

Board of Education, Fairfield Public Schools
501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room, Fairfield, CT
Tuesday, August 27, 2013
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES 7:30 P.M.

Voting Summary:

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 Jennifer Kennelly, John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono, Paul Fattibene and Sue Brand. Tim Kery was not in attendance. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, and approximately 20 members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 25, 2013.

Mrs. Brand moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 25, 2013." Motion passed 8-0.

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 16, 2013.

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 16, 2013." Motion passed 8-0.

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 24, 2013.

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 24, 2013." Motion passed 8-0.

Old Business

Second Reading of the Communications Committee Report

Mrs. Kennelly moved/Ms. Iacono seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education accept the Communications Committee Report"

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded to call the question. Motion failed 4-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand against).

The original motion failed 4-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand against).

New Business

Salary and Benefit Adjustment for Food Service Workers

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded the recommended motion, "that the Board of Education approve a salary and benefit adjustment for Food Service Workers for the 2013-2014 school year as listed in Enclosure No. 7". Motion passed, 6-1 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono in favor; Mr. Fattibene against. *Mrs. Brand was not in the room at this time.*)

New Items added to agenda

Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Brand seconded a motion to add an item to the agenda. Motion passed 7-1 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Fattibene against.)

Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Brand seconded “to subcontract the FPS Food Services Program to include employees, managers and staffing needs and to authorize the Administration to send out an RFP.”

Motion passed 6-2 (Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Fattibene against.)

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded to add an item to the agenda. Motion passed. 8-0.

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded “that the Board work to hire a PR intern. A college student – the Chair will consult with local universities to implement in the Fall – but the committee recommends to have one intern from Sacred Heart for one semester and one from Fairfield U for the other semester. The Chair will work with the Superintendent to determine the appropriate staff person to supervise the intern – this person will also work with the Board Secretary.”

Mr. Liu made a friendly amendment (accepted by Ms. Iacono) to specify that the intern will be unpaid, so the final motion reads as follows:

“that the Board work to hire an unpaid PR intern. A college student --the Chair will consult with local universities to implement in the Fall – but the committee recommends to have one intern from Sacred Heart for one semester and one from Fairfield U for the other semester. The Chair will work with the Superintendent to determine the appropriate staff person to supervise the intern – this person will also work with the Board Secretary.”

Motion passed, 8-0.

Adjournment

Mr. Convertito moved/Mr. Liu seconded the recommended motion “that this regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 8-0. Meeting adjourned 10:27PM.

Detailed Minutes

Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call

Chairman Philip Dwyer led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and called the Regular meeting to order at 7:45PM. Present were members Jennifer Kennelly, John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono, Paul Fattibene and Sue Brand. Tim Kery was not in attendance. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, and approximately 20 members of the public.

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Board Committee/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Kennelly reported that the Policy Committee is currently reviewing the Board Goals Report and the review will continue at the Policy Committee meeting on September 3rd.

Superintendent’s Report

Fairfield Public Schools District-Wide Improvement Initiatives

Dr. Title reviewed the District-wide Improvement Initiatives List; the Board has reviewed some items in the past; implementation is sometimes more difficult than the design. The new teacher and administrator evaluation plans are the biggest initiatives under ‘Program Implementation’. ‘Continuous Improvement’ initiatives are often multi-year efforts; a new effort will be the district-wide data team which is important to have for the new teacher and administrator evaluation plan; and student progress needs to be shown on common performance assessments. Under ‘Curriculum and Program Development’, curriculum will be on the agenda from January through May; the Alternative High School program is under review; the high school and middle school schedules are under review; and Andrea Leonardi is researching an in-house therapeutic day program to educate more students here instead of outplacements. Under ‘Staffing’, there are 5 contracts that are out this year; Ann Leffert is spearheading an effort to improve the quantity and quality of substitute staffing. Under ‘Technology’, Infinite Campus should be fully implemented by year-end; currently implementing efficiency tools such as a new reservation and work order system; and some technology initiatives are carry-overs from last year. Under ‘Finance and Operations’, a new transportation contract will be implemented including challenges such as new buses that don’t fit under bridges; the new Uniform Chart of Accounts is a state law that we are transitioning to; we need to fully fund all these mandates; we can’t control the approval process but we do need to communicate all of these to the Board. Under ‘Facilities’, we are working with our vendor on new enrollment projections, and also working to revise the Long-Range Facilities Plan.

Mrs. Brand requested that this be incorporated into a strategic plan with a timeline, cost estimates, and updates to the Board.

Mr. Liu requested to see the work done on Program Implementation #2 PK-2 Curriculum, the names of the people who worked on it, and cost of development; and also stated that aside from the state mandates, he would like to have input on any new items prior to them being embedded in the budget.

In response to Ms. Iacono, Dr. Title stated that the middle school schedule is being reviewed for the 6th grade team structure among other things, but there is no particular agenda; with new staff and curriculum there are new expectations; it may be that no changes will be made.

Mr. Convertito asked for insight into Full-Day Kindergarten; Dr. Title responded that a modified day has been granted to those who requested it. Mr. Convertito requested that the high school schedule be done sooner rather than later.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the high school schedule change would impact the 15-16 year budget; Dr. Title responded that it may in fact save money over time, and that Improvement Initiative #27 is for existing programs.

Mrs. Brand requested an update on full-day KDG, busing issues, and costs at the first meeting in October; Dr. Title responded that he will provide updates via the Superintendent’s Report.

Mr. Fattibene requested a quarterly update rather than ad-hoc updates to have information prior to any recommendations.

Mrs. Kennelly requested the administration provide measures of success or progress. In response to Mrs. Kennelly, Dr. Title stated the Alternative High School program review is open ended; there are point people in each school and central office for Improvement Initiative #20, with implementation ongoing; the district strategic plan has expired; and strategies will be developed based on the finalized Goals/Mission/Objectives.

Mrs. Gerber requested more information on the Woodard and Curran report; Dr. Title stated that a follow-up report will be presented at a future September or October Board meeting

Ms. Iacono stated that the Board should keep appropriate administration staffing in mind when voting on the budget; maybe add the department responsible to aid the public in understanding responsibilities.

Mr. Dwyer asked when the Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans will be reviewed; Dr. Title responded that he will address that under Legislative Summary. Mr. Dwyer asked if there are any other items which may require Board approval; Dr. Title responded that the high school schedule will most likely go before the Board, and that the therapeutic day program might be presented in the 15-16 budget.

Dr. Title stated that if the high school schedule has any budget implications, the Board will be informed of it; and the high-school roll-out will occur simultaneously at Fairfield Warde and Fairfield Ludlowe High Schools; the Alternative High School has a different program.

Education Legislation Summary

Dr. Title reviewed the Education Legislation Summary and commented as follows: the Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans presupposed the CMTs would still exist as assessments; the Commissioner has appealed to the federal government to offer districts a choice on whether CMT and CAPT will be administered or go to the new Smarter Balance assessments. Dr. Title stated that no guidance has been offered on this choice, but Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Plans may be impacted and/or reconfigured if the Smarter Balanced assessments are chosen; in reviewing the 3rd page on gun violence, the schools need to establish school security and safety plans and school security and safety committees; a security grant request has been filed; the state is requiring a uniform school calendar for the 15-16 school year; Page 5 states that aggregate expenditures are to be posted for each school, but it is unclear on how to comply with this; on page 6, beginning this year, the Board of Finance is required to make recommendations to the BOE on consolidation of services; the BOE must provide a written explanation if it rejects the recommendations; and the BOE is required to notify the RTM of budget transfers; policy changes will be required for page 7 regarding childhood obesity; the act requires that the BOE adopt a policy that disallows withholding physical education as a punitive measure; and there is a requirement to have a lifeguard/swimming coach to monitor the swimmers.

In response to Ms. Iacono, Dr. Title responded that recess is included in the physical education for the childhood obesity policy. Mrs. Iacono asked who was on the 19 member task force for the uniform calendar; Dr. Title stated it is a state level task force with 6 regions; Ms. Iacono confirmed that anyone in our RESC will follow the uniform calendar; Dr. Title stated that the idea behind this is to provide transportation savings. Ms. Iacono requested confirmation on the Board of Finance providing recommendations to the BOE; Dr. Title responded that the process in the statute is unclear; appropriations may also be done by the RTM and clarity is required on this, but it is clear that recommendations are to be issued from Town to BOE during budget review.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that the Board should be proactive and request BOF recommendations in October.

Mrs. Brand requested that this document go to the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance and the RTM to move this along. Dr. Title clarified for Mrs. Brand, that an amendment was created so that the Smarter Balance test could be given in grade 11. Dr. Title also clarified that the minimum budget requirement states that the same amount of money as the previous year must be appropriated for a new budget year unless enrollment goes down.

Mrs. Kennelly asked if the state required Kindergarten assessment tool may lead to a Kindergarten preparation requirement; Dr. Title said it did not.

In response to Mr. Convertito, Dr. Title stated that under the statute, it is allowable to graduate students in 11th or 12th grade by administering an exam; the Board decides graduation requirements. Dr. Title stated that the Police Dept. will have new training requirements for the School Resource Officers which will not impact the BOE budget.

Mr. Dwyer stated that he would like school security and bullying issues to receive equal treatment.

Ms. Iacono asked if it new legislation could have a dollar amount attached to it, so that state legislature is made aware of what its votes cost the district.

Old Business

Continued Discussion on Planning for the 2014-2015 Budget Review Process

Mr. Dwyer addressed enclosure #6 and requested feedback from Dr. Title. Dr. Title provided the following comments on the list: a multi-year budget can be done but it will not be reliable as seen with health insurance, however, assumptions can be provided; a hard or soft budget target is within the Board's purview; the budget cannot be provided to the Board any earlier but it could be spread out and would require moving the 2nd regular budget review meeting to a Thursday; a Powerpoint with metrics could be provided as is currently done for the RTM; the

administration would need Board input by the October meeting for any format changes; overall Board input is considered differently than individual member input; it is the Board's call on whether to review the budget by line item; the administration would like to get AON to present in December, the same as last year; the administration asks for enough time to answer any questions the Board may have; a budget adjustment discussion working session can be arranged if needed; the budget transfer information that is provided is based on Board policy; actual budget numbers from the prior year are already provided in the budget book; costs of mandates could be provided; and the administration is also looking for suggestions regarding what the Board would like to subtract from the budget book.

Mrs. Brand stated it would be helpful if percentages were up front in the Executive Summary.

Ms. Iacono stated an index in the back with FAQs would be helpful.

Mr. Convertito requested a coding system showing what the obligated contractual costs are.

Mrs. Kennelly is interested in pursuing 5, 8, 12 and a new 13 to invite Board of Finance input by October.

Mrs. Brand stated that she is hoping the Goals review is ready by October to help with priorities.

Mr. Dwyer requested a read from the Board on the list:

- Item 1: Not to be done this year
- Item 2: A meeting to discuss could be scheduled in October
- Item 3: The current budget calendar will be used
- Item 4: Dr. Title will highlight more of the metrics in the budget presentation
- Item 5 and 6: Planning time can be scheduled for the October meeting, and individual members may always share information off-line.
- Item 7: Interested in Board feedback on this item to plan accordingly
- Item 8 can be scheduled if needed
- Items 9 and 10 are being done by policy; format suggestions can be done throughout the year
- Item 11 is moot based on the state's timetable
- Item 12: Start with cost of mandates and new initiatives
- Item 13: Invite Board of Finance input by October. Chairman Dwyer stated that item 13 will be added, given the general consensus of the Board.

Mr. Convertito would like a section to include upcoming mandates.

Mrs. Brand stated that it would be helpful to get a presentation with the budget book delivery and a line by line review is very important.

Chairman Dwyer polled the Board and all Board members agreed that the discussion on the Board goal for budget input has been accomplished. Mr. Dwyer stated that it will be an ongoing goal that will be further refined.

Second Reading of the Communications Committee Report

Mrs. Kennelly moved/Ms. Iacono seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education accept the Communications Committee Report"

Mrs. Gerber stated that there were minor changes to the report regarding timing; no negative feedback was received and suggestions are welcomed.

Mr. Fattibene requested clarification on the meaning of the work "accept" in the motion. Mr. Dwyer stated that according to Roberts Rules, accepting the motion endorses the statement and makes the assembly responsible for it. Mr. Fattibene stated that only items 10-13 have recommendations, and will interpret the motion to read that the recommendations will become an act of the Board. Mr. Dwyer stated that if the Board wanted to separate items 10-13 it could do so, and that some items on the list have already been implemented. Mrs. Gerber stated that the wording in items 10-13 reflected future action after the handbook and by-laws were reviewed/revised; other items on the list reflected Board agreement on current actions, such as student recognition at Board meetings. Mrs. Kennelly requested clarification on whether report acceptance translated to the Board doing items 1-9. Mrs. Brand stated that accept, approve, and adopt are all the same; everything in that document becomes a mandate. Mr. Dwyer stated that Roberts Rules allows for report acceptance, which is different from adoption; and stated that his ruling would endorse the statement; make the assembly assume responsibility for it; and gives the Board the flexibility to implement.

Mrs. Brand stated that PTA's typically invite Board members to participate. Mrs. Gerber stated that she has contacted the PTA's and made the offer to attend and has received enthusiastic responses.

Additional Board discussion followed on the wording of the motion regarding the word "accept".

Mr. Dwyer, in response to Mr. Convertito, stated the sub-committee would disband, but members may continue to work on items such as the PR intern.

Mr. Liu stated there is an inconsistency on how the items will be done and he will be unable to vote this forward.

In response to Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Dwyer stated that the alternative is to take no action and have the sub-committee disband.

In response to Mr. Liu, Mr. Dwyer stated that these ideas could still be built into the agenda for a vote, but the preference is for the Board to accept the ideas.

Mrs. Gerber stated that this has been discussed for many months and any issues should have been shared; and she is not sure how to move forward.

Ms. Iacono requested clarification on what is being left out; each item has an idea and an action; she stated she is unsure why this is not being voted on.

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded to call the question. Motion failed 4-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand against).

Mrs. Brand stated that she will not be a member of the Board when these items are discussed for by-law review and she will not be supporting the motion.

Ms. Iacono stated that the items will be saved for the by-law discussion as stated in the report and the new Board will decide the items at that time.

Public Comment re Motion:

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated that a Town hall meeting would be helpful; is concerned that public comment would be addressed without proper notice, and that communication to the community needs to be tightened.

Board Comment re Motion:

Mr. Fattibene stated that based on the Chair's ruling he will vote no.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that based on the Chair's ruling, she will vote yes; the report is being accepted and not approved.

Mr. Dwyer re-stated his position for Mr. Fattibene, that the Board assumes responsibility for the report, and will require the Chair to schedule items on the Board calendar.

The original motion failed 4-4 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand against).

Mr. Dwyer stated that the committee is officially disbanded and the Board takes no action.

New Business

Salary and Benefit Adjustment for Food Service Workers

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded the recommended motion, "that the Board of Education approve a salary and benefit adjustment for Food Service Workers for the 2013-2014 school year as listed in Enclosure No. 7". Motion passed, 6-1 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono in favor; Mr. Fattibene against. *Mrs. Brand was not in the room at this time.*)

Initial Discussion of 2013-2014 Board Goals

Mr. Dwyer asked the Board 2 questions; what should the goals approval process be and should the goals be approved in 2 year cycles?

Ms. Iacono stated the 2 year cycle is a good idea.

Mr. Liu stated that he thinks the 2 year process is a good idea, and have current Board members provide input.

Mrs. Brand stated that she likes the yearly goal setting process as there are many changes and current Board members can provide insight for the newer members.

Ms. Iacono stated that it is best to move the whole goals process to the next Board and stated that she would like to add an item to the agenda regarding the PR intern.

Mr. Fattibene stated that he likes annual goals.

Mrs. Kennelly stated that she agrees with Mr. Liu, and that the current Board should provide input for the newer Board members to approve.

Mr. Convertito stated that current members can provide their input in writing to use as discussion points with the new Board.

Mr. Dwyer stated that he will send out a DRAFT goals document as a starting point and will place items on the agenda upon request.

New Items added to agenda

Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Brand seconded a motion to add an item to the agenda. Motion passed 7-1 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Fattibene against.)

Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Brand seconded "to subcontract the FPS Food Services Program to include employees, managers and staffing needs and to authorize the Administration to send out an RFP."

Mr. Convertito stated that this motion is based on the history of the food services program which is no longer self-funded; Westport and Weston are 2 districts that contract out these services. Mrs. Brand stated that this is to maintain healthy food and address the financial situation. Mr. Fattibene stated that some changes need to be made, but does not have enough information to make a decision at this time; he stated he will not support this motion. Mrs. Kennelly stated she has concerns regarding accountability, direct control, food quality, high school schedule change could lead to more money being sent on lunch, and staff concerns. Mrs. Brand stated that many of Mrs. Kennelly's concerns may be addressed within the RFP. Mr. Dwyer stated that many high quality districts have found this to be successful; he will support this motion; and he clarified that if the motion is approved, the district will move in this direction.

Motion passed 6-2 (Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Fattibene against.)

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded to add an item to the agenda. Motion passed. 8-0.

Ms. Iacono stated that hiring a PR intern has been a consistent issue over the last 5 years.

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded "that the Board work to hire a PR intern. A college student – the Chair will consult with local universities to implement in the Fall – but the committee recommends to have one intern from Sacred Heart for one semester and one from Fairfield U for the other semester. The Chair will work with the Superintendent to determine the appropriate staff person to supervise the intern – this person will also work with the Board Secretary."

Mr. Liu made a friendly amendment (accepted by Ms. Iacono) to specify that the intern will be unpaid, so the final motion reads as follows: “that the Board work to hire an unpaid PR intern. A college student --the Chair will consult with local universities to implement in the Fall – but the committee recommends to have one intern from Sacred Heart for one semester and one from Fairfield U for the other semester. The Chair will work with the Superintendent to determine the appropriate staff person to supervise the intern – this person will also work with the Board Secretary.”

Mr. Fattibene asked for an approximation on how much supervision is needed for this position; Dr. Title stated that it depends on the quality of the intern; this will not increase the budget; if it becomes too time consuming for staff, the program would be ended.

In response to Ms. Iacono, Mr. Dwyer stated that the intern could attend universities other than Fairfield University and Sacred Heart.

Motion passed, 8-0.

Public Comments and Petitions

Kelly Dunn, Tuckahoe Lane, stated she is thrilled about the PR intern; on the budget side, number 8 should be specified as a public work session, also make sure to be specific regarding the salary negotiation timeline.

Kelly Jacobson, Acorn Lane, requested a status of materials to support the new K-2 curriculum. She stated she is a 2nd grade parent and has had no materials to assist her child at home.

Rose Miller, Crane Street, stated that she appreciates the efforts of the district to improve school climate, and requests reassurance that Fairfield Public Schools is in compliance with the child internet protection practices.

Open Board Comment:

Mrs. Brand requested a strategic school profile presentation in September or October.

Ms. Iacono stated that she would appreciate adding the Communications report back on the agenda.

Ms. Gerber stated that Fairfield Living Magazine is highlighting 5 teens from Fairfield Public Schools as “teens to watch.”

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board that the CAFE conference registration is ongoing.

Mr. Fattibene stated that voting to remove the funding to attend CAFE seminars should be revisited for next year.

Adjournment

Mr. Convertito moved/Mr. Liu seconded the recommended motion “that this regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 8-0. Meeting adjourned 10:27PM.

*Jessica Gerber
Board of Education
Secretary*