

Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE; January 14, 2014

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 7:35PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, John Convertito, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, John Llewellyn and Marc Patten. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the central office leadership team, student representatives Danielle Clarke, Acacia Longley, Ethan King and Bill Moeder and approximately 50 members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 10, 2013.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 10, 2013.” Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2013.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2013.” Mrs. Liu-McCormack moved/Mr. Llewellyn seconded a motion to add the following wording to page 5 of the minutes at the end of the Aon Presentation: “When Mrs. Liu-McCormack inquired of Aon, based on their broader client experience, what has proven to be the most effective way he has seen other districts reduce health plan costs, Mr. Lindgren responded the conversion to an HSA plan is a solution, reducing the value of the plan itself to reduce benefits.”

Mr. Llewellyn moved/Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the amendment by substituting language in Mrs. Liu-McCormack’s written amendment – following the statement, “Mr. Lindgren responded” -- with language stated by Mr. Lindgren in the meeting transcript provided by Mrs. Gerber as follows: “I think you have to kind of shift the cost away from the employee contribution and reduce the plan value if you will. So through HSAs is one of the ways you could get there. But really anything that reduces the value of the plan itself.” Motion failed 4-5 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against).

Mrs. Liu-McCormack’s original amendment failed 3-6 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against).

The original motion to approve the minutes passed 6-3 (Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten in favor; Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn against).

Old Business

Approval of the Secondary Business Curriculum and Textbook

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Secondary Business Curriculum as recommended.” Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded to amend the motion to divide the question into a) approving the revamped curriculum, and b) approving the two new courses. Mr. Convertito then made a friendly amendment to his motion’s wording to instead amend the main motion to approve the current business curriculum not including the Financial Literacy course and the Intro to Investing and Finance course, which the Board accepted by unanimous consent. After discussion, Mr. Convertito withdrew his motion. Original motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Fattibene moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion, “that the Board of Education approve the Secondary Business Curriculum Textbook, “Becoming Money Smart: A Simulation for Financial Decision Making by Judi Deatherage, as recommended”

Mr. Llewellyn moved/Mr. Patten seconded to amend the motion and add “with the use of Perkins Grant money” at the end of the recommended motion. Motion failed 3-6 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. Patten in favor; Mr. Convertito, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against). The original motion passed 9-0.

Approval of the BoE Capital Non-Recurring Projects 2014-2015.

Mr. Patten moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the BoE Capital Non-Recurring Projects 2014-2015 as recommended.” Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes of November 26, 2013

Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular/Organizational Meeting of November 26, 2013.” Mr. Llewellyn moved/Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the minutes and add the language “John Llewellyn requested a copy of the most recent set of financials, as well as the 2013/2014 budget related to the Food Services Fund” to page 8 of the minutes, under the Update on Food Services RFP. Motion failed 4-4-1 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against; Mr. Convertito abstained). The original motion to approve the minutes passed 5-4 (Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten in favor; Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn against).

At 10:50PM Ms. Karnal moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15PM. Motion passed 9-0.

Amendment of Minutes of October 22, 2013

Mrs. Liu-McCormack moved/Mr. Llewellyn seconded to amend the previously adopted action by amending the minutes of 10/22/13 (adopted 11/26/13) to say (insert language under “Quarterly Financial Update” after last sentence): “When asked about who paid for health insurance for food service employees Ms. Mussel responded, ‘They haven’t paid us for last year. They owe the Health Insurance account from last year.’” And then Sue Brand comments: ‘I was concerned about the status of the food service budget because we went out to RFP because we were running out of money. How are we managing to operate? We don’t have the food service budget in front of us. I would feel more confident if it was before us. This leaves me with more questions than answers and questioning management given the fact that we had some serious problems.” Motion failed 4-4-1 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against; Mr. Convertito abstained). Mr. Dwyer stated that the October 22 minutes then stood as they were approved on November 26.

New Business

Approval of Agreement between Bargaining Unit AFSCME Council 4, Information Technology Technicians and the Fairfield BoE for 2011-2016

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mr. Llewellyn seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Agreement between Bargaining Unit AFSCME Council 4, Information Technology Technicians and the Fairfield Board of Education for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2016.” Motion passed 9-0

Approval of Agreement between Bargaining Unit AFSCME Council 4, Special Education Trainers and the Fairfield BoE for 2011-2015

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Ms. Karnal seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Agreement between Bargaining Unit AFSCME Council 4, Special Education Trainers and the Fairfield Board of Education for the period July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2015.” Motion passed 9-0

Adjournment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn”. Meeting adjourned 11:15PM.

Detailed Minutes:

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 7:35PM. Present were members Eileen Liu-McCormack, John Convertito, Donna Karnal, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Paul Fattibene, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, John Llewellyn and Marc Patten. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, student representatives Danielle Clarke, Acacia Longley, Ethan King and Bill Moeder and approximately 50 members of the public.

Mr. Dwyer led the Board and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 10, 2013.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 10, 2013.” Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2013

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2013.” Mrs. Liu-McCormack moved/Mr. Llewellyn seconded a motion to add the following wording to page 5 of the minutes at the end of the Aon Presentation: “When Mrs. Liu-McCormack inquired of Aon, based on their broader client experience, what has proven to be the most effective way he has seen other districts reduce health plan costs, Mr. Lindgren responded the conversion to an HSA plan is a solution, reducing the value of the plan itself to reduce benefits.”

Mrs. Gerber handed out a transcript regarding this portion of the AON presentation at the December 10, 2013 meeting to all Board members.

Mr. Llewellyn moved/Mrs. Liu-McCormack seconded to amend the amendment by substituting language in Mrs. Liu-McCormack’s written amendment – following the statement, “Mr. Lindgren responded” -- with language stated by Mr. Lindgren in the meeting transcript provided by Mrs. Gerber as follows: “I think you have to kind of shift the cost away from the employee contribution and reduce the plan value if you will. So through HSAs is one of the ways you could get there. But really anything that reduces the value of the plan itself.” Motion failed 4-5 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against).

Mrs. Liu-McCormack’s original amendment failed 3-6 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against).

The original motion to approve the minutes passed 6-3 (Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten in favor; Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Llewellyn against).

Student Reports

Mr. Moeder and Mr. King reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School and stated that students are preparing for mid-terms, the Candlelight Concert was well attended, the Key Club’s Operation Hope Drive was a success, early action/decision letters are being received, winter sports season has begun, and course selection night is coming up.

Ms. Clarke and Ms. Longley reported for Fairfield Warde High School and stated that winter sports season has begun, the Carillon Concert was a great success, mid-terms are coming up, the county assemblies dances are coming up, the school

store will be opening, the Key Club is collecting cans, yearbook orders are due soon, and 8th grade orientation will take place soon.

Superintendent's Report

Quarterly Financial Report

Mr. Dwyer asked that Board discussion focus on the issue of the increased Special Education costs as related to outplacements and reported that the meeting with the Board of Finance went well.

Ms. Munsell presented the Quarterly Financial Report, discussed the enclosure, and stated there is a projected \$1.4 million shortfall, largely due to increases in Special Education costs; this has resulted in a budget freeze for non-essential spending which does not affect the health, safety, or instructional needs to maintain programs; a hiring freeze for non-essential employees is currently in effect; overtime is limited to critical maintenance; subs are limited to coverage of essential employees for unavoidable situations; and administrators have been asked to estimate potential savings.

Dr. Title stated that capital purchases such as technology replacements may be deferred; professional development and curriculum writing may be put on hold; employees wishing to go to conferences must cover the full cost of the conference and substitute unless there is a contractual obligation; schools have been asked to limit inventory; maintenance has been asked to limit overtime; health, safety and maintenance issues will be addressed.

Dr. Title stated that help may be needed from the Town to cover the projected deficit and the Board of Finance has indicated a willingness to work together on this issue.

Board Discussion followed and Ms. Leonardi summarized key points in response to Board questions:

- a number of students rose to a level of need via the PPT process and mediated settlements
- there is a higher rate of students with mental illness and high level of emotional distress requiring a level of care not offered in our public schools
- work is being done to address these issues through consultations, evaluations, and school-based teams
- many districts are experiencing similar spikes in these types of needs and issues
- services required for these complex issues have never been offered in the district
- the district has discussed developing an in-district solution, however, there will always be a need to outplace some students
- Fairfield's overall prevalence rate is about 10%, well within national standards

Mr. Dwyer recommended a separate meeting on this topic should more information be required.

In response to Mr. Patten, Dr. Title stated the electric rates are based on Town estimates.

In response to Mr. Llewellyn, Ms. Leonardi stated that the special education budget is based on October of the prior year, on the total number of tuitions with estimated tuition rates; that the prior year's transfer of \$280,000 into Pupil Personnel Services could have been due to parts of evaluations, consultations, and tuition. Dr. Title stated that the complex excess cost calculation is unknown until the filing is complete, and this year many placements did not qualify for reimbursement.

In response to Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Leonardi stated that approximately 1100-1200 students are in Special Education with 89 students in outplacements; the predominant outplacement cost is tuition and transportation and is estimated at \$8.5 million.

Dr. Title stated that there are 2 streams of funding to off-set special education costs: the excess cost grant which is capped by the state, and federal funding that was affected by the sequester, costing the district \$150,000.

In response to Mr. Llewellyn's question regarding Food Services, Mr. Dwyer ruled that, in the interest of time, the Food Services portion of the Quarterly Report would be discussed at the January 21 meeting.

In response to Mr. Fattibene, Dr. Title stated that the district must end the year without a deficit, and there are still unknowns such as the weather.

Presentation of the Superintendent's 2014-2015 Operating Budget

Dr. Title presented a Powerpoint Report on the recommended operating budget for \$156,909,651 for Fiscal Year 2014-2015, which included slides showing 'Return on Investment for Program and Student Achievement'; 'Historical Data on Budget, Staffing and Enrollment'; and 'Budget Priorities'.

Mr. Dwyer asked that all budget questions be forwarded to Dr. Title well in advance of the next meeting so the staff has time to prepare; the first budget meeting will cover the income summary and food services, and the second budget meeting will cover the line item levels; the third meeting requires a vote and due to Town charter there can be no motions to postpone. Dr. Title stated that the budget book preparation is a huge undertaking by staff, and the budget book has won CABE's "Excellence in Educational Communication" Honorable Mention Award for the last three years.

Dr. Title explained the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the BOE regarding health insurance; that the agreement is if the Board of Education follows AON's recommendations and still has a shortfall, the Town will cover those expenses for that year and the deficit will get rolled over to the following year's operating budget.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack requested a copy of this agreement.

Mr. Llewellyn stated that he would like to make a motion to get the budget in Excel format. Mr. Dwyer ruled the motion out of order, and stated the Board has agreed to the current format. After Ms. Munsell stated that only the budget executive summary and support is in Excel and all else is in an Access Database, Mr. Llewellyn stated he would accept that format; both Mr. Llewellyn and Mr. Fattibene challenged the Chair's ruling.

Mr. Dwyer restated that the motion is out of order and that Mr. Llewellyn currently has a Freedom of Information Request pending before the Freedom of Information Commission regarding the format of how Fairfield Public Schools presents information; a Hearing for this was held on Monday where briefs have been requested from Mr. Llewellyn and Fairfield Public Schools, and that a ruling by the Board prior to the ongoing process would be a mistake.

Mr. Fattibene stated that he is unaware of the FOI details and that a format request, if it exists, is a reasonable request from a Board member, and that he doesn't recollect any Board action stating that the budget will be presented in a PDF format only.

Old Business

Approval of the Secondary Business Curriculum and Textbook

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the Secondary Business Curriculum as recommended."

Mr. Convertito moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded to amend the motion to divide the question into a) approving the revamped curriculum, and b) approving the two new courses. Mr. Convertito then made a friendly amendment to his motion's wording to instead amend the main motion to approve the current business curriculum not including the Financial Literacy course and the Intro to Investing and Finance course, which the Board accepted by unanimous consent.

Mr. Convertito stated that he does not want to add more programming until a program audit has been completed. Mr. Dwyer stated that the Board has not adopted a program audit. Dr. Title expressed concern that new courses would not be approved without a program audit. After discussion, Mr. Convertito withdrew his motion.

Public Comment: Curriculum

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, thanked school district for the refreshing curriculum presentation.

Approved by BOE 3/11/2014

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill Road, stated that she echoes Suzanne Miska's sentiments and that her daughter takes business classes.

Eric Newman, Eastfield Drive, stated that he took business courses when he was a student and to eliminate these classes is shortsighted.

Tricia Donovan, Taintor Drive, asked that the Board make the Personal Finance/Literacy class mandatory.

Original motion passed 9-0.

Mr. Fattibene moved/Mr. Convertito seconded the recommended motion, "that the Board of Education approve the Secondary Business Curriculum Textbook, "Becoming Money Smart: A Simulation for Financial Decision Making by Judi Deatherage, as recommended"

Mr. Llewellyn moved/Mr. Patten seconded to amend the motion and add "with the use of Perkins Grant money" at the end of the recommended motion.

Public Comment: Textbook

Neal Fink, Crest Terrace, stated the amendment doesn't make sense, this is not a discussion on how to pay for things, if something happened to the grant, the class may be prohibited from being offered.

Motion failed 3-6 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Llewellyn, Mr. Patten in favor; Mr. Convertito, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly against).

The original motion passed 9-0.

Approval of the BOE Capital Non-Recurring Projects 2014-2015

Mr. Patten moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education approve the BoE Capital Non-Recurring Projects 2014-2015 as recommended." Motion passed 9-0.

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Mrs. Gerber handed out a transcript of this portion of the November 26, 2013 Meeting. Board discussion followed on remaining consistent, capturing the essence, and focusing on actions rather than comments.

Motion failed 4-4-1 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against; Mr. Convertito abstained). The original motion to approve the minutes passed 5-4 (Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten in favor; Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn against).

At 10:50PM Ms. Karnal moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded to extend the meeting to 11:15PM. Motion passed 9-0.

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before us. This leaves me with more questions than answers and questioning management given the fact that we had some serious problems.”

A transcript of this portion of the meeting was provided to all Board members. Board discussion followed on paraphrasing and whether meeting minutes resemble a full transcript.

Motion failed 4-4-1 (Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Karnal, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Llewellyn in favor; Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Patten against; Mr. Convertito abstained). Mr. Dwyer stated that the October 22 minutes then stood as they were approved on November 26.

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First Reading of Policies 0100, 0110, 0200, Board of Education Mission, Goals, Objectives

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly introduced Sue Brand, as Chair of the Mission Goals Review Advisory Committee. Mrs. Brand stated that the enclosure document is the basis for the work of the district; a varied number of people within the district and community were invited to be part of the committee process; the committee met 6 times; the committee also worked with Central Office.

Public Comments and Petitions

Brian Haberly, Duck Farm Road, stated that there is a continuing suppression of public comments by the Board when comments are limited to 2 minutes and occur so late at night; 17 outplacements don’t happen overnight.

Adjournment

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn”. Meeting adjourned 11:15PM.

Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education
Secretary