

Fairfield Board of Education
MINUTES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL/REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

Tuesday, November 27, 2012
501 Kings Highway East
2nd Floor Board Conference Room

1. Vice Chairman Mr. Philip Dwyer called the Executive Session to order at 7:05pm. Other members present were Mrs. Jennifer Kennelly, Mr. John Convertito, Mr. Perry Liu, Mrs. Jessica Gerber, Ms. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:10pm), Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Tim Kery and Mrs. Sue Brand. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and Director of Human Resources Ann Leffert.

2. Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mr. Liu the recommended motion, "that the Board of Education convene into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations"

Motion Carried: 8:0:0 *Ms. Iacono was not present for this vote.*

Executive Session adjourned at 7:40pm.

3. Call to Order of the Organizational/Regular Meeting of the Board of Education.

Chairman Ms. Pamela Iacono called the Organizational/Regular meeting to order at 7:48pm. Other Board members present were Mrs. Jennifer Kennelly, Mr. John Convertito, Mr. Perry Liu, Mrs. Jessica Gerber, Mr. Philip Dwyer, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Tim Kery, and Mrs. Sue Brand. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title, members of the Central Office Administration, Fairfield Ludlowe student representative Marco Congello, Fairfield Warde student representatives Danielle Clark and Acacia Longley, and approximately 50 members of the public.

4. Ms. Iacono led the Board and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Iacono took a moment of personal privilege to say that it has been an honor and pleasure to serve as Chairman for the past year, and she wishes Mr. Phil Dwyer well.

5. Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education.

Mrs. Gerber moved, seconded by Mrs. Kennelly the recommended motion "that in accordance with the By-Laws, Superintendent Dr. David Title will serve as Temporary Chairman and Secretary during the election of the Board of Officers"

Motion Carried: 9:0:0

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to nominate Mr. Philip Dwyer as Chairman.
Motion Carried: 6:3:0 Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, and Mrs. Brand in favor; Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, and Mr. Kery against.

Mr. Fattibene moved, seconded by Mr. Convertito to nominate Ms. Pam Iacono as Vice Chairman.

Motion Carried: 8:1:0 Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Ms. Brand in favor; Mr. Liu against.

Mrs. Kennelly moved, seconded by Mr. Dwyer to nominate Mrs. Jessica Gerber as Secretary.

Motion Carried: 9:0:0

Mr. Dwyer thanked Ms. Iacono for her years of service to the Board. He then requested feedback on any changes to the By-Laws to be voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. Liu asked whether curriculum approval was an item in the By-Laws. Mr. Dwyer responded that it was not.

Mrs. Kennelly would like to revisit adding a FEA representative, considering the new teacher evaluation process. Mr. Dwyer asked Mrs. Kennelly to prepare some language so that it can be voted on.

Ms. Iacono would like to eliminate Open Board Comment. Mr. Dwyer asked Ms. Iacono to prepare the wording so that it can also be presented at the next meeting.

Mrs. Brand would like to bring back the number of days that Board members have to review Board Meeting materials, and to increase it.

Mrs. Kennelly asked whether Board appointments must be written in to the By-Laws. Mr. Dwyer responded that the Chairman can appoint members, as the Chairman deems appropriate, and appointments do not have to be included in the By-Laws.

Ms. Iacono would like to revise the Board agenda regarding reports. That not all reports should be listed, but that the Chairman can ask if there are any reports.

Mr. Dwyer would like the Board to consider changing the placement of the public comment in the agenda.

Mr. Dwyer asked the Board to consider the Board assignments, and asked that those on building committees remain as assigned for the purpose of consistency. Mr. Dwyer invited Board members to email him regarding Board appointments, and asked that Board members remain as currently assigned until new appointments are finalized.

Ms. Iacono stated that she does not wish to continue as RTM liaison, as she has been in this appointed position for three years.

Mr. Liu stated that Transportation liaison should be added to the list of appointed positions.

6. Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

Mr. Dwyer ended the Organizational Meeting of the Board of Education, and started the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education by introducing the presenters from Woodard and Curran.

7. PCB Plan Presentation by Woodard and Curran.

Dr. Title provided the background for the presentation. Due to the ongoing issues with Osborn Hill School, Woodard & Curran consultants were hired to provide the expertise required to survey Town and school buildings for PCBs. This presentation will also be given at Board of Finance and RTM meetings.

Mr. Jeffrey Hamel and Ms. Lisa Campe, Woodard and Curran Senior Vice Presidents, were introduced by Dr. Title. Mr. Hamel gave a background of the firm, saying they will be working with Fairfield Public Schools to develop a program that is consistent with some of the other hazardous material programs that Mr. Cullen already has in place, such as the Indoor Air Quality Program. In order to do that, the first aspect will be to look at each of the buildings, and assess potential presence of PCBs in the building using indicators such as Osborn Hill test results, age of the building, and substances that are in the building such as caulking and spray-on fire proofing. A quick screen that could be used is a chlorine test. PCBs cannot exist without chlorine. Woodard & Curran will be trying to answer the questions: (1) If a suspect PCB material present, what is the risk? (2) Is it at a concentration that is regulated? (3) Are there conditions in the building that could cause PCBs to be released that we could remedy? Schools that are post 1980 constructed will not be surveyed.

Lisa Campe stated that the mere presence of PCBs does not necessarily translate into a health risk. Factors to consider are building conditions, and accessibility and frequency of exposure to the room. These factors will help to develop a ranking matrix.

Mrs. Brand asked if there are two phases, and what does this cost? Mr. Hamel answered that the first phase is to look at the schools and develop a matrix. Following that, we determine if remediation is required. There will be a cost range depending on the results.

Mr. Dwyer asked whether the scope of work is limited to the survey. Mr. Hamel responded that it is limited at this time to the survey.

Mrs. Brand asked whether chlorine testing is less expensive, and will there be false positives using this method. Mr. Hamel answered that chlorine screening is a hand held instrument, which helps in the screening, but there may be false positives.

Mr. Kery asked about the EPA limits. We need direction on making our schools safe, as the same body that told us we had to close part of our Osborn Hill School, is also telling us there is no need to test the other schools. Mr. Hamel stated that the survey will provide more answers. Conservative PCB levels drive the action. If a level is exceeded,

there is a need to drive the level down, which doesn't necessarily mean there is a health risk at that level. This may be difficult to understand, but a conservative clean-up level is much different than a hazardous level. Ms. Lisa Campe explained that EPA air action levels for elementary assumes that children are eating PCBs in soil and fish, and then assumes that students are in the same spot 7 hours every day.

Mr. Convertito asked if the scope of work will be 3a and 3b, from the enclosure. Mr. Hamel responded that it also includes 3c.

8. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Gerber moved, seconded by Mrs. Kenelly, the recommended motion that" the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of October 9, 2012"

Motion Carried: 9:0:0

9. Student/Committee/Liaison Reports.

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board that reports should only be given when there is an imminent action required, with the exception of the student reports.

Mr. Marco Congello, FLHS Student Representative, reported the following items for Fairfield Ludlowe High School:

- Sticks for soldiers, run by the Lacrosse team, raised \$70,000 for families with hardships due to war.
- Girls Varsity volleyball won the FCIAC championship and made it to the State semi-finals.
- The Athletic Department was awarded the Michaels Achievement Cup.
- Super Storm Sandy t-shirt relief initiative is underway with proceeds going to local hurricane relief efforts.
- In October, the climate survey was completed.
- The Homecoming dance was rescheduled and it was fun and orderly.
- Alumni day was this past Wednesday, and it was a well-attended event.

Ms. Danielle Clark, and Ms. Acacia Longley, FWHS Student Representatives, reported the following for Fairfield Warde High School:

- 60 randomly selected students participated in a national test.
- Report Cards were just handed out.
- Completed the Climate Survey.
- Most fall sports made the State level. Winter sports are starting.
- Fundraising efforts are underway with "Humanity Now" for a trip to Africa over the summer. Key Club is fundraising for the holidays.
- Four music students were accepted into the All-Eastern music festival.
- Carillon rehearsals are underway, and tickets will be on sale.
- Students are working to open a school store to sell food and spiritwear.

Ms. Iacono thanked the representatives for giving of their free time to attend the meeting.

Mrs. Brand reported that at the Board of Health meeting, the main topic was Hurricane Sandy, and how to get reimbursements. A legislative change in medication policy will be coming to the Board shortly. Mrs. Brand said the district received rave reviews on the food items offered at the shelter during the storm, and asked how reimbursement would be processed for the food that was provided.

Mr. Fattibene reported that the Stratfield Building Committee is officially disbanded. Additionally there were two referrals to the Transportation Safety Advisors. Decisions have been rendered.

Mrs. Gerber reported on the Ad-Hoc Communications Meeting that was held, and provided copies of the minutes. The Committee looked at other district websites to compare, and would like there to be more basic information that is easy to find. It would be helpful to have a link to FairTV, a calendar on the front page with BOE, BOF and other Town meetings, hard copies distributed throughout Town, more outreach to PTAs and non-school groups, a Board newsletter, more information on Board members, perhaps a Facebook page, and a clarification of roles with the Board of Education and schools.

Mr. Dwyer asked if these changes could easily be made and asked whether the Board would like to vote on all suggestions, or just items 6-11. Ms. Brand stated that with regards to item 5, Board members must be invited to attend private meetings. Mr. Kery stated that he is fine with the first 5 items on the enclosure. Ms. Iacono stated that a Facebook page was a wonderful resource during the Hurricane. Mrs. Gerber stated that Nancy Byrnes informed her that a Facebook page will take time to manage. Mr. Liu stated that there are 9 people on the Board, which might be difficult to reach a consensus on a Facebook page, blog, or newsletter.

Mrs. Kennelly stated the second internet policy draft is still being worked on.

10. Superintendent's Report

A. Update on Hurricane Sandy

Dr. Title first thanked all the staff that went above and beyond their duties in order to help the Town. Custodial staff cleaned and Food Service staff prepared food for close to 300 people. Tom Cullen worked 24/7, and Joanne Fitzpatrick seemed to always be at the shelter. This effort raised questions about emergency protocols. FEMA reimbursement will not be received until next year, but there are some costs that are still being determined. Overtime work alone was around \$30,000. The Sherman playground and surrounding fields will need to be cleaned. Fairfield Warde High School had power surges and equipment and lab specimens were lost. Transportation is currently being provided for displaced families, which might be FEMA-reimbursable, but not sure. All damages and costs will be submitted for reimbursement.

Mr. Dwyer commented that Pam Iacono did a great job of keeping everyone informed, and thanked Tom Cullen and the entire district staff for the efforts.

Ms. Kennelly asked whether there might be special reimbursement for the food that was provided. Dr. Title answered that he is unsure, and he did bring this issue up specifically when the Commissioner visited.

Ms. Iacono thanked Dr. Title for his tremendous efforts during the storm, and all of his work at the shelter, the Emergency Operations Center, and with the press conferences. Ms. Iacono thanked the Town for recognizing the importance of having a school member on the emergency team.

Dr. Title mentioned a Hurricane Sandy fundraiser that will be launched soon by the PTA Council.

Mrs. Brand asked Dr. Title whether there will be any freezing of accounts due to these expenses, as the year has to be closed out and we can't spend money that we don't have. Dr. Title answered that the bigger issue is Osborn Hill School, and we are waiting to find out the reimbursement for Osborn Hill School.

11. Old Business

- A. Ms. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Gerber, the recommended motion that "the Board of Education approve the Amendments to the Racial Imbalance Plan as proposed"

Dr. Title stated that if this is not approved, something else will have to be done. If approved, this will have to be defended in front of the State. Dr. Title stated that he recommends approval.

Mrs. Brand questioned the PCB parameters, which are different for Pre-kindergarten students. Dr. Title responded that the levels for Pre-K are the same as for Kindergarten.

Mr. Fattibene stated that this is expanding the current duties, when there is already so much to do with current K-12 duties.

Mr. Liu stated concerns with unknown PCB levels. He also stated that this may not solve the problem, and at a time when we are under the gun economically, will not support it.

Ms. Iacono stated she is conflicted with the statutory obligation to follow the law with this issue, and asked Mr. Liu, through the Chair, what his recommendation might be. Mr. Liu responded it is not up to him personally to come up with a solution, and this issue might need further Board and/or administration discussion. Money might be better spent elsewhere to get the needed results. Ms. Iacono stated that this is a Board problem and should be countered with a solution. Ms. Iacono stated the only other solution, which she is not interested in pursuing, is redistricting. Students should be able to attend their

neighborhood school. The focus should be on student achievement, not redistricting. The only other opportunity is to sue the State.

Mr. Dwyer stated that we are under 2 percent over the measurement point. This is a problem that has been solved in the past, and then we creep over the number and the State sends us another letter. Mr. Dwyer is concerned about this issue, and stated that the district is obligated to respond at this time. If PCBs are found, we would go back to the State and it becomes a work in progress. Mr. Dwyer stated that he is in support of it.

Mrs. Kennelly stated there are 4 parts to the proposal, and perhaps they could be separated. Dr. Title stated that without the Pre-K element as part of the plan, it will not go through.

Public Comment: None

Motion Carried: 7:2:0 Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery in favor; Mr. Liu Mrs. Brand against.

12. New Business

A. 2012-2013 Student Calendar Amendments

Ms. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Brand the recommended motion that "that the Board of Education extend the 2012-2013 school year for any additionally incurred "no school" days for a maximum of 5 school days beyond June 21, 2013. Any days in excess of 5 school days past June 21, 2013, will be taken from April break"

Ms. Iacono stated it was unhealthy to go from January to July without a break and there will be excessive absenteeism.

Mrs. Brand stated that April break is important for juniors and seniors to visit schools, and asked whether it was contractually acceptable. Dr. Title stated that it is fine contractually.

Mrs. Gerber stated that school can be held on others days such as Good Friday.

Mr. Dwyer asked whether it was possible to have only 180 school days this year. Dr. Title stated that 182 school days were negotiated and moving to 180 should be a last resort. He would recommend keeping the Professional Development day, and there could be a lot of staff absenteeism on Good Friday.

Mr. Liu and Mr. Convertito would like to keep the calendar as is.

Mrs. Kennelly asked from the High School perspective, if an additional day were added to the school year, what would that day be with regards to instruction. Mr. Hatzis responded that the day would be an exam make-up day. Dr. Title said that the current date of June 20 graduation could remain.

Mr. Convertito stated that part of the reason to end the year sooner is due to the heat, and he recommends terminating the year at 180 days.

Mrs. Kennelly is in favor of amending this motion to have one day of wiggle room in June as a safety net.

Mr. Dwyer asked if any Board member wished to make any amendments to the motion, and there were none. Motion stands as written.

Public Comment:

Suzanne Miska, Rygate Road, stated that June 21st is long enough and that this Town just went through an unavoidable emergency, as stated in the attached letter.

As read by Ms. Iacono on behalf of Maureen Sawyer, Thor Place. She stated that April break should be maintained.

Mr. Dwyer stated that most emails received by the Board requested that the school year not be extended.

Dr. Title clarified that this decision will not impact the graduation date.

Motion Carried: 6:3:0 Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, and Mrs. Brand in favor; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, and Mr. Liu against.

B. Presentation of Draft 2013-2014 Student Calendar

Dr. Title explained that this calendar mirrors the current year calendar. It provides 7 “no school” days before impacting the April Break. It is possible to start school year sooner, the only hesitation is that the window to get things done over the summer becomes a bit tighter with a late ending and an early start.

Mr. Liu stated that he agrees that school should start on August 26, 2013.

Ms. Iacono agrees the school year should start sooner, but thinks it should start on Tuesday, August 27, 2013.

Mrs. Gerber asked when teachers would have to report. Dr. Title stated the teachers would have to report the previous week on August 21st or 22nd.

Mr. Convertito stated that he disagrees as the classes will be very hot.

Mrs. Brand stated that she prefers that students attend school on Presidents Day.

Mr. Kery asked what the teachers' schedule is during the three days prior to the start of school. Dr. Title stated that those days are heavily scheduled with staff meetings, Professional Development, and independent work. Mr. Kery is in favor of hearing more about starting the school year earlier.

Mrs. Kennelly raised the issue of Veteran's Day.

- C. Approval of the Wage and Premium Cost Share Insurance Amount Re-Opener of the Collective Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Paraprofessionals Union CSEA, SEIU Local 2001, CTW and the Fairfield Board of Education for the period July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

Mrs. Brand moved, seconded by Mrs. Kennelly the recommended motion : “that the Board of Education approve the Wage and Premium Cost Share Insurance Amount Re-Opener of the Collective Agreement between the Fairfield Educational Paraprofessionals Union CSEA, SEIU Local 2001, CTW and the Fairfield Board of Education for the period July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013”

Board Discussion followed.

Motion Carried: 8:1:0 Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Fattibene against.

13. Public Comments and Petitions

Elizabeth Moyse, South Pine Creek Road, stated that exposure to PCBs can cause more than cancer; it can also cause endocrine and immune issues.

Tricia Donovan, Taintor Drive, stated that parent concerns should not be cast aside. Parents are right to have concerns over a math program where students are sharing a textbook and aren't allowed to take the textbook home. Requested an open forum on why CPM was chosen.

Michael Cohenuram, Park Drive, regrets that the Roger Ludlowe Middle School class trip was canceled because too many school days would have been missed. He stated that it would have benefitted the students in Tanzania with new supplies and essentials.

Dawn Llewellyn, Sturges Road, asked why CPM was adopted, and asked whether it was adopted to narrow the achievement gap. Was Singapore math considered? We don't have a curriculum committee as required by State law.

Mary Mayer, Warner Hill Road, would like the Board to consider adding back the February break in next year's calendar.

Jay Wolk, Stratfield Rd., concurs with Perry Liu that all paraprofessionals deserve a raise.

Susie Burns, Cross Hwy stated that this year has been a complete disaster for her son in Algebra 1. The Board has not approved this textbook, Core Connections. There is no approval for this textbook, and the district should use the Algebra 1 textbook previously used and approved. Students are being required to use their own resources, i.e. computers, in order to access the textbook at home.

Vesselina Doulis, Mill Plain Road, read a letter on behalf of Terry Carron, Warner Hill Rd, stating that her child's teacher does not teach unless BOE members are visiting the classroom.

Karen Nash, Sherwood Drive, stated that she is in support of an open discussion on the math curriculum.

Kelly Crisp, Papermill Lane, stated that she is against the math curriculum. Her son is struggling and never has before. Teachers should teach, and other students shouldn't be teaching. Quality instructional time is being wasted.

Suzanne Miska, Rygate Road, stated that she feels there is failure to communicate. Central Office should have an open forum with the parents.

John Llewellyn, Sturges Road, stated that the new math has 2 levels of math, others have 5. He stated that levels of rigor should be added.

14. Open Board Comment

Mrs. Brand stated that she has concerns that the district is using a text that did not come before the Board. She requested a presentation on this.

Mr. Liu stated that he is extremely troubled about this, and asked whether a new textbook was being used. This should be dealt with straight forward.

Mrs. Kennelly also requested that this be on the December agenda.

Ms. Iacono stated that she would like clarification on not receiving district materials. She also clarified that a Curriculum Review Committee does exist.

Mrs. Gerber stated that she was at a SEPTA meeting earlier this month and the "Friend of SEPTA Award" was given to Ann Leffert. Many parents attended the ceremony and gave personal stories about her positive impacts. She also stated that during the CAFE convention, the Commissioner commended Dr. Title for all his work during Hurricane Sandy. In addition, Mrs. Gerber stated that the Fairfield Budget Book won an Honorable Mention Award.

Ms. Iacono stated that the reason she is suggesting getting rid of Open Board Comment is that it is not supposed to be used to blindside people.

Mr. Dwyer stated that some have been asking for the AON report. The information might be available for the Board Packet. Mr. Dwyer asked that questions be forwarded to Dr. Title so that they can be received in advance of the meeting. He also stated that the Board calendar should be agreed on in December.

15. Adjournment

Ms. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Convertito the recommended motion that “that this Organizational/Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 10:30pm”

Motion Carried: 9:0:0