4. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-

- ◆ Stephanie Teixeira reported that 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Fairfield Warde High School started school with an orientation followed by a cookout. Fall sports have started. Cross country had their first meet today, field hockey and soccer will have their first games tomorrow, and football will have their first game on Friday. A group of girls from the fashion program went to California over the summer to compete in Nationals for FCCLA and all of the girls left with either a silver or gold award. On Friday there was a great assembly for 9/11.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that CES met last Thursday. They had three construction projects that were all under budget. They are working on their Long-Range Capital Plan. There was discussion about the new State Curriculum Standards that are to be implemented by 2014. On October 19 CES is offering all districts help with their long-term technology plan, which has to be finished by 2012. Adequate Yearly Progress results have not yet been released from the State. The Board of Health met last night and reviewed the outcome from the management of the storm and the shelter at Ludlowe, which ran extremely well. Many people received phone calls and updates on Saturday. The issue is that people rely on their cell phones and if they don't have their land line or a transistor radio, communication is becoming more of a challenge. Nursing policies have had some changes, but they do not impact Board of Ed policies. The policy subcommittee met and discussed the Bullying Policy, which is on tonight's agenda for a first read. The committee also discussed school climate, which will be incorporated as part of the Bullying Policy. A committee will be looking into this, and it will be due in December. Mrs. Brand suggested inviting local religious leaders to help provide feedback and participate in that committee. Mrs. Brand stated that Board members received a copy of the Cycle of Curriculum in their packet, and after attending the CES meeting her concern is what impact the State changes will have on our curriculum cycle.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow – No report.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene reported that there has been a flurry of referrals to the Transportation Safety Committee. The committee has resolved or at least made recommendations in most all of the cases. He does not know of any pending issues that have not been decided yet.
- ◆ Ms. Iacono reported that the Special Projects Standing Building Committee continues to be focused on the Sherman project. The committee went before the Board of Selectmen and received full funding for an appropriation of \$3.9 million and that included ventilation for the gymnasium and the APR and an energy recovery system. The committee then went before the Board of Finance and the request was reduced to \$3 million. The request now goes to the RTM on September 26, with committee meetings on September 19 and 21. Ms. Iacono stated that it was made very clear and went on record that the Board of Education took a sense of the body that

it was the Board of Ed's intention to see the project through to completion, meaning that we would be back to ask for ventilation in the gymnasium and the APR. Hopefully, the RTM will grant the additional \$800,000 so that Sherman can get the classrooms, the second serving line and the ventilation. Mr. Kery asked if it would be possible to invite the RTM to hold their September 26 meeting in the Sherman gymnasium. Board discussion followed on this suggestion. Ms. Iacono will extend an invitation to the RTM Moderator to host the September 26 meeting at Sherman, and if it is not possible, she will let him know that we are happy to accommodate anyone who would like to visit Sherman.

- ◆ Mr. Kery reported that PTA Council held their Leadership Kickoff meeting last night. Mr. Mitola, Ms. Iacono and Dr. Title spoke at the kickoff.
- ◆ In Mr. Liu's absence Dr. Title stated that Fairfield Woods Middle School is open and turned out fantastic. It was a total team effort to make that happen and is something to be proud of.
- ◆ Mr. Mitola reported that Stratfield School is essentially done. There are some punch list items left to do.
- ◆ Ms. Zahn – No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Albin reported that she just returned from the CABA Board of Directors meeting where Acting Commissioner of Education, George Coleman, who is retiring was honored. Dr. Coleman spoke about what will be going on in education in Connecticut during the next year. One of the key areas is working to close the achievement gap; schools need to start meeting the needs of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The new Commissioner, Stefan Pryor, was introduced. He briefly reviewed his background and noted that one of the key things this year will be Race to the Top-3, and they intend on winning.

#### 5. Superintendent's Report-

Dr. Title stated that Race to the Top-3 is the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. Dr. Title was recently elevated from committee member to Chair of the Governor's Early Childhood Cabinet. It is that cabinet that will be driving this and will end up overseeing the money if the State were to get it. He believes it will be broad enough so that Fairfield will be able to participate. It is not just about urban race to the top; it is for everybody.

#### A. Opening of School Update-

Schools have opened. Dr. stated that this was certainly the most unusual opening of school. The damage to Fairfield was extensive, ripping out large portions of the electrical grid. Sal Morabito tracked down a generator in New Jersey and had it brought to Mill Hill and hooked up in time for staff to get into school at noon on Friday to set up their classrooms before Tuesday's opening. Everyone really came through and worked together. Only two student days were lost. Basically, that counts as two snow days. There are four snow days built into the calendar before we go into April vacation, and we have now used two.

Enrollment – Dr. Title stated that enrollment moves around between the first day count and the official count on October 1. At this point there are 57 more children than projected. The biggest difference is the kindergarten numbers. There are 800 kindergarten students and 760 were projected. There are 21 more kids in K-5 than projected, 6 more in middle school than projected and 30 more at the high school.

Certified staff – Sixteen certified positions were eliminated in the budget, but because of a greater number of retirements and other reasons, no certified staff were laid off. There were 25 retirements last year.

Non-certified staff – Fourteen paraprofessional positions were eliminated throughout the district. This group traditionally has a significant amount of turnover, and they were all absorbed with non paraprofessionals being laid off.

Secretaries – Three positions were eliminated, and two people were laid off.

Media technicians – Five positions were eliminated and four of those people lost their jobs.

The high school parking fee will go into effect, after school hours at the high school libraries are being cut back, high school secretaries are rotating into positions, the world language reduction went into effect, and lunch prices were increased. Basically, we did what we said we would when the budget was cut.

The biggest traffic issue has been at Tomlinson, which has always been a problem. Town Engineer Bill Hurley has designed a fix that would involve some renovation/repair work to the lower parking lot and would remove the car traffic entirely from the bus area. Cost is one issue but the bigger issue is that it will need a significant number of approvals from Town bodies. An extra loop was created at the top of Tomlinson by removing some parking spaces so the extra buses can flow through. We are still looking for a more permanent fix.

Mrs. Albin asked if it would help if the Superintendent and the Chairman of the Board sent a letter to Tomlinson parents explaining the traffic issue and asking them to use the buses. Dr. Title stated that a similar letter went home from the Principal and it did help. This is a work in progress, and is being worked on.

Last year we ran 95 public school buses and estimated needing 91 this year. We are running 91 buses this year, right on the number. There are 13 more runs with 4 fewer buses because more of the buses are doing 3 loops/tiers.

Dr. Title highlighted a number of initiatives that will take place this year. The Technology Plan will be updated, the entire Help Desk is being changed and we are looking to put out an RFP for a student information system, which was in the audit and is badly needed. The Facilities Plan will continue to be implemented as designed. Many initiatives from last year will be implemented: the new elementary staffing model, the new gifted education model for grades K-8; the new preschool model at Warde and Burr, new high school common assessments, new high school grading guidelines, new high school academic expectations, the PK-12 Scientifically Research Based Intervention (SRBI) process and the new PK-12 Curriculum Coordinating Council. A lot of work is taking place with the administrators putting together a common format for school improvement plans and data teams by school, by level, by grade and by department visiting each other's schools and looking at what is going on in the classroom as a vehicle for change. A lot of professional development is going on with the administrative team. The elementary report card is on the docket for revision this year as well as curriculum approval for elementary art, elementary music, grades 3-5 math, grades PK-5 language arts and grades 7-12 technology education. Initiatives continue with healthy food and wellness, contract negotiations with six bargaining units, and continuing to look at the operational audit for any recommendations that can be put into place. A lot of moving the district forward.

#### B. Capital Projects Update–

Dr. Title reviewed the town capital improvement projects and pending facilities projects. In the budget process the Board approved a number of capital improvement projects, and this is a recap of what got funded and where things stand. Taking out the switch project, which was added in later, the Board requested about \$1.7 million in capital projects and received funding for about \$400,000. Holland Hill oil tank is being done, Jennings bathrooms received half funding, and the Early Childhood Center playgrounds are being worked on. Dr. Title reviewed pending facilities projects. The major roof repair project was approved by the Board in March and is up for Board of Finance review on October 4. The Ludlowe HS window replacement project is at the TFC waiting for a cost estimate from the study that was done. The Warde HS roof replacement was approved last June, and the Board of Selectmen sent it to the TFC on November 17. The TFC hired an architect on March 24, the report was received and we are still waiting. Sherman is in good shape. McKinley roof repair was approved on January 12. In April the RTM approved \$30,000 to have a study done, two months later the TFC hired Hoffman, the report was received and we are still waiting. He pointed out that the report from Hoffman said the same thing our

consultant said was the problem. This project needs to get out of the TFC so we can move on with a funding request. Riverfield has just been launched, and the Tomlinson façade work went through several rounds and was voted down. That is a recap of where the projects stand.

Dr. Title reminded Board members that the Board of Finance will hold a Planning Summit next Tuesday.

Board comments and questions followed regarding discussing the process and a different approach to the process for projects at the Planning Summit next Tuesday. A suggestion was made that the Superintendent meet with the First Selectman and ask him what he can do to get these projects out of committee; they deserve an up or down vote so we can move on.

## 6. Old Business-

- A. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board of Education approve the Understanding on Health Insurance.

Dr. Title stated that this was discussed extensively at the last Board meeting, and he provided a brief recap. Last year during the budget process the consternation was how we were budgeting for health insurance, the Memo of Understanding that was signed by Ann Clark and Ken Flatto, funding of the reserve fund, etc. Dr. Title pledged to work with the Town to come up with something that everybody could agree on so that during the next budget process the parameters are clear, it is fiscally responsible for everybody involved and replaces the prior memorandum. At the last meeting Board members received a draft Memo of Understanding, suggestions were made, and Dr. Title revised the memo and reviewed it with Don Houston who also made some suggestions to protect the Board's interest with respect to not waiving any rights about line item budgeting. Enclosure No. 3 is the newly revised Understanding on Health Insurance.

Approximately one hour of Board questions, comments and discussion followed regarding the need to rescind the old agreement, the need to have a Memo of Understanding, the Board of Education carrying all of the risk and assuming the financial burden for the Town, whether this is going to be a joint account or a separate independent account, one sentence indicates keeping twice the IBNR balance in the account and another sentence says in 2014-2015 the Town and the Board mutually acknowledge the goal of each funding 125 percent of the balance, what will happen if there is a year where we have a lot of claims to pay out and we have agreed to fund this, how the agreement will be interpreted in the future when it is read by someone other than the people who made the agreement, does this document accurately reflect what everyone's understanding is, and the written agreement needs to be clear and concise. A number of Board members expressed concern with voting on this document this evening,

Mr. Fattibene stated that there are a few things in the document that are ambiguous and conflicting, and he would like to see a tighter document that is a little clearer. Other Board members shared similar concerns.

Dr. Title stated that twice the IBNR is 200 percent, therefore, at this moment in time we are agreeing to fund at twice the IBNR (200%), knowing that the Town is not there and that over time the goal is for us to reduce to 125 percent of the IBNR and the Town would get up to 125 percent IBNR.

Mr. Mitola offered a friendly amendment to put 200% in parenthesis wherever it says twice the IBNR so that it is clear.

Board comments and suggestions continued.

Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Ms. Iacono to amend the motion and the Board instruct the Chairman and the Superintendent to work with our General Counsel to develop a letter of understanding on health insurance to be voted on at the next regular meeting.

Board discussion followed on the amendment.

Dr. Title asked for clear direction about what the Board wants changed.

Mrs. Albin withdrew the amendment. Ms. Iacono, as the seconder, was agreeable.

Board discussion followed on the agreement.

Mr. Mitola and Mr. Fattibene will do a conference call with Attorney Houston to tighten up the language and bring something back to the Board for a vote at the next meeting.

Mr. Kery withdrew the main motion.

Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that this be tabled to the next meeting.

Motion carried: 7:0:1. Mrs. Brand abstained.

## 7. New Business-

### A. First Read of Policy #5330, Bullying

Mrs. Brand stated that the subcommittee reviewed this policy, and it is being moved forward for a first read. The sequel to this will be the school climate piece which will be done by December and presented to the Board at that time.

Ms. Zahn stated that when this policy comes back for approval, she will not be voting in favor of it. There is nothing in this document that is unique to Fairfield other than what the State mandates of us for bullying.

Dr. Title stated that this is CAGE's recommended policy.

Ms. Leonardi stated that the long standing policy has only been about response to bullying once it has occurred or the accusation of bullying has been made. This changes the conversation from what do we do when bullying occurs to what do we do to prevent our schools from having a climate that supports bullying. It is going to change the conversation from is it bullying or isn't it bullying to our school climate will no longer support bullying from taking place at all. It is going to change from response only to prevention, intervention and response.

Board comments followed.

Mr. Fattibene commented that one of the most beneficial things we can teach a student is the ability to cope with the bullying situation should it occur elsewhere and to instill in them the ability to deal with it and carry on with their lives. In his view to be fully successful as a district one would be able to graduate their students with not just protecting them while they are in the school, but to give them tools to protect themselves outside of school. He would like to see that as a component somewhere in the policy.

Ms. Leonardi stated that the section Mr. Fattibene speaks about will be spelled out as part of the intervention, which will speak to not just protecting students but building resiliency among our student body so that we can address any issues where students may feel victimized and how to seek and get support appropriately.

8. Public Comments and Petitions –

Kelly Crisp, Harbor Road, commented on the bullying policy and stated that the examples of bullying don't include anything that speaks to sexual harassment, and she asked that it be added or at least taken up. Sexual harassment has to be included otherwise you have girls whose reputations are damaged as a result of rumors that are spread. She also commented on the term "put downs" and stated that disparaging comments or remarks would be better language.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, commented on the redistricting plan that put 20 buses in the loop at Roger Ludlowe Middle School and the times students are arriving home. Because only ten buses can fit in the line, if your bus is not one of the first in line at 2:50, you are waiting until the first ten take off and are boarding a bus at 3:10. The bus her son is on is looping towards the McKinley side of town and getting him home at 3:30. She also commented that she attended Open House at the middle school to find out that in the tech ed class the students can't learn to build anything with wood because there is no budget for wood this year at the middle school. These kids need the academics and the practical learning experience.

9. Open Board Comment –

Mr. Fattibene commented on an article that appeared in the New York Times two weeks ago about technology and how technology improves or doesn't improve education. He encouraged Board members to seek that article out. It was an analysis of a district that had very good funding for technology and whether it did or did not actually increase student achievement.

Mrs. Brand presented two articles from the New York Times to be scanned and sent to Board members in their Friday packet; one on the trouble with homework and one on bullying.

10. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education convene to Executive Session at 9:43 p.m. to discuss Superintendent Evaluation.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

11. Ms. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board reconvene to Public Session at 10:08 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

12. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Ms. Iacono that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 10:09 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

Stacey Zahn  
Secretary