

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

JAN 24 2012

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

APPROVED

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, January 10, 2012, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Board Conference Room.

1. Chairman Ms. Pamela Iacono called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:32 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Sue Brand, Mr. John Convertito, Mr. Philip Dwyer, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Jessica Gerber, Mr. Perry Liu, Mrs. Jennifer Maxon Kennelly and Mr. Tim Kery (arrived 7:50 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, Fairfield Ludlowe High School Student Representative Emma Sweet and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 125 people comprised the remainder of the audience.
2. Ms. Iacono led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of Minutes-
  - A. Mrs. Gerber moved seconded by Mr. Dwyer that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 13, 2011.

Motion carried: 7:0:1. Mrs. Brand, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Ms. Iacono, Mrs. Kennelly and Mr. Liu voted in favor. Mr. Fattibene abstained.

4. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports-

- ◆ Emma Sweet reported that at Fairfield Ludlowe High School mid-term exams start on January 19, seniors are submitting forms for internships which begin in May, the AFS Club is getting ready for a service trip to New Orleans and the music students are fundraising for a trip to California in the spring. There is a new piano in the front foyer which students are encouraged to play. Mrs. Huber's Textile and Design class won first place in the state on their tests, which were taken back in the spring. Science teacher, Mr. Vital, was recently published in a chemistry journal.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that the Board of Health met last night. The Health Assessments Policy was approved unanimously. Mrs. Brand asked whether or not the Board of Health was going to consider the Connecticut Concussion Law in their initial exams, and they said they were not. Mrs. Brand stated that there is a procedure that takes place within the schools and on the fields but there is no policy. A State Legislation was passed in 2010, and she recommended the Board of Ed consider it for a policy. Another item that came up at the Board of Health meeting is that it is no longer permitted by law for a school nurse to give anyone medications for distribution when they are on a non-field trip, i.e., extra-curricular activities, the exception being sporting events and intra-murals. That is a significant shift, and there are issues coming up now with events such as ski trips. If a student is special education or has a 504 plan, accommodations will be made but otherwise they will not. She thought this might be something for the Policy Committee to look at and to at least make sure everyone understands the implications of this and the limits.
- ◆ Mr. Convertito reported that the Policy Committee will meet on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Special Projects Standing Building Committee-Sherman renovations are going along. The kitchen addition has been framed out and enclosed in steel, the foundation for the bump out in the front has been poured, what was the main office is being gutted and there is an RFP out to hire a "clerk of the works" to track the progress.
- ◆ Mr. Dwyer reported that CES will meet on Thursday. There is a new ad hoc committee called Building Projects Review Committee. The intent of the committee is to streamline and make the decision-making process for capital projects more efficient. The first meeting was late this afternoon. Most of the discussion related to non-recurring capital projects and the process by which they will get reviewed by the various Town bodies. There was a lot of discussion around the role of the TFC. The original charge of the TFC was that projects would get referred to them through the Board of Selectmen, and this year they seem to be referred to them by a variety of Town bodies. It was agreed that it should go back to the original process and that the TFC will

only get involved if the Board of Selectmen asks them to be involved. Another meeting is scheduled for next month.

- ◆ Mr. Fattibene reported the Stratfield Building Committee canceled their last meeting. The Transportation Advisory Committee is reviewing a request for a change in a bus stop that has not yet been decided.
- ◆ Mrs. Gerber reported that Parks & Rec met in December, and there was a very preliminary proposal for an outdoor ice rink in the parking lot at Smith Richardson Golf Course. It would be used for public skate, cub scouts, brownies, etc., and also as the practice space for the high school co-op hockey team. This would piggyback on a proposal that will be put forth for extensive renovations at Smith Richardson. The baseball fields at Gould Manor are being sodded, and the girls' softball field should be open by August or September. The neighbors of the softball field have withdrawn their lawsuit against the Town.
- ◆ Ms. Iacono reported that the RTM approved the teacher and administrator contracts and the roof warranty proposal.
- ◆ Mrs. Kennelly reported that the SEPTA cookie walk was very successful and raised over \$1,000. Their next meeting will be a social tomorrow at the Pilot House.
- ◆ Mr. Liu reported that the Fairfield Woods Building Committee met the other night, and the project is coming along beautifully.

5. Superintendent's Report-

Dr. Title stated that he will reserve his time for the end of the meeting when he will present the budget.

6. Old Business

- A. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Fattibene that the Board of Education approve the Safe School Climate Plan.

Board questions and comments followed regarding whether case managers could be the same person for both the victim and the perpetrator, what measures will be in place for assessing the interventions, what the appropriate actions are for a parent to take if they think their child is being bullied and what they could expect as a response, concern that this plan involves some extensive training of staff and is that allocated for in the 2012-13 budget and is there money in the current budget for training that will start now, will there be compensation for those employees who take on additional responsibilities such as the school climate specialist, concern with the lack of a detailed appeals process, having those involved in this keep a record of their time commitment for future reference, is there something in this plan so if a student consistently hears a group of students making comments that are aimed at a class of people and not an individual, that student could file a report so the district could take action, what age group of students is being targeted for the district school climate team, having students who graduated from our schools 4 or 5 years ago on the district school climate team and how we are reaching out to get community members.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- B. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber that the Board of Education postpone approval of the Understanding on Health Insurance to the next Regular Board Meeting, January 24, 2012.

Mrs. Iacono stated that this is a procedural move because the MOU is still not ready. A meeting has been set up with the First Selectman and the Chairman of the Board of Finance to try to iron out the details so there will be something to act upon for the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Board questions, comments and discussion followed regarding having legal counsel review the document before the Board votes on it, whether there will be discussion and a vote on the 24<sup>th</sup> or discussion on the 24<sup>th</sup> and a vote at the next meeting and how an amount could be built into the budget if there is no agreement. Dr. Title stated that he needed some guidance about how to budget for health insurance; and the Chairman of the Board of Finance, the Chief Fiscal Officer

and the First Selectman all said they are comfortable with us budgeting at two times the IBNR, so he built the budget that way.

Board questions and discussion continued.

Mr. Convertito stated that there are Board members who have no idea what this is, and he would like to see a presentation on the 24<sup>th</sup> and vote at the following meeting. Mr. Dwyer asked if a document would be ready for one of the two budget review meetings on January 17<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> so the Board could review it at one meeting and still meet the deadline of voting on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Brand asked if it would be possible to have AON reps at the table to answer questions on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Kery called the question, seconded by Mrs. Gerber.

Motion carried: 6:3:0. Mrs. Brand Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono and Mrs. Gerber voted in favor. Mr. Liu, Mr. Convertito, and Mrs. Kennelly voted in opposition.

Vote on Motion "that the Board of Education postpone approval of the Understanding on Health Insurance to the next Regular Board Meeting, January 24, 2012"

Motion carried: 5:4:0. Mr. Kery, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono and Mrs. Gerber voted in favor. Mrs. Brand, Mr. Liu, Mr. Convertito and Mrs. Kennelly voted in opposition.

C. Discussion of Board of Education By-Law items that were postponed from the December 13, 2011 Board of Education Meeting

Ms. Iacono stated that there were three hold over items from the last Board meeting; which are listed on Enclosure No. 3.

Mr. Fattibene moved, seconded by Mrs. Kennelly to refer this to the Policy Committee which is scheduled to meet on January 23.

Mr. Liu commented on the importance of receiving the agenda, enclosures and backup material five business days prior to a meeting. He commented on the Board's history of having two meetings a month an educational meeting and a business meeting. Items were presented at one meeting and voted on at the next meeting. This practice gave the Board time to discuss, think and do their homework in order to make these important decisions. If material that is going to be voted on at the upcoming Tuesday meeting is received late Friday afternoon, it is extremely little time to do the due diligence that he believes needs to be done, and he finds it difficult to make these quick decisions with less than two business days of review.

Motion carried: 7:2:0. Mr. Kery, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Dwyer, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Liu, Mr. Convertito and Mrs. Kennelly voted in favor. Mrs. Brand and Ms. Iacono voted in opposition.

7. Old Business

A. Quarterly Financial Update-

Mrs. Munsell stated that Enclosure No. 4 is the Quarterly Financial Report as of December 31, 2011, midway through the fiscal year. The total projected expenses are within budget. There are areas within the budget that will exceed their respective appropriations but anticipated savings in other areas are sufficient to cover those overages. Unanticipated maintenance projects and transportation modifications in the bus tiers and number of runs have created shortfalls in those areas. Significant savings in electricity because of a Town bid last spring and staff turnover will cover those overages. She briefly reviewed the major expense categories: personnel services, fixed charges, pupil personnel expenses, school expenses, support expenses, maintenance/operation/transportation and capital.

Board questions and comments followed regarding pupil personnel coverage on tuition, if there are any maintenance projects related to items that were asked for but were denied, the \$190,000 coverage in transportation, fixed charges for health insurance, any need for transfers coming up soon and having a report and update on the Food Services budget and the healthy school lunch program at an upcoming meeting, perhaps January 24.

B. Distribution and Presentation of Superintendent's Recommended 2012-2013 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Projects

Dr. Title briefly reviewed the highlights of the recommended 2012-2013 operating budget. This budget has some improvements in it, some initiatives in it and at the same time is fiscally responsible. Some of the improvements in this budget include extending the elementary math support model to the middle schools and the high schools. An additional 1.0 FTE math resource teacher is proposed for each middle school to address student math performance and an additional .4 at each high school to continue the support for students who are moving out of Algebra 1 into Geometry and Algebra 2. A complete reconfiguration of special education staffing has been done at the elementary schools. There are major staffing implications for this, and there are offsets as well. Funding has been improved for a number of instructional initiatives. Under the new cycle of curriculum development, as programs come up for review and approval we want to support them with the resources so there is more money in instructional initiatives than in the past. Funding was put into the budget for a new student information system, which was flagged in the audit and is sorely needed in the district. Some reconfiguration and improvements are being done to English Language Learner services (ELL) at the elementary level, which is a growing population. Additional afternoon office coverage is proposed at the nine elementary schools that don't have it now. Part-time assistance is being requested, particularly to help with afternoon issues and bus students who are brought back to school in the afternoon when there is no one waiting for them at their stop. Additional staff is proposed to handle the increasing high school enrollment. More money is being put into preventative maintenance programs, including roofs, and an additional plumber is being requested for the district. The safe school climate survey is being funded and some professional development for that Plan. Many of these have offsets in different areas of the budget. The recommended budget increase this year is 2.6%. The reason improvements and initiatives can be made is that there are some areas of this budget that have modest increases compared to prior years. For example, this year the average settlement for contracts is about 2% and last year's budget was built on a much higher figure, last June the Town rebid the electrical contract for the entire town so there are significant savings in electrical costs and legal fees are going down because contracts that need to be negotiated are going down. This year started with a sliding scale for preschool tuition and that program has been incredibly successful with more revenue than anticipated, which allows us to offset some of the preschool expenses. We are budgeting for increased transportation costs; an additional bus or two will be needed because of increasing enrollment and some additional runs and there is a contract increase of 3%. Virtually every initiative and improvement referenced comes with some cost offsets and that limits the net impact to the budget.

Five minute break while budget books were distributed.

Dr. Title highlighted some of the changes in the budget book this year. The section that has changed the most from last year is the Executive Summary which begins on page 15. It is a one page executive summary that is color coded for each of the 11 major objectives. The next few pages break out each of the 11 objectives and gives more detail behind the changes. The description of what each item is has been moved up. The description is on the facing page and the description of any changes is next to the chart. Page 18 explains what is in the accounts, and page 19 explains some of the differences. Page 35 is the last page of that section and the colors then match the colors on the Executive Summary. He briefly reviewed the various sections of the budget book: and the detail that can be found in each section.

Dr. Title highlighted the capital improvement projects, which is the \$2 million in capital that we are allowed to request. Some projects that were turned down last year have been put back in because those problems did not go away. The Dwight boilers, the other half of the Jennings bathrooms and the Tomlinson façade work were put back in. New items are the window replacement project at Osborn Hill, the Tomlinson flooring system, a traffic project to relieve some of the congestion at Tomlinson and all of the oil tanks that are underground that need to come out.

8. Public Comments and Petitions –

Anne Pasco, FEA President, asked for clarification regarding school nurses and administration of medication. She would like to have clarified who is going to give those youngsters their medication when they go on a non-field trip or extra-curricular activities. It already came to her attention that the ski teams are part of the clubs, and if they have to hire a nurse, they want clarification. She asked if this could be addressed at the next meeting.

9. Open Board Comment –

Mr. Convertito asked if any items that were cut from the budget last year have been restored in this budget, and if so is there a place in the budget that shows that.

Mr. Liu commented on the January school lunch menu and asked to have it on the January 24 agenda for discussion. He has been happy with the progress Food Services has been making but he is at a loss for words with the new alternative that allows a student to choose pizza every day of the week and does not see how that promotes healthy eating. He would like to have the Board review the Food Services Program and our commitment to promoting healthy food at the next Board meeting. Ms. Iacono stated that the Board is in the midst of budget season and if this could wait until February or a later meeting that would be most helpful. She asked Mr. Liu to send his request through the Chair and try to get two other Board members to support this request. Mr. Liu stated that he would like to send the request through the Chair.

Mr. Dwyer commented that perhaps when discussing the budget and Food Services it would be helpful if the staff could be here to comment on whether the budget supports continuing the healthy foods initiative or improving upon it.

Mrs. Brand commented that it is obvious that there is a gap in mutual understandings with the new legislation regarding the administration of medications during extra-curricular activities. There needs to be a protocol in place so people have a better understanding, and the information needs to get out. She suggested that this be reviewed and discussed by the Policy Committee. Ms. Iacono asked Mrs. Brand to send an email and make her request through the Chair.

Ms. Iacono stated that she has one procedural item. Board members received a letter in their Friday packet from the Town Clerk regarding requirements for meetings, FOI, etc. The letter requests that the Board Chair distribute and discuss Article XI of the Town Charter "Standards of Conduct." Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mr. Convertito to waive the reading. It was the sense of the Board that they have read the Standards and understand them.

10. Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Jessica Gerber  
Secretary