

Board of Education, Fairfield Public Schools
501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room, Fairfield, CT

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

MINUTES

Voting Summary:

Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:30PM. Present were members Jennifer Kennelly (arrived 7:36PM), John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono, Paul Fattibene, Tim Kery and Sue Brand. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, student representatives Danielle Clark and Bill Moeder and approximately 40 members of the public.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 24, 2013

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 24, 2013.” Motion passed 5-2-2 (Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene in favor; Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand against; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Kery abstained)

Old Business

Naming the Alternative High School in Honor of Mr. Walter Fitzgerald

Ms. Iacono moved/Mr. Kery seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve Fairfield High Schools Walter Fitzgerald Campus as the name for the Alternative High School, in honor of Mr. Walter Fitzgerald” Motion passed 9-0.

New Business

Approval of Plans and Specifications for the Osborn Hill Project

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the plans and specifications for the Osborn Hill Project Numbers 051-0124CV and 051-0126EA/EC” Motion passed 9-0.

Approval of the Changes to the Fairfield Teacher Evaluation Plan

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education accept changes to the Fairfield Teacher Evaluation Plan as recommended by the Teacher Evaluation Committee” Motion passed 6-3 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Kery and Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu and Mr. Fattibene against)

Approval of the Changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education accept changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as revised by the CT State Department of Education”

Mr. Fattibene made a friendly amendment (accepted by Ms. Iacono) to change the motion to read, “that the Board of Education accept changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as revised by the CT State Department of Education and as recommended by the Fairfield Evaluation Committee”

Mr. Fattibene moved/Ms. Iacono seconded to divide the motion and separate “changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as revised by the CT State Department of Education” and “changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as recommended by the Fairfield Evaluation Committee.” Motion failed 4-5 (Mr. Liu, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Kery against)

Amended Motion passed 8-1 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Fattibene against)

Adjournment

Mr. Kery moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn” Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned 10:40PM.

Detailed Minutes:

CALL TO ORDER OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:30PM. Present were members Jennifer Kennelly (arrived 7:36PM), John Convertito, Perry Liu, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Pamela Iacono, Paul Fattibene, Tim Kery and Sue Brand. Others present were Dr. Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, student representatives Danielle Clark and Bill Moeder and approximately 40 members of the public.

Mr. Dwyer welcomed new and returning student members and led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS

Karen Parks introduced BP Representatives Neal Geary (General Manager of East Coast Government/Public Affairs), Steve Williams (Head of BP Olympic Programs), and Olympian Julie Chu. BP sponsors Julie Chu as an Olympian, and supports her charity of choice. Ms. Chu stated that she feels fortunate to partner with BP and give back to Fairfield Public Schools. Ms. Julie Chu, Mr. Geary and Mr. Williams then presented a \$10,000 check to the Fairfield Public Schools Physical Education Department, which was accepted by Mr. Dave Abraham.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 24, 2013.”

In response to Mrs. Brand, Mr. Dwyer stated that a summary of public comment, rather than the entire commentary, is included in the minutes.

Motion passed 5-2-2 (Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene in favor; Mr. Liu, Mrs. Brand against; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Kery abstained)

BOARD COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

Danielle Clarke reported for Fairfield Warde High School that senior activities are ongoing; Girls Cross Country won their East Division, and placed 4th at FCIAC’s; the Homecoming Dance is coming up; and the school store will be opening this coming Monday.

Billy Moeder reported for Fairfield Ludlowe High School that sports are starting on a high note with football; the Girls Volleyball is tied for first in FCIAC; boys soccer is currently in 4th place in FCIAC; and that November spirit week is coming up as is the Freshman Forum.

Ms. Iacono stated that the Riverfield Building Committee plans to use Woodard and Curran to address issues as outlined in the district-provided Woodard and Curran report.

Mrs. Brand reported on the Board of Health Meeting; that technology enhancements with health forms will save time and eliminate paperwork for school nurses; she recommends adoption of the CES policies regarding student confidentiality.

Mrs. Gerber reported on the Fairfield Ludlowe High School Building Committee, Perkins Eastman was approved as the architect, and the committee meets again next Wednesday.

Mr. Liu referenced the Fairfield Woods Building committee, and stated the theater lights don’t dim for a production, which should be considered when accepting the project.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Ms. Munsell reviewed the summary of the quarterly financial report per enclosure No. 2; there is an unencumbered balance of \$20.3 million with 86.5% of the budget expended or encumbered; September claims for health insurance are not yet available, and AON will present claim information at the December 10 meeting.

Board discussion followed regarding specific line items, the new state-mandated general ledger accounting system, and the Food Services budget.

2014-2015 BUDGET CALENDAR

Dr. Title stated that the budget preparation has begun and doesn’t conclude until May. Board members offered suggestions including receiving the budget earlier and attempting consensus prior to budget receipt. Dr. Title stated that the new budget system will not be in place until next year; that the biggest budget driver could be the health insurance; the AON presentation is given in December; and the target date for the new high school schedule implementation is the fall of 2015.

OLD BUSINESS

NAMING THE ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL IN HONOR OF MR. WALTER FITZGERALD

Ms. Donowitz, AHS principal, explained the name selection process; students initially voted on Fairfield High Schools Fitzgerald Campus; the students prefer that ‘Walter’ be included; and that Fairfield High Schools Walter Fitzgerald Campus would be an appropriate name.

Ms. Iacono moved/Mr. Kery seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve Fairfield High Schools Walter Fitzgerald Campus as the name for the Alternative High School, in honor of Mr. Walter Fitzgerald”

Mr. Dwyer stated that the minutes will determine if there is an apostrophe after the ‘s’. Board Members supported this motion whole-heartedly and were happy to act on this as a celebration of a life and a school.

Mrs. Fitzgerald stated that she is humbled and honored that the students and staff of the PAL/Co-op/AHS program have come together in a collaborative way to honor a person who gave his life to the alternative education program; there was no greater advocate or teacher in the Alternative High School than Walter Fitzgerald; all are proud to be moving in this direction; and thanked everyone who made this possible, including the Board members.

Motion passed 9-0

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE OSBORN HILL PROJECT

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the plans and specifications for the Osborn Hill Project Numbers 051-0124CV and 051-0126EA/EC”

Dr. Title explained that PCB’s were found during a window replacement project; the project now has 2 parts: (1) remediation so that the school could be occupied and (2) for the project itself, which has expanded to include the gym and the walkway. Mr. Fattibene, as a point of clarification, stated that 051-0124CV is for the remediation that has already been done and the 051-0126EA/EC is for the more permanent gymnasium. Mr. Morabito agreed; the special legislation number is 051-124, and the 126 number is the normal process for OSF.

Mr. Kery was assured by Mr. Silver that due to the additional PCB testing, there is increased confidence that the cost of the project should not expand due to PCBs.

Mr. Liu mentioned security issues regarding the open window design, and Mr. Convertito questioned the gym window design. Mr. Silver stated that staff vigilance will be required, and the state has charged projects to introduce daylight as much as possible into designs.

Motion passed 9-0

APPROVAL OF THE CHANGES TO THE FAIRFIELD TEACHER EVALUATION PLAN

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education accept changes to the Fairfield Teacher Evaluation Plan as recommended by the Teacher Evaluation Committee”

Dr. Title stated that the district has elected to give the SBAC test this year because it is aligned to the common core and will give baseline data; 16 out of 18 Southern Fairfield County districts have chosen SBAC and 2 were undecided; the CMT is a legacy test that is being phased out; for those districts choosing SBAC, the state will require an update to the Teacher Evaluation Plan for the current year to include local, rather than state test data, pending federal approval. Ms. Leffert stated that assessments used will be building and level specific, based on the school improvement plan; Dr. Title stated that there are common standardized assessments by level in reading and math but there may be additional assessments.

Mr. Convertito preferred that existing Science CMT data for grades 5 and 8 and CAPT for grade 10 be included as assessments. Board discussion followed on double-testing students and using available CMT and CAPT Science Data.

Mrs. Kennelly requested samples of teacher and administrator goals once the process is complete.

Public Comment re: Motion:

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated parents hadn't heard of SBAC; she prefers a district assessment.

Marc Patten, Valley Road, stated that he would rather use new tests based on common core.

Martha Becker, FWHS teacher, stated that test results were never before used in evaluations.

Mr. Dwyer stated that many parents at a recent PTA meeting knew the shift to SBAC was happening.

Motion passed 6-3 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Kery and Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu and Mr. Fattibene against)

APPROVAL OF THE CHANGES TO THE FAIRFIELD ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION PLAN

Ms. Iacono moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion "that the Board of Education accept changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as revised by the CT State Department of Education"

Mr. Fattibene stated that the motion should include both state changes and Fairfield Evaluation Committee recommendations.

Mr. Fattibene made a friendly amendment (accepted by Ms. Iacono) to change the motion to read, "that the Board of Education accept changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as revised by the CT State Department of Education and as recommended by the Fairfield Evaluation Committee"

Mr. Fattibene moved/Ms. Iacono seconded to divide the motion and separate "changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as revised by the CT State Department of Education" and "changes to the Fairfield Administrator Evaluation Plan (SEED Plan) as recommended by the Fairfield Evaluation Committee"

Mr. Dwyer clarified that the wording in red on the second to last page is the only thing separated out.

Motion failed 4-5 (Mr. Liu, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Kery against)

Amended Motion passed 8-1 (Mrs. Kennelly, Mr. Convertito, Mr. Liu, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Brand in favor; Mr. Fattibene against)

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Nancy Haberly, Duck Farm Road, questioned dismissal time at Riverfield, the quick action to broker out Food Services, and voiced concern that her statements are censored in the minutes.

Kelly Crisp, Papermill Lane, asked for transparency and accountability in teacher recruitment, hiring and retention efforts.

Kelly Dunn, Tuckahoe Lane, thanked the outgoing members of the Board and would like to see a better set of Board goals.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated that she is concerned over privacy issues in systems like Infinite Campus.

Marc Patten, Valley Road, echoed Kelly Dunn’s sentiments and wished the outgoing members the best of luck.

OPEN BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Dwyer spoke to the departing Board members and stated that the viewpoint shared by all Board members is that they care deeply about the success of over 10,000 students, and that certainly was true for Mrs. Brand, Ms. Iacono, Mr. Kery and Mr. Liu. Mr. Fattibene and Mrs. Kennelly also shared their best wishes for the outgoing Board Members, and thanked them for their service.

Mrs. Brand thanked all for the kind words and thoughts and said it is an honor to serve as a member of the Board of Education and an elected official in Fairfield; when she ran 6 years ago she made a commitment that she took to heart and tried to maintain; this service is not done alone and her family and friends have been patient and supportive; the Democratic party and the voters supported this opportunity; her recommendation to the Board is to not compromise on principles, the children and voters deserve no less.

Ms. Iacono thanked everyone and said that she started and ended in the same place: at Riverfield. She stated that she has met many amazing people along the way and learned that change takes time; it takes courage to stand your ground and stay the course; she thanked all for their advice and input; she thanked her family and stated that she initially became involved to be a voice for all students and it has been a wonderful experience; her advice for those coming in is something she learned from State Representative Brenda Kupchik – to listen first. She admires the administration and respects all the teachers.

Mr. Kery stated that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve on the Board; thanked the team for dealing with challenges; transformational changes have occurred over the last 3 years; the team morale and desire to work together is a testament to Dr. Title and staff; a solid foundation is needed to build something, and over the last 3 years a foundation based on improving instruction has been occurring; integrating school improvement plans and data is very exciting and revolutionary; and he believes that the foundation will sustain us in the future.

Mr. Liu thanked Mrs. Kennelly for the kind words; he stated that it has been an honor and a privilege; there is a lot of responsibility; Fairfield has wonderful citizens; he wanted to shoot for higher goals as a Board member; with 4 new Board members, remember that your voice doesn’t stop with election day, and important that your voice is part of this process all the time; should always try to push harder and be better.

Mr. Dwyer thanked the audience for staying to hear the outgoing members speak.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kery moved/Mrs. Brand seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn”

Motion passed 9-0. Meeting adjourned 10:40PM.

*Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Board of Education
Secretary*