

**DRAFT**

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tuesday, January 25, 2011

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, January 25, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Brand, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Tim Kery, Ms. Stacey Zahn, Mr. Perry Liu (arrived 7:35 p.m.) and Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:36 p.m.). Mrs. Sue Dow was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Ludlowe HS Student Representative Allison Reich and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 100 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Mr. Mitola led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. A Moment of Silence was held for Dr. Frank Scholan who passed away recently. He was a long-time Medical Advisor for the district.
4. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-
  - ◆ Allison Reich reported that mid-terms are finishing at Fairfield Ludlowe HS. For a small fee, subscriptions to the school newspaper are now being delivered to people's homes.
  - ◆ Mrs. Albin – No report
  - ◆ Mrs. Brand – No report
  - ◆ Mr. Fattibene – No report
  - ◆ Mr. Kery – No report
  - ◆ Mr. Liu – No report
  - ◆ Mr. Mitola – No report
  - ◆ Ms. Zahn – No report
5. Superintendent's Report-

Dr. Title reported that there have been three snow days. There is one more snow day left, and any days after that will come out of April vacation.
6. Old Business
  - A. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve Policy #1430 – Public Performances by Students as presented at the January 11, 2011 Board of Education meeting.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.
  - B. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board of Education approve Policy #5330 – Bullying as presented at the January 11, 2011 Board of Education meeting.

Board comments and questions followed. Pursuant to State Statute, the updates to this policy are required at this time. The Policy Sub-committee will put this on a future agenda for review to strengthen the policy.

Motion carried: 7:1:0. Ms. Zahn voted in opposition.
  - C. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Basic and Supplemental Textbook which has been reviewed and selected in accordance with the administration's selection process and presented for the Board's consideration at the January 11, 2011 meeting be adopted.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

D. Discussion of 2011-2012 Budget Request-

Approximately two hours of Board comments, questions and discussion took place regarding the following: Executive Summary – instructional services; miscellaneous cumulative services; and the reason for a decrease in the benefits account for new staff when there is a net increase in staffing; Budget Detail – business services account for driver/custodian and custodians; middle school liaison; intramural costs-Fairfield Ludlowe HS versus Fairfield Warde HS; differential in the utilities for running Fairfield Ludlowe HS versus Fairfield Warde HS; maintenance services for the Burr HVAC system; the kitchen dehumidification system at McKinley; instructional services-the Director of Curriculum, 6 curriculum leaders and 5 support staff; fixed items and non-fixed items; increase in special education out of district tuition; percentage of reimbursement expected in terms of excess cost; clarification of the elementary staffing model; elementary staffing; the reason for two assistant principals at Roger Ludlowe Middle School; clerical services-elementary school secretaries and paraprofessional staffing; why each middle school does not have the same number of custodians; the possibility of trimming the wage and benefit reserve; concern with the increase in the pension line; utilities at the schools; technology; technology services-computer maintenance; maintenance projects-low voltage system preventative maintenance; clarification of the \$131,000 that is being paid as part of the new federal health care law; a stop loss somewhere in the middle of \$150,000 and \$300,000 and what type of savings that would yield; student parking at the high school and why there was a significant drop off of permits issued at Fairfield Warde HS this year; how many buses could be saved if we were to charge for student parking at the high school and then waive the fee for students who sign off and waive their seat on the bus; summary of savings found from the audit or tied to the audit; maintenance items that did not make it into this budget; and what would be sacrificed if the \$1.8 million in town capital improvement projects had not been funded.

- E. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that a budget recommendation in the amount of \$148,505,841 be approved and forwarded to the Board of Finance for its consideration in the preparation of the town budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year; further that the Superintendent be authorized to distribute the said amount in a manner agreed to by the Board at this meeting.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to amend the motion and change the stop loss from \$300,000 to \$200,000 and take the difference from the reserve in the medical retention fund and balance it out that way. There would be no change in the operating budget.

Board comments followed on the procedure for this amendment. Since the line item would be the same, just a transfer of funds from one account to another, a motion would not be needed. The amendment was to change the stop loss from \$300,000 to \$200,000. If that part of the amendment is successful, Mrs. Brand could make a second amendment on how to move funds.

Mrs. Brand withdrew the amendment.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to amend the motion and increase the budget by \$280,000.

Board questions and comments followed on this proposed amendment.

Motion failed: 2:6:0. Mrs. Brand and Mr. Liu voted in favor. Ms. Zahn, Mr. Mitola, Mrs. Iacono, Mrs. Albin, Mr. Kery and Mr. Fattibene voted in opposition.

Public Comment on the Main Motion-

Anne Pasco, FEA President, spoke in support of changing the high school start time back to 7:30 a.m. in order to save \$500,000.

Dorene Herron, Forest Avenue, thanked the Board for the detail and clarity of this budget. As Roger Sherman's PTA President, she voiced support for the new elementary staffing model and thanked the Board for putting this forward and hopes the other town bodies keep it in the budget. It is much needed.

Kathryn Engle, Mill Hill Terrace, spoke in support of the increase in staff at the elementary level. She stated that she hopes the Board supports Dr. Title and his administrative staff and passes this budget as presented.

Nancy Trupp, a teacher in Fairfield, urged the Board to support this budget. She stated that NEASC evaluated both high schools and any subtraction from this budget would impact the accommodations that were made to NEASC.

Fran Wilder, a teacher in Fairfield, commented on two articles that were posted on the town's website. July 17, 2006 - Fairfield is ranked as one of the top 10 communities nationwide, and it is the number one community in the northeast for overall livability which includes the quality of schools. November 5, 2009 - according to Connecticut Magazine, Fairfield finally slipped past Greenwich to snag the top spot among communities. The most telling statistic came in the area of education where Fairfield topped Greenwich in mastery test scores, CAPT scores, and percentage of high school graduates going to college. She stated that her kids went through the Fairfield schools and she wants the same education her children got for her grandchildren.

Karen Lynch, North Startfield PTA President, applauded Dr. Title and the central office staff for incorporating the new elementary staffing model into the proposed budget and stated that she sincerely hopes the Board of Ed keeps those guidelines in tact as part of this budget, especially the increases to the math and science teachers and language arts specialists.

Sandra Kroll, Tahmore Court, stated that she hopes the Board will support the budget, especially the elementary staffing model for additional math, science, and language arts.

Mike Goughnour, Osborn Hill Budget Rep, thanked everyone for the elementary staffing model. He stated that he is a realist and knows that the budget will be tight but asked the Board to please do everything possible to maintain the elementary staffing model.

Elaine Davis, Fairfield Woods Middle School Budget Rep, asked the Board to please support Dr. Title's budget as presented and keep our impeccable level of service where it is.

Jill Kellerman, Brookfield Avenue, spoke in support of the new elementary staffing model and the budget.

Mary Hogue, Stonewall Lane, stated that it is clear that this is a very lean budget and everyone has worked very hard to make self-imposed cuts that aren't necessarily something that we are seeing. We only see the end result. She hopes everyone appreciates how much isn't in this budget and cutting from this would be a real problem. Fairfield has a wonderful school system, and this budget allows us to stay there and continue moving forward

GiGi Christel, PTA Council President-Elect speaking for herself, stated that she appreciates that Dr. Title and his staff went through the budget line item by line item and tried to find ways to save money. She stated that she also supports the elementary school model and hopes the Board will accept this budget as written.

Tracie Valentino, Jennings Road, thanked everyone for the easy budget format and spoke in favor of the elementary school staffing model. Keeping it in the budget would be a great asset to our already spectacular school system.

J. Alfred Dunn stated that he remembers the later start time discussions and the traffic experts from the Fairfield Police Department who were against it. He remembers the situation concerning this movement. Cut \$500,000; we need it.

Mr. Kery asked for a Point of Personal Privilege to thank Dr. Title and his staff. He also thanked everyone for dropping everything this week to answer Board members' questions.

Mr. Mitola stated that this is a very responsible budget; it is a lean budget and is in line with other districts in the area. He thanked Dr. Title and the administration for putting this book together.

Vote on motion: "that a budget recommendation in the amount of \$148,505,841 be approved and forwarded to the Board of Finance for its consideration in the preparation of the town budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year; further that the Superintendent be authorized to distribute the said amount in a manner agreed to by the Board at this meeting"

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

7. Proposed Town Capital Improvement Projects-

Mr. Mitola commented on the Proposed Town Capital Improvement Projects that are in the budget book but are not part of the operating budget. There have been discussions/differences of opinion as to whether or not the Board needs to vote on this. He stated that he checked with Town Attorney Dick Saxl, and he indicated that it would be appropriate if the Board voted on the proposed Town Capital Improvement Projects and put in an estimated dollar amount.

8. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin to add moving forward to the appropriate town bodies the Proposed Town Capital Improvement Projects to this agenda.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

9. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board move forward to the appropriate town bodies the Proposed Town Capital Improvement Projects for the 2011-12 fiscal year in the estimated amount of \$1,845,000.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to reduce the Town Capital Improvement Projects funding by \$255,000, by eliminating \$150,000 for Fairfield Woods Middle School and Stratfield Elementary School and \$105,000 for the Early Childhood Center.

Mr. Kery asked to split the motion and separate the two reductions.

This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

"to reduce the Town Capital Improvements Projects by \$150,000 by eliminating funding for Fairfield Woods Middle School and Stratfield Elementary School"

Board questions and comments followed. Dr. Title will try to identify in this line what some of the possible unexpected and/or unforeseen issues/items are that could come up during the building project. Dr. Title suggested having a discussion between the Board and the Building Committee to explain that the Board doesn't have funds to pay for unanticipated expenses that are directly related to the project. Mrs. Brand asked if the Building Committee liaisons could address the Building Committee to stress if they see anything that is unanticipated to give us a heads up.

Public Comment-

Andrew Crawford, 146 Lawrence Road, stated that he doesn't understand why the Board is arguing who is going to pay. If the Board is uncomfortable with it being in the capital budget, why not move it to the operating budget and move on.

Vote on amendment carried: 8:0:0.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to reduce the Town Capital Improvement Projects by \$105,000 by eliminating the Early Childhood Center.

Board comments and questions followed regarding the Early Childhood Center being located at Fairfield Warde HS and the possibility of moving it elsewhere so that space could be available to the high school, comparing costs of moving this program versus how much it would cost to add on to one of the high schools when the population increases, and delaying this project while we investigate the space further. Mrs. Albin asked if there is a safety component to this item. Dr. Title stated that rubberizing/resurfacing the existing playground is a safety issue. It is an unstable surface and not accessible for all of the children in the program. The other component is an expansion of an additional fully enclosed motor skills playground and that is not a safety issue. It is an issue of having appropriate space for all of the children in the program and fully enclosing it. \$45,000 is considered a safety issue and \$60,000 would be having an appropriate space. An outdoor learning environment is a critical component of Early Childhood learning not just a place for kids to run around. It is part of the instructional program.

Mrs. Brand stated that she would amend her amendment to change the amount and put back the \$45,000 for resurfacing the existing playground because that is a safety issue.

Mrs. Brand withdrew her amendment.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to amend the motion and reduce the Town Capital Improvement Projects by \$60,000 for the Early Childhood Center.

Board discussion followed regarding putting off the playground.

Public Comment-

Dorene Herron, Forest Avenue, commented on the importance of keeping this in the budget for educational reasons. It needs to be included and not put off any longer.

Vote on amendment failed: 3:5:0. Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand and Ms. Zahn voted in favor. Mr. Mitola, Mrs. Iacono, Mrs. Albin, Mr. Kery and Mr. Fattibene voted in opposition.

Board questions and comments continued regarding Roger Ludlowe MS and McKinley School roof repairs and whether they are truly a capital project or a typical maintenance project being put in the capital account. There was also concern that some of the other items should be maintenance items. Mr. Cullen stated that due to the scale and size, past practice has been to do large roofing repairs like this through town capital. Our roofing preventative maintenance program wouldn't pick up the scale and magnitude of these repairs. There was also a question about the Jennings bathrooms and if it is worthwhile to do a study /analysis to see whether or not it would be cost effective to hire another full time master plumber/tradesperson to do this work in-house.

Vote on motion as amended: "that the Board move forward to the appropriate town bodies the Proposed Town Capital Improvement Projects for the 2011-12 fiscal year in the estimated amount of \$1,695,000"

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

10. Public Comments and Petitions-

Bruce Monte, Sky Top Terrace, commented on changing the high school start time and expressed concern over the year of work that was done by the Board, by the administration, and by the high school start time task force that was overturned through a budgeting process. He stated that he is curious as to how much discussion of policy that took a year to set went into this decision. The data is clear, consistent, and credible. More sleep is practically a magic bullet for many of the things that ail our youth. He encouraged the Board at some point in the future to take up the policy aspect of this and see if there is another place to find that money and to continue to provide our high school students with every opportunity to succeed.

11. Open Board Comment-None

12. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 10:24 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

Stacey Zahn  
Secretary