

DRAFT

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
Tuesday, November 23, 2010
501 Kings Highway East
2nd Floor Board Conference Room

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand. Other Board Members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu, Mr. John Mitola, and Ms. Stacey Zahn. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 20 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

1. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Mrs. Brand stated that this has been a very challenging year for the community and the Board; and she has tried to work in a transparent manner as much as possible. Moving forward she hopes Board members will do their due diligence, be respectful, and work together for the children of Fairfield.
3. Ms. Zahn made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Albin that in accordance with the By-Laws, Superintendent Dr. David Title will serve as Temporary Chairman/Secretary during the election of Board Officers.

Motion carried unanimously: 9:0:0.

4. Ms. Zahn nominated Mr. Mitola as Board of Education Chairman.

Mr. Liu nominated Mrs. Brand as Board of Education Chairman.

Vote for Mr. Mitola as Board of Education Chairman: 6 votes in favor (Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Mrs. Iacono, Ms. Zahn and Mr. Mitola).

Vote for Mrs. Brand as Board of Education Chairman: 3 votes in favor (Mr. Liu, Mrs. Dow and Mrs. Brand).

Mr. Mitola was elected Chairman of the Board of Education.

5. Mr. Kery nominated Mrs. Iacono as Board of Education Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Fattibene nominated Mrs. Dow as Board of Education Vice Chairman.

Vote for Mrs. Iacono as Board of Education Vice-Chairman: 5 votes in favor (Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Mrs. Iacono, Ms. Zahn, and Mr. Mitola).

Vote for Mrs. Dow as Board of Education Vice-Chairman: 4 votes in favor (Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand, Mr. Liu and Mrs. Dow).

Mrs. Iacono was elected Vice-Chairman of the Board of Education.

6. Mrs. Brand nominated Mr. Liu as Board of Education Secretary.

Mrs. Albin nominated Ms. Zahn as Board of Education Secretary.

Vote for Mr. Liu as Board of Education Secretary: 4 votes in favor (Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand, Mrs. Dow and Mr. Liu).

Vote for Ms. Zahn as Board of Education Secretary: 5 votes in favor (Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Mrs. Iacono, Ms. Zahn, and Mr. Mitola).

Ms. Zahn was elected Secretary of the Board of Education.

7. Mr. Mitola took the Chair.

8. Mr. Mitola thanked everyone for their support and thanked Mrs. Brand for her year of service as Chairman. He stated that the Board has a lot of work to do this year and that the Board needs to work as a cohesive body. There will be significant issues with the budget and with the facilities this year and the Board needs to listen to each other and respect each other's differing views. The Board needs to support Dr. Title and the administration, ask tough questions, have frank discussions on the issues and move on. It is important for Board members to look over the By-laws as a reminder of what our authority is as Board members. He promised to support Board members, to be responsive and to listen. He will be responsive to the public, will be open minded on all of the issues, and promises to continue the Board's transparency to the public.

9. Review of By-laws-

Mr. Mitola commented that the Policy Committee along with Dr. Title reviewed the By-laws at their last meeting. Dr. Title suggested some proposed changes to the By-laws; and Mrs. Iacono, Mrs. Brand and Mrs. Albin have also suggested some proposed changes.

Mrs. Iacono stated that her By-law changes actually were not changes. She was trying to highlight what is already in the By-laws.

Dr. Title reviewed his proposed changes. He stated that one item that is confusing is the two types of meetings, the Business Meeting and the Education Meeting. Business is conducted at both meetings, yet the agendas are different. Many Boards operate with one meeting per month called a Regular Meeting. Any other meeting of the Board that is called becomes a Special Meeting, which is usually a shorter meeting with only one or two agenda items. The Regular Meeting follows the same protocol for every meeting, including public comment or Board reports. He suggested eliminating Advisory Committees since these were in the By-laws before the Standing Committee structure, and almost anything that comes forward could be assigned to one of the three Standing Committees. He deferred to Mrs. Albin because she had this on her list. Another proposed change was to encourage continuing Board members to attend CABA sponsored workshops, not just new Board members. He also commented that conducting four meetings at four different schools throughout the calendar year causes some issues and there are other ways for Board members to get out into the community. He suggested that Board meetings be held at 501 Kings Highway, unless there is a need to move a meeting to a school because of a hot topic that requires more space. Dr. Title proposed a meeting schedule that does not require the Board to meet twice every month. However, he suggested that Board members continue to reserve the second and fourth Tuesday for Board meetings; and if additional meetings are needed, they could always be scheduled. He proposed eliminating the Consent Agenda since it typically is not used. The order of business for a Regular meeting would be the same format for all meetings with presentations, approval of minutes, public comment and reports at the beginning of every meeting followed by old business, new business and adjournment. Special meetings would have a much simpler agenda.

Mrs. Albin commented on Advisory Committees and noted that this language pre-dates the new and current committee structure. The three Standing Committees were established a few years ago to cover work the Board needs to do. This does not preclude the Board from forming Ad Hoc Committees when needed, if it is work that cannot be accommodated in one of the three Standing Committees. Deleting this would make the By-laws a cleaner document. She commented on the

four off-site Board meetings and an idea she came up with that would be cost neutral and would get Board members out to the schools to connect with the parents and the PTAs. She suggested that perhaps the standing committees, three members at a time, could attend one or two PTA meetings a year. They could visit the school, meet with the PTA, hear their concerns, etc. If Board members think is a good approach, she would suggest eliminating the four off-site meetings and including a commitment by the standing committees to go out to the PTA meetings at least once or twice a year. She stated that Page 9 of the By-laws, Article V, Section 1, the last sentence should read, "All Board of Education meetings shall adjourn at 11:00 p.m. unless there is a 2/3 vote of the Board to suspend the rule. According to Roberts Rules, that actually requires a 2/3 vote, not a majority vote. Mrs. Albin stated that the suggested changes she has made are for the Board's consideration.

Mrs. Brand stated that her only recommended change is on Page 4, paragraph 3, to add the following sentence: "Only Board may take action on sub-committee recommendations." This is elsewhere in the By-laws but it just emphasizes it again.

Approximately forty-five minutes of Board discussion took place on the following proposed By-law changes: elimination of advisory committees, elimination of off-site meetings, adding language that Standing Committee members would attend PTA meetings, having only one Board meeting per month and renaming the meetings Regular meetings as opposed to Education or Business meetings, elimination of the consent agenda, elimination of open board discussion, and adding language that amendments to the By-laws can be made at any time during the year when determined to be necessary,

The majority of the board was in favor of renaming Board meetings Regular Meetings as opposed to Education and Business Meetings. The By-laws will go back to the Policy Committee for review and will be on the December 14 agenda for review and approval of the recommended changes.

10. Discussion of Board Assignments-

Mr. Mitola commented that he would like to keep the Board assignments as they are, although if Board members have a need to change because of scheduling difficulties or a desire to change they should let him know. The one assignment he is going to take back and assign to himself is the FEA Liaison, which he thinks the Chairman should be the liaison to. He asked Board members to review their assignments, and let him know by next week if they want to do something different and he will make assignments based on that.

11. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Kery to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.
Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary