

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, May 10, 2011

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, May 10, 2011, at Fairfield Ludlowe High School, 785 Unquowa Road-Auditorium.

- DRAFT**
1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:40 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Brand, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu, and Ms. Stacey Zahn. Mrs. Sue Dow was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Warde HS Student Representative Stephanie Teixeira and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 25 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
 2. Mr. Mitola led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
 3. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of March 29, 2011.

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to include in the Minutes between Number 2 and the next sentence the following statement that Mrs. Brand made during the meeting in public session: "I will be voting against and not staying for this Executive Session because I believe it is an FOI violation, and I called Tom Hennick at the FOI Commission and he agrees and that is the reason I will not be staying."

Mr. Liu asked to make a friendly amendment to include that it was also the reason he left the meeting.

Board discussion followed. Mrs. Iacono stated for the record that she was not present in the room when this happened; she arrived at 7:12 p.m.

Amendment failed: 3:3:2: Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Liu and Mrs. Brand voted in favor. Ms. Zahn, Mr. Mitola and Mrs. Iacono voted in opposition. Mrs. Albin and Mr. Kery abstained.

Main Motion carried: 6:1:1. Mrs. Brand voted in opposition. Mr. Kery abstained.

4. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 12, 2011 be approved.

Motion carried: 6:0:2. Mrs. Brand and Ms. Zahn abstained.

5. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-

- ◆ Stephanie Teixeira reported that at Fairfield Warde High School report cards went out last week, AP exams will finish this Friday, and CTE testing will take place on May 18, 19, & 20. The Girls Lacrosse game against Ludlowe is this Thursday, spring sports end next week, and the teams that made it to FCIACs and States will go on. The National Honor Society induction will be on May 19. The Junior Prom will be held on May 21, and the PTA is hosting a post prom. Urinetown, the school play, was performed this past weekend and it was a success with great reviews.
- ◆ Mrs. Albin – No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that the Board of Health is working out some of the specs for Sherman Elementary School with the nurse's station. CES-Mrs. Brand reported that she sent all of the Board members a message that the Executive Director Evan Pitkoff sent to members of the CES Board. She summarized that the message stated what the Governor's stance was and that there will 4,742 layoff notices and \$545,000,000 more in spending cuts. There was more detail in the message that she forwarded to the Board. The Six to Six meeting was postponed.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene – No report.

- ◆ Mrs. Iacono reported that the Special Projects Standing Building Committee continues to meet on Sherman. The project is currently out to bid, and the bids are due back June 1st. The RTM voted on the budget and decided to reduce our spending by an additional \$800,000 on top of the \$2 million reduction from the Board of Finance.
- ◆ Mr. Kery reported that he was unable to attend the PTA Council meeting last week and will get a copy of the report for the Friday Packet.
- ◆ Mr. Liu – No report.
- ◆ Mr. Mitola – No report.
- ◆ Ms. Zahn reported that the High School Scholarship Foundation was going to hold their annual fundraiser in the spring but unfortunately, that is not happening. There will be an Evening to Honor Excellence along with the Art Show they were going to do in the fall. Also, letters are sent to the parents of graduating 8th graders and seniors for donations to the High School Scholarship Foundation and anyone can donate for any reason.

6. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Title stated that the Finance Subcommittee will meet on Thursday, at 5 p.m. at Central Office in the 2nd floor Board Conference Room and that will be the first look at the recommended budget adjustments for next year.

Mr. Mitola stated that the Board of Education will hold a Special Meeting on Monday, May 16, at 7:30 p.m. at Central Office. The item of discussion will be the budget reductions. He stated that it is the intent to get these recommendations to all Board members on Thursday; the Board will discuss them on Monday and vote on May 24.

7. Old Business

- A. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Physical Education Curriculum, Grades K-5.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- B. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Long-Range Facilities Plan

Dr. Title stated that he tried to follow the directives from the March 29 Board meeting. On page 17, Summary Sheet, the 2011-12 column was updated recognizing the items that the RTM had acted on. If a project had been deferred or declined, it was moved to the next year; any project that was not acted upon favorably was moved to the next year because it is still an item to consider; and projects that were either approved or are pending remain in the 2011-12 column. Also, some projects were moved completely off the chart. The gross estimated total is now \$42,429,746 and the net estimated total is \$33,764,381. Page 26, Future Projects, is where Mill Hill now resides and Osborn Hill was also moved over.

Mr. Cullen stated that Jennings Elementary School was only approved \$125,000 for the bathrooms, which were originally \$250,000, so in the following year, 2012-13, the other half was put in plus escalation. McKinley Elementary School was approved \$30,000 for the consultant cost, so the following year, 2012-13, \$100,000 was put in for repairs. At the bottom of page 26, Future Projects, all of the oil tanks that are at the schools that will eventually need to be replaced were added in at \$1 million.

Board questions and comments followed regarding how to get the most out of our existing facilities and how to configure them in a way to minimize costs, the aging portables at Mill Hill and Riverfield and the increasing enrollment at those sites, investigating whether or not redistricting would solve the high school overcrowding issue, the square footage at Fairfield Ludlowe High School versus Fairfield Warde High School and the possibility of needing a variance because of the size of the building relative to the size of the lot.

Mr. Fattibene expressed concern with respect to Mill Hill Elementary School. It currently has five portables, and two of those portables are over ten years old. It was also listed in the Building Use and Capacity Report by MGT of December 14, 2010 as the elementary school with the lowest operational capacity. He stated that he believes there is a need at Mill Hill and suggested to add Mill Hill to the 2013-14 year and delete the renovations scheduled for Mill Hill in 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15. Mill Hill would have one renovation number of \$11.9 in the 2013-14 year with the other numbers folding into that total renovation figure. Mr. Fattibene also suggested moving Riverfield Elementary School to 2012-13 since it is late in 2011-12 to get that started and looking at the total capital expenses for each of those years, it may even out the capital expenses a little.

A suggestion was made to split the motion.

Mr. Fattibene moved, seconded by Mr. Kery to add Mill Hill to 2013-14 in the amount of \$11,993,433 and delete the renovations scheduled for Mill Hill in 2012-13 in the amount of \$262,500, for 2013-14 in the amount of \$289,406 and for 2014-15 in the amount of \$461,614.

Board questions, comments and discussion followed on this amendment.

Amendment failed: 4:4:0. Mrs. Brand, Ms. Zahn, Mr. Kery and Mr. Fattibene voted in favor. Mr. Liu, Mr. Mitola, Mrs. Iacono and Mrs. Albin voted in opposition.

Mr. Fattibene moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to move Riverfield Elementary School from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

Board discussion followed. Mr. Fattibene stated his reasons for moving this project from 2011-12 to 2012-13 is that the time is relatively short to get that project moving forward, especially with the current environment and a new First Selectman coming in. In moving it to 2012-13 it balances out the total capital projects for any one year so they are more equal in the total dollar amount for every year.

Amendment failed: 2:6:0. Mr. Fattibene and Mr. Liu voted in favor.

Back to Main Motion.

Mr. Liu commented that he is still looking for a few more things in the plan; priorities within the years still need to be addressed, and whether or not redistricting is or is not a solution to some of our high school and elementary school population problems needs to be part of the equation. He stated that he would like more time to do the investigating on this that he would like to and to see documentation of where we are going with our populations in regards to the elementary schools and high schools as part of this plan.

Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand to postpone this vote until the next Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, May 24, 2011.

Board discussion followed on this amendment.

Public Comment-

Dorene Herron, Forest Avenue, asked the Board not to postpone a vote on the Long-Range Facilities Plan.

Amendment failed: 2:6:0. Mr. Liu and Mrs. Brand voted in favor.

Back to Main Motion.

Public Comment-

Catherine Engle, Mill Hill Terrace, asked the Board to please consider redistricting, particularly for the elementary school students.

Vote on Main Motion carried: 6:2:0. Mrs. Brand and Mr. Liu voted in opposition.

- C. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve Policy #5514 – Administration of Medication in the Schools.

Motion Carried: 8:0:0.

- D. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve Policy #5124 – Transfers Within Fairfield.

Mr. Fattibene offered a friendly amendment to modify the language slightly in an effort to make it a little clearer and more understandable. This was discussed in subcommittee and agreed upon.

Third sentence of the second paragraph, delete the following language “A student may be granted a change in attendance area without demonstrable need. Regularly enrolled students who have moved within Fairfield and who have started the school year may complete the school year in their previously assigned attendance area.” In place therefore, would be inserted the following language: “Irrespective of demonstrable need, a student may be permitted to complete the school year in their previously assigned attendance area if the student has moved within Fairfield and has started the school year.” This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- E. Approval of Policy #3431.2 Financial Statements – Quarterly Reports and Policy #3431.1 – Financial Statements Monthly Reports (delete)

Dr. Title stated that this policy had a first read at the last Board meeting and was referred back to the subcommittee. The subcommittee did not get to this at their last meeting, therefore, he asked that this policy be postponed to the June 14 Board meeting.

Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education postpone Policy #3431.2 – Financial Statements – Quarterly Reports and Policy #3431.1 – Financial Statements Monthly Reports (delete) to the June 14, 2011 Board of Education Meeting.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

8. New Business

A. First Read of Policies

- Policy #5518 – Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Response
- Policy #6200 – Curriculum
- Policy #6221 – Family Life and Sex Education
- Policy #6132 – Emergency and Disaster Preparedness
- Policy #6513 – Home Schooling

- Policy #5518 – Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Response

Ms. Leonardi stated that the committee worked to draft, react and respond to each other electronically in order to engage a group of people who otherwise would not have been able to participate, including community based mental health providers, board certified child and adolescent psychiatrists, parents and teachers. This changes our current policy from a policy that is reactive to crisis to a policy that recognizes that we have an opportunity to educate, to prevent, and to intervene with groups of students and individuals in the hope of not having to deal with the crisis situation of a student suicide. It also prescribes protocols for response in the event that we do have to deal with that.

Mrs. Brand expressed her concern with paragraph 4, which she brought up in subcommittee. "Any school employee who may have knowledge of a suicide risk, threat or intent will immediately report this information to the school Principal/Headmaster." The intent of that sentence is to initiate the process. It is fine to notify the principal/headmaster, but she doesn't want the principal or headmaster to think they have a judgment call before them.

Board questions and comments followed.

Mrs. Brand suggested switching the paragraphs by moving the sixth paragraph up to directly after the fourth followed by the fifth paragraph.

- Policy #6200 – Curriculum

Dr. Rosato stated that this change addresses new legislation which requires us to have a district-wide curriculum committee. The legislation is broad and doesn't specify who needs to be part of that committee but specifies the need to have a designated district curriculum committee that is responsible for bringing curriculum forward.

Board questions and comments followed.

- #6221 – Family Life and Sex Education

Dr. Rosato commented that the language that has been added to this policy came from the No Child Left Behind Legislation which talks about notification and complying with Federal Guidelines. Our current practice does comply but this language needed to be added in our policy.

Dr. Title stated these policies have been reviewed and approved by CABE.

- #6132 – Emergency and Disaster Preparedness

Dr. Rosato stated that the new language is to strengthen this policy and give it a little more direction. Mr. Cullen and Mr. Morabito have reviewed this and given it their blessing.

- #6513 – Home Schooling

Dr. Rosato stated that there have been a number of changes related to homeschooling in the last few years. Currently there are 27 students in Fairfield who are being homeschooled, which is an option that parents have available to them. This language was taken from CABE. It gives parents much more latitude and flexibility.

Mrs. Brand pointed out that the subcommittee did discuss that if the district feels in any way that a child is at risk and is not being educated, there is a way to address that.

B. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board of Education approve preschool tuition.

Dr. Title stated that this was discussed during the budget process, and there was a recommendation in the audit about charging tuition for some of our preschool slots.

Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that for the last three years the income cut off has been based on the pool of applicants. Three years ago the cut off for free preschool was \$80,000. The applications were reviewed again two years ago and the cut off was \$70,000. Last year the household income cutoff was decreased to \$60,000. Any family that had a household income of \$60,000 or less was provided a slot in one of our preschools, either at McKinley or Burr. The application pool grows from year to year, and this year it was determined that it could not be based on the pool of applicants any longer. Research was conducted on the fee structure of the local preschools, and the 2009 census of the average household incomes in Fairfield was reviewed. Based on this data, it was decided to target the bottom 21.4% of families in Fairfield and a \$49,999 household income cutoff for free preschool was determined. Those spots will be available primarily at Burr

but some will also be available at ECC. Families earning \$50,000 to \$74,999 will pay a reduced rate of \$1,750 and families earning more than \$75,000 will be charged a full tuition of \$3,500 per year. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard briefly described the program. The program at Burr is five days per week for 2 hours and 45 minutes each session, morning and afternoon, and transportation is provided. The ECC program is a four day per week program for 2 hours and 45 minutes each session and transportation will not be provided. Morning students do not attend on Friday and afternoon students do not attend on Wednesday. Both sites will serve 3 and 4 year olds. Burr will start with 32 slots for students, and ECC will have about 33 slots in addition to those students who receive special services and students who are grandfathered in because they attended as 3 year olds and will be there next year as 4 year olds.

Board questions followed.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- C. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve line item transfers in the amount of \$290,000 for the 2010-2011 fiscal year as detailed in the Financial Statement – Enclosure No. 14.

Mrs. McWain stated that the Board reviewed the quarterly report in April and discussed the projected budget shortfalls and the funding earmarked to cover the shortfalls. At this time the total amount of the budget areas requiring transfers is estimated to be \$575,000, which is the lowest amount that has been requested in many years. The total amount estimated for transfers is not requested at this time because there may still be some adjustments necessary in some of the accounts before the fiscal year closes on June 30. The Board will receive an update in June and a final budget report will be provided after all accounts have closed in the summer. The two areas that have shortfalls are maintenance, specifically in custodial overtime, and unbudgeted maintenance projects. The only other area that will have a significant shortfall is special education and that is basically for tuition and other contracted services. At this time the Board is being asked to approve line item transfers in the amount of \$290,000.

Board questions and comments followed.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

9. Public Comments and Petitions – None

10. Open Board Comment -

Mrs. Brand commented on the murals in the foyer at Tomlinson and expressed concern that when the renovation was done, sprinklers were put in just above them, and they are at risk if the sprinkler system goes off. She asked if the Board would be willing to allow her to see if there are options. Mrs. Albin commented that she had spoken with someone for the name of an art restorationist and she will pass that information on to Dr. Title. She suggested this be brought back to the Board for discussion at another date. Mrs. Brand stated that her primary concern is to at least move them so they are not sitting right in front of the sprinklers and then look further as to whether or not we are able to restore them. She would like to make sure they don't get destroyed.

11. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:35 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary