

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Minutes of the Executive Session and the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Ms. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu and Mrs. Albin (arrived 6:41 p.m.). Ms. Zahn was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Mrs. Margaret Mary Fitzgerald, Attorney Lisa Eagen and Selectman Jim Walsh.
2. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the Fairfield Education Association (FEA) and the Fairfield School Administrators Association (FSAA).

Motion carried: 7:0:0.

3. Convene to Regular Meeting of the Board of Education at 7:26 p.m.
4. Chairman Mr. John Mitola called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:35 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Brand, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Ms. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery and Mr. Perry Liu. Ms. Zahn was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Reps and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 50 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
5. Mr. Mitola led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
6. Ms. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular meeting of September 13, 2011.

Motion carried: 7:0:1. Mr. Liu abstained.

7. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-
  - ◆ Emma Sweet and Sara Wiant reported that a 9/11 memorial ceremony was held at Fairfield Ludlowe HS, SATs were last Saturday, this past week the Marine Band gave a performance, and the Cancer Awareness Club had someone speak to them on brain cancer. Yesterday was the Ludlowe vs. Warde soccer game and tomorrow is the Ludlowe vs. Warde volleyball game. There is a new Spirit Club to get more student participation at sporting events. The Homecoming Dance will take place next week after the homecoming football game. Fundraisers are taking place for the senior prom and other senior events that take place during the year.
  - ◆ Mrs. Albin – No report.
  - ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that the Board of Health will meet next Monday evening. CES-The Common Core State Standards adopted by the State of Connecticut were rolled out on September 26. This will require all districts in the state to review their curriculum to make sure it is in alignment. You will not see CMTs or the CAPT any longer. The type of testing will be completely different. Testing is supposed to be done on computers, and i-Pads cannot be used. This will be a huge undertaking, and districts are now forming transition teams to help facilitate this. CES is also looking at how to develop a safe school climate, which is part of the bullying piece; and districts are encouraged to share what they have with them. The Six to Six preschool was accredited with outstanding results. CES has had some behavioral issues, and when they investigated they found that the kids with the behavioral problems were not the ones testing poorly but were the kids who had high test scores. Board members received a copy of the draft minutes from the last policy committee meeting in their Friday Packet.

- ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that CABE's 2011 taskforces are now underway and will be reporting in January. SEPTA's October meeting will be tomorrow night, and they will be doing a mock IEP. Some highlights from the September meeting: SEPTA is now on Facebook, they are using Volunteer Spot this year, they are conducting a Mabel's Labels fundraiser and teachers and professionals who join SEPTA will be entered into a drawing for an all-expense paid trip to a seminar in New York City presented by author and educator, Michelle Garcia-Winner. A number of programs have started: First Tee Golfing at Fairchild Wheeler, Challenger Sports Soccer, Teen Nights at the Y on the last Friday of every month and there will be a trip to the pumpkin patch on October 18. The US Department of Education Special Ed Program does a rotating five year inspection of the state programs, and Connecticut is up this year.
  - ◆ Mr. Fattibene reported that the Transportation Safety Advisory Committee had one referral last month and that was decided.
  - ◆ Ms. Iacono reported that she was unable to attend the Special Projects Standing Building Committee meeting, however, the committee did recommend awarding the contract for Sherman to THP. The RTM approved the Sherman project unanimously. The Board of Finance approved the roof warranty request and they also approved changes to the Purchasing Guidelines.
  - ◆ Mr. Kery reported that PTA Council met last Wednesday. This year PTA Council has a \$58,000 budget to assist with scholarships and enrichment programs that go above and beyond in assisting the local PTAs. He thanked the members of PTA Council and the local PTAs for all of the work they do. PTA Council will hold a Board of Ed Candidates Open Forum on Monday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m.
  - ◆ Mr. Liu – No report.
  - ◆ Mr. Mitola – No report.
8. Mr. Mitola asked to move Old Business Item B, Approval of Understanding on Health Insurance, to this point on the agenda.
9. Ms. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve the Understanding on Health Insurance.

Mr. Mitola stated that at the last meeting the Board discussed this agreement and changes to the language in it. Over the last month changes were made, the language was tightened and it was discussed with legal counsel. Last week this document was sent to other Town bodies, and the First Selectman and Chairman of the Board of Finance requested that no action be taken on this tonight. They asked that it be tabled to give them time to look it over since some changes were made.

First Selectman Tetreau commented that one of the changes made was a timeframe at which point the reserves would be adjusted, and he would like time to go back and look at what the tax impact of that is and what that does overall to the adjustments. Those accounts impact the entire Town balance sheet. These are the asset accounts or the reserve accounts that the rating agencies take a very close look at. The Town currently sits with a AAA credit rating and a negative outlook from Moody's. The concern from Moody's is the internal service fund. That fund is made up of the insurance fund for the Board of Ed, the insurance fund for the Town and the workers comp fund or the overall risk management fund. The biggest driver is the workers comp number. That is what makes us very sensitive to any adjustments in the reserve. For the last three to four years the Board of Finance has taken a very close look at this fund to make sure that each of the accounts was fully funded. However, the Board of Finance and the administration has not been able to adjust those balances based on the challenging economy and the intent of keeping tax increases to a minimum. The other piece of this has been the very significant growth on the workers comp side. First Selectman Tetreau asked the Board to consider postponing this item to allow time for Dr. Title, himself, Mr. Flynn and Mr. Hiller to complete the financial picture so all of the facts are in front of you in terms of what the impact is on the Town and the other reserve funds.

Board questions, comments and discussion followed regarding the need for a memorandum, concern with the previous agreement between Dr. Clark and Mr. Flatto, putting that agreement on the Board of Selectmen's agenda and making it null and void since there is a stipulation in the agreement that if

the Board of Ed does it the Town takes all of the funds in that account and if the Board of Selectmen takes action and dismisses it entirely there is no penalty.

Mr. Kery withdrew his second to the motion.

Mr. Kery moved to postpone this item to a date certain.

Dr. Title recommended postponing this to a date certain, the December Board meeting.

Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Ms. Iacono that the Board of Education postpone this item to the December 2011 Board meeting.

Board questions, comments and discussion followed regarding workers comp, pursuing a memo of understanding, the importance to have something in writing that defines how we are working together with the town on this, how we get from A to B, and having something in writing at least in terms of laying out the facts.

Mr. Tetreau stated that the Board of Education, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance need to have all of the facts; the liability is generated fifty percent from the Board of Ed side and fifty percent from the Town side.

Dr. Title stated that this is about health insurance. The only discussions the Board of Ed has had have been about health insurance; workers comp is a whole separate issue that has not been part of the discussions and is not in the agreement.

Board discussion continued on rescinding the prior letter of understanding entered into with the prior First Selectman and the prior Superintendent, putting something in writing, this proposed memo of understanding is just a letter of understanding that could be rescinded by either party at any time, and how the rating agencies will look at our reserve funds if we don't have an agreement.

Mr. Tetreau stated that he does not believe that the rating agencies know about the agreement, all they are looking at is the total dollars in the reserve fund and the total liabilities.

Mr. Tetreau stated the he believes a new agreement is needed.

Motion carried: 7:0:1. Mrs. Albin abstained.

#### 10. Superintendent's Report-

##### A. Enrollment/Staffing Update-

Dr. Title reported that Enclosure No. 2 shows the actual enrollment changes from October 1, 2010 to October 1, 2011 and contrasts them with the actual staffing changes from 2010 to 2011. This is K-12 enrollment and does not include pre-k. There are 131 more kids and 29.25 fewer FTE staff.

Enclosure No. 3 shows how our actual FTE count compares to the budgeted FTE count, and we are almost exactly on the number. The FTE count in the budget is 1426.9 and the actual is 1427.65; within one FTE count, which is due to the hiring of a paraprofessional. Everything we said we were going to do we did. The budget the Board agreed to as amended has been enacted.

Board questions followed.

##### B. Maintenance Projects Update-

Dr. Title stated that he will be reporting quarterly on maintenance projects. These are mostly maintenance projects that are in the operating budget. Enclosure No. 4 shows the location of the project, description of the project, status, amount budgeted and account balance. This will be a way to track the progress of projects and to also track unanticipated projects that come up during

the year. Dr. Title stated that there was a delay in the ECC project, which was due to a contractor issue. The project is anticipated to be completed the first week in November.

C. Other-

Dr. Title stated that as Ms. Iacono reported, the roof extension and warranty project was approved by the Board of Finance, and he is working with the Moderator of the RTM to figure out what the best way is to schedule it with the RTM. It may not get scheduled in October or may get scheduled and postponed, but it will get to the RTM this calendar year. A fix for the Tomlinson lower parking lot is going to the Police Commission tomorrow at 4:30 p.m. He does not anticipate that it will be approved but hopefully will spark a discussion.

11. Old Business-

A. End of Fiscal Year June 30, 2011 Report-

Mrs. Munsell stated that Enclosure No. 5 is an updated report detailing the areas reviewed at the June 14, 2011 Board of Education meeting and is the final update of the end of year budget justification for 2010-11. The final end of year balance for fiscal year 2010-11 was \$31,741, which was returned to the Town. At year end, the total amount of budget transfers was \$597,574 or .42 of one percent of the budget allocation. She briefly reviewed the report and each of the seven major classifications and the balances and shortfalls in the accounts.

Board questions and comments followed. Ms. Iacono stated for the record that the Board of Ed returned \$31,741 to the Town.

12 New Business-

A. Quarterly Financial Update-

Mrs. Munsell stated that the first quarter of the 2011-12 year covers July, August and September. Financial reports for the first quarter are preliminary since as of September 30<sup>th</sup> school has only been in session for one month. During the beginning of school in September, staff assignments are being finalized and salaries and benefits are being confirmed. Salaries and benefits are 80 percent of the budget. As of September 30 just over \$17 million has been spent and almost \$95 million has been encumbered, leaving a balance of a little over \$33 million or 23 percent. The financial report distributes our budget of \$145,680,350, over seven major categories: personnel services, fixed charges, pupil personnel expenses, school expenses, support expenses, maintenance/operation/transportation and capital. She briefly explained what is included in each of these categories. She also explained the process or cycle of how expenses are incurred throughout the year.

Board questions followed regarding what will happen when the \$450,000 from capital is moved to health insurance, pupil personnel services tuition, student transportation line 317, how much might be reimbursed by the excess cost reimbursement from special education, how much of the student transportation cost is in a deficit or has a negative unencumbered balance that is attributable to additional cost of regular busing versus costs expended for special education transportation which is going to be reimbursed by the excess cost, why pupil personnel line item 307, other services, has a fairly large unencumbered negative balance of \$92,000, why nothing was budgeted in support expenses line item 404-supplies, books and materials, if money is being expended in that line item.

B. First Read of Policies

- #4220 – Smoking by School Employees
- #5314 – Smoking (Students)
  
- #4220 – Mrs. Parks stated that this policy adds the following language to the first sentence: or any other unauthorized use of tobacco, tobacco products, including chewing tobacco or tobacco paraphernalia. This policy just covered smoking and not any of the other tobacco

products. The language came from CABE and it covers all of the tobacco products which we don't want used in the schools by school employees.

- #5314 – This policy is smoking related to student behavior. This policy includes not only the use but the possession of tobacco, tobacco products, including chewing tobacco or tobacco paraphernalia. We are not only banning the use but are also banning possession while in school.

Board comments followed. This policy will be on the December agenda for approval.

- C. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education revise the authorized signers of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs to designate David G. Title, Superintendent of Schools, as the person authorized to sign claims for reimbursement, and in his absence Doreen Munsell, Director of Finance and Business Services, as the second person authorized to sign claims for reimbursement.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

- D. Mrs. Dow moved, seconded Mr. Kery that the Board of Education authorize the Chairman to send a letter to the First Selectman requesting a building committee for the Fairfield Ludlowe High School renovation project as listed in the Long-Range Facilities Plan.

Dr. Title stated that this project is next up in the Long-Range Facilities Plan. This is an opportunity for this Board, as the ones who approved the Long Range Facilities Plan, to move this to the next step. This will expand the footprint at Fairfield Ludlowe High School. It will add classrooms, expand the cafeteria and some other upgrades and renovations.

Board comments, questions and discussion followed regarding a place holder amount for this project, the traffic on this site and putting more students at an already larger populated high school, the need for a traffic study before taking this next step, the need for a traffic study that addresses the future enrollment population of Fairfield Ludlowe High School how it will affect the population and the traffic situation, being asked to vote on something this big without having sufficient time to review and discuss it, and following the process of discussing at one meeting and then voting on an item at the next meeting.

Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand to amend the motion to postpone this item to a date certain, the December meeting, for the purpose of having a traffic study done at the Ludlowe campus site.

Board discussion followed on the amendment regarding what criteria would be used for a traffic study, who will develop the criteria, having Town Engineer Bill Hurley look at what the projected enrollment is going to look like and what may need to be done to the site for safety reasons would be very helpful and also would help save on the expense, not taking traffic issues into account up front, safety has to come first, requesting a building committee before having educational specifications for the project, doing a traffic study prior to a establishing a building committee, concern with postponing this to wait for a traffic study to be done, and pushing forward on something that has not been completely vetted.

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

Back to main motion.

Mr. Liu moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand to postpone this item to the December Board Meeting.

Motion failed: 3:5:0. Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand and Mrs. Dow voted in favor. Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Ms. Iacono and Mr. Mitola voted in opposition.

Back to main motion.

Public Comment-

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, expressed concern about putting this many students at Ludlowe HS. It is already overcrowded and she is concerned about safety. She asked the Board to think about doing something else, maybe asking students to voluntarily move from Ludlowe to Warde. Warde can handle the students, Ludlowe cannot. This needs to be addressed immediately.

Cathy Coyle, Sherwood Farm Road, asked if the Board considered how much more square footage is at Warde, moving the ECC, that you must receive a waiver from the Town for Ludlowe's expansion and you might not receive it, that Ludlowe is already overcrowded and enrollment is growing every day, that the proposed solution to this overcrowding will take years to accomplish considering the lengthy approval process through Town boards and subsequent construction of the project, a traffic study for Ludlowe and its surrounding area, the tax burden on this Town, placing the highest concentration of students on the most over-utilized campus in the busiest area of town while another high school campus of roughly equal size across town will be under-utilized in comparison.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated that something has to be done. The Board ran through middle school redistricting, please take your time with this. She also commented on the girls and boys "gang" bathrooms and hopes there are other bathrooms for the other students and not just for "gangs."

Ken Lee, Rhoda Avenue, commented that building committees are to study before they build, and he does not see the down side to getting a group of professionals together to study. He also thanked the Board members who are retiring.

Further Board comments continued.

Motion carried: 5:3:0. Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Ms. Iacono and Mr. Mitola voted in favor. Mrs. Dow, Mrs. Brand and Mr. Liu voted in opposition.

### 13. Public Comments and Petitions – None

### 14. Open Board Comment –

Mrs. Albin stated that the time has come for the future Board to look at new models for how students leave their elementary schools and move on to secondary school. There is only so much space in this town, and we are never going to divide 11 schools comfortably into these spaces. The time has come to look at different ways to populate the secondary schools.

Ms. Iacono acknowledged and thanked the Board members who are retiring: Mrs. Dow, Mr. Mitola, and Mrs. Albin. She also acknowledged and thanked Ms. Zahn and Mr. Fattibene who are up for re-election and hopefully will be rejoining the Board.

Mrs. Brand welcomed the prospective Board of Education candidates and thanked Mrs. Dow, Mr. Mitola, Mrs. Albin for all of the time they put in and all of the work they have done.

Mr. Mitola thanked everyone for the six years he served on the Board; it has been a pleasure.

### 15. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:40 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.