

APPROVED

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION

ENCLOSURE NO. 2

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JUN 14 2011

Monday, May 16, 2011

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education held Monday, May 16, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the Special Meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Brand, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Perry Liu, Mr. Tim Kery (arrived 7:41 p.m.), and Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 8:05 p.m.). Ms. Stacey Zahn was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title 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. Open Working Executive Session-

Discussion of Proposed Recommended Budget Adjustments for 2011-12

Mr. Mitola stated that tonight's meeting is an Open Working Executive Session. Dr. Title will explain the budget adjustment sheet, Board members will have an opportunity to ask questions and then the Board will discuss any objections, possible suggestions or changes to the reductions.

Dr. Title stated that this document has been reviewed with the Finance subcommittee. Positions new to the budget or ones that staff felt were not one hundred percent necessary are listed as not being filled. If there was a possible way to not fill a vacancy, that was done. Class size was preserved wherever possible. The audit recommendations were reviewed again, and there were some areas where a few more recommendations could be done. To the extent possible, he tried to share the cuts across all levels. He also looked at adjusting the budget based on changes in enrollment that have occurred from the time the budget was put together to now. He stated that he believes in preserving the new program initiatives; the elementary staffing model, the new gifted and talented program and the new model for pre-k. He reviewed the proposed budget adjustments: reduction of the District Instructional Improvement Teacher at Central Office, reduction of .2 of the Grade 4-8 World Language Coordinator's time due to the reduction in the World Language Program, a slight reduction in the Continuing Education Coordinator's position, reductions in certified staff at the high school due to course taking patterns, a few reductions at the Alternative High School due to attrition, cut backs at the library media center at both high schools, special ed staff reductions at the high school, a reduction in World Language at the elementary schools from 100 minutes a week to 50 minutes, grade 6 Spanish will be offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday versus every day, the reduction of a music teacher at the middle school which is a new position and will have minimal impact on the music program, class size maximums at McKinley will go from 19 and 21 to 21 and 23 which reduces one position; a .5 reduction of the IIT at Osborn Hill, and an elementary special ed reduction. That covers the certified staff side, a reduction of 16.4 positions. On the non-certified side, there is a total reduction of 22.8 positions. The total staff reductions in this document are 39.2 positions. That does not mean 39.2 layoffs; that is positions, some were new, some were vacant, but some are occupied. He reviewed the proposed non-certified staff reductions: each high school will share one library media secretary, the receptionist at each high school will be eliminated, the library paraprofessional at each high school will be eliminated; two computer lab paraprofessionals at each high school will be eliminated, the extra custodian for Fairfield Woods MS has been eliminated, the elementary media technicians will be reconfigured to service technology differently which will result in a 5.0 fte reduction, and the reduction of 7.8 regular education paraprofessionals at the elementary schools which is a reduction of a .2 paraprofessional per kindergarten section at each school. Dr. Title stated that the priority of the elementary principals is the new elementary staffing model, and they are willing to absorb reductions in other areas to make that happen. He reviewed other proposed budget adjustments: 10.5 month staff positions are being reduced; some by 5 days, some by 8 days and some

by 9 days; the paraprofessional work year is being reduced from 185 days to 183 days; there will be an additional reduction in custodial costs offset by increasing lunch prices by 10 cents; a reduction in program implementation and staff development accounts; and the implementation of pay to participate in high school sports. Dr. Title stated that in order to maintain the extensive programs and in lieu of reducing high school sports, a pay to participate fee of \$125 per student with a \$500 family cap for most sports will raise the revenue needed. The sports that have a moderate rental cost such as bowling, skiing and hockey, will be \$175; sports that are the most expensive will be \$225. There are fee waivers built in for students who are on free/reduced lunch or have a hardship case. Capital outlay at the schools is being reduced, the high school late bus is being eliminated, the middle school late bus is being reduced from three days a week to two days a week, extracurricular costs at the middle school will be reduced by eliminating the girls and boys JV basketball and some intramurals/activities spread across the three middle schools, a reduction in clubs/activities at both high schools, and a reduction in some maintenance services. There are additional budget adjustments required: an additional 1.5 retirees and an additional 3.0 elementary teachers due to increased enrollment, which brings the net total reductions to \$2,825,491. Dr. Title stated that these are his recommendations. If the referendum is successful, he would recommend restoring the World Language cuts and eliminating pay to participate fees.

Approximately 30 minutes of Board questions and comments followed regarding the possibility of implementing distance learning for some of the low enrollment classes at the high school, the impact of the high school certified staff reductions, new positions that will not be filled, the impact of reducing math and social studies at the Alternative High School by a .5 FTE each, the decrease in staffing at the high school when enrollment is expected to increase, the role of the District Improvement Teacher, the reduction of a music teacher at the middle school, the reduction of the Continuing Education Coordinator from .6 to .5, the reduction in regular education paraprofessionals at the elementary schools and how that will impact kindergarten, what the impact will be of eliminating the elementary media technicians and how technology will be handled, the reduction in the World Language program and what adjustments will be required to the curriculum, the reduction of .2 of the Grade 4-8 World Language Coordinator, instructional cost savings, reduction of extracurricular non-sports costs, the additional 3.0 elementary school teachers due to increased enrollment, and the reason why there aren't more administrative cuts.

Approximately one hour of Board comments followed on the proposed budget reductions.

Mr. Fattibene expressed concern with pay to participate in sports. He stated that the Connecticut Constitution mandates that there will always be free public elementary and secondary schools in Connecticut, and he does not think it is a good policy to start charging to participate in the programs provided at a public school. He suggested that the Superintendent look to find \$250,000 somewhere else and remove pay to participate from the proposed budget adjustments.

Board discussion followed on pay to participate and the reduction in the World Language program.

Mrs. Iacono stated for the record that if the Referendum goes through and \$800,000 is restored, she would support putting World Language back.

Board members voiced opposition to reducing the World Language program and pay to participate.

Mr. Mitola stated that the majority of the Board is not in favor of pay to participate in sports at the high school and asked Dr. Title to look for alternatives.

Dr. Title stated that the purpose of pay to participate is to allow us to continue to enable these offerings that are quite extensive and getting more expensive. The alternative he sees at this point is to eliminate freshmen sports and either some of the high cost relatively, low enrollment sports at the high school such as girls and boys ice hockey, or cut middle school intramurals.

Mr. Fattibene suggested not just looking at non-personnel but looking at other support staff cuts that could be made to come up with that amount of money.

Board suggestions and comments followed on other possible reduction options: grandfathering at \$350,000; some reduction in Instructional Services line item 321-professional development at \$399,617; Business Services line item 321-professional development at \$6,000; some reduction in Personnel Services line item 321-Professional Development at \$285,000; the possible reduction in some maintenance projects that could be deferred such as \$30,000 for soundproofing panels in the gym at Burr, \$50,000 for painting projects, \$25,000 for new ceiling lights in the kitchen at FWHS, etc.; a possible reduction in central office non-bargaining unit wage increases; and a possible reduction in central office insurance benefits to get them closer in line with administrators or teachers so there is more of a balance in terms of shared cost. There was discussion regarding the new elementary staffing model and the increase of 8.3 fte's that will be needed for this new initiative for a total increase of \$418,972.

Dr. Title stated that the elementary staffing model is a priority, and principals were willing to give up other things they felt were less important in order to make this happen. That would be the last reduction he would put on the table.

Dr. Title stated that the \$285,000 for professional development is a contractual obligation, which is non-touchable. He expressed concern about cutting maintenance since there is no provision in the maintenance budget for unanticipated expenses that will undoubtedly occur with the building and renovation projects.

Mr. Mitola stated that the two major areas of concern seem to be pay to play and the reduction in the World Language program. He asked Dr. Title to see if there are other areas where cuts could be taken so pay to play would not need to be implemented. With respect to World Language, Mr. Mitola stated that due to the amount of money that would be needed to restore the program, it is going to be difficult; and with the Board's consent he would ask the administration to focus on pay to play.

Mr. Mitola stated that there will be a meeting on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. to hear public comment, and the intent is to vote on the reductions at the May 24th Board meeting. He asked if Dr. Title could have additional information on the proposed reductions by Thursday. For those Board members who are unable to attend the meeting, Fair TV will do everything to have it on the air by Friday; and for Board members who would like a video file of the meeting, Gerry Speno from Fair TV will be able provide one on Friday.

4. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 10:10 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.