

Board of Education
Fairfield Public Schools
Special Meeting Minutes
1/28/2014

Chairman Dwyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm with all members present: Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Convertito, Ms. Karnal, Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Llewellyn, and Mr. Patten. Also in attendance: Dr. David Title, members of the Central Office Leadership Team, and several members of the public.

Chairman Dwyer asked that members follow the agenda to facilitate discussion.

Board discussion and questions followed, continuing the discussion from the January 23 Special Meeting regarding the 2014-2015 Budget:

In response to Mr. Patten's question on the increase on page 43, line 321, Dr. Title stated this is to provide assistance to principals with the new teacher evaluation process; that the new teacher evaluations are time consuming for principals and teachers; the real impact is on the administrators.

Mr. Fattibene commented that he is contemplating adding \$3000 back into Board of Education Services, page 86, so that new members may attend the CABE conference.

Ms. Leonardi stated that the \$20,000 increase in Pupil Personnel Services, page 86, will be used to fund specific training for school psychologists.

In response to Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Dr. Title stated that current year professional development is ongoing.

Mr. Convertito asked about the increase of \$30,000 in line 54170, page 86. Dr. Title responded that this is to fund Professional Development for Teacher Evaluation.

Mr. Patten asked about Line 400. Dr. Title responded that paper costs were re-categorized; 402 and 404 went down; 404 was mostly moved to school accounts; principals use allocations as they see fit. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard reviewed various increases in line items, related to 56158, 56169, and Mill River tuition.

In response to Mr. Llewellyn, Dr. Title stated that text and materials for LA can be found on page 148. Dr. Boice stated that textbooks for LA are under review; paperbacks and novels are used; new curriculum allows for tightening of grammar instruction. In response to Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Dr. Boice stated that funds exist for new textbooks if they choose to go in that direction.

In response to Mr. Convertito, Dr. Title stated that the lease on 418 Meadow was recently renewed after a fairly exhaustive search. Mr. Cullen stated that pages 80-82 show the increase; playground maintenance; fire protection, and paving are the big projects.

In response to Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, regarding page 82 and \$85,000 increase in Business Services, Mr. Cullen stated that this is for playground maintenance. Dr. Title stated that playground safety is best dealt with by a licensed professional. Mr. Cullen stated that internal inspections are done on a yearly basis, but a professional firm was hired this year; the recommendation was to dig up and replace the wood chips.

In response to Mr. Llewellyn, Dr. Title stated the electrical rates are comprised of generation and transmission rates, and confirmed that those have gone up for this year and next year.

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In response to Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Mr. Cullen stated that the Burr intercom system is no longer supported by the manufacturer; parts can no longer be replaced; he later confirmed that an All-Call is not possible from this system.

In response to Mr. Convertito, Mrs. Munsell stated that Town guidance is followed for utilities; water and electrical included.

In response to Mrs. Liu-McCormack, Ms. Byrnes stated that the multi-media projectors on page 154 are for 68 elementary classrooms; they are smartboard compatible; connectivity for existing equipment at Sherman School is also included in this number.

In response to Mr. Fattibene's question regarding tablets, as mentioned on page 154, Ms. Byrnes stated that the district was approved for an SBAC grant to prep students for online testing; the tablets would stay within district and be shared; the number is net of grant.

Budget Detail by Object

Mr. Dwyer stated that the proposed budget is based on existing teachers; variations may occur for the actual budget.

Mr. Llewellyn requested a clarification on page 64, line 113. Dr. Title stated that some positions are grant based. Ms. Leonardi explained that this is based on currently existing students; future placement determines the focus of these positions.

Mrs. Liu-McCormack requested clarification on paraprofessionals. Ms. Leonardi stated that special education students vary in the amount of paraprofessional services that are needed; for example one student may need a 1.0 FTE, and another student may need help only during class transitions. Dr. Title explained that the staffing model allows principals the flexibility to determine the placement of some paraprofessionals. Dr. Cutaia-Leonard stated that principals meet specific needs with instructional-based paraprofessional support.

In response to Mr. Convertito, Dr. Title stated that additional high school computer lab support could be used.

Ms. Munsell responded to Mr. Patten; any excess money from unsettled contracts goes into an accrued salary account.

In response to Mr. Llewellyn, Dr. Title stated that fewer teachers notified the district that they will be earning advanced degrees.

Dr. Title stated that school allocations vary for supplies; principals use school allocations differently based on inventory.

Budget by School and Department

Dt. Title stated dues and fees increase as seen on page 107, line 69; this is an estimate of the increase.

Dr. Title answered Mr. Llewellyn; that Professional Books are books for the staff that the district or principals choose, based on professional development.

Dr. Title stated that Maintenance Services varies by school depending on school specific projects; staff shifted among middle schools due to FMWS being fully populated; and page 76 includes extra-curricular salaries.

Ms. Byrnes stated that laser printers are used and the cost of laser toner has remained flat. Mr. Patten stated that he would like to see if laser printers are cost effective vs. ink jet printers. Ms. Byrnes stated that ink jets are budgeted via

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school allocations and are not networked printers; page 155, the Evault Discovery Server is a hardware appliance that facilitates the ability to archive and retrieve documents; this is helpful for legal and FOI requirements.

Ms. Byrnes stated that students, staff and visitors have multiple devices that access the district's wireless network; there is a need to increase the wireless density.

In response to Mrs. Gerber, Dr. Title stated that demographers project the enrollment, and use the October 1 enrollment number to do so.

Board Members discussed possible amendments:

Mrs. Liu-McCormack stated that she would like to have a discussion on World Language (WL) restoration; she would like to restore the Grade 5 music program; she would like to eliminate the Pre-K bussing for full tuition students; and she would like to reconsider an additional 6th grade gifted assessment.

Mr. Convertito requested the cost difference of rolling back the parking fees to the 12-13 level; the sports fee roll-out across the board for all sports for pay-to-play, much like the Trumbull format - to make up for the WL and music programs that were cut; and the numbers for adding back paras to the 2 high school computer labs.

Ms. Karnal stated that she will propose a reduction in Guidance Counselors so that each counselor have 250 students per state statute; she would like to discuss the list of maintenance projects; and she would like to understand more about outsourcing the Food Services Program. Mr. Dwyer stated that the Food Services program is not within the operating budget.

Mr. Fattibene stated that he would like to eliminate the sports rental fees.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly clarified that Mrs. Liu-McCormack's proposals are an addition to the budget, without any proposed cuts to off-set the increase; Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly supports the elimination of pay-to-play; and recommends discussing maintenance projects at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Llewellyn stated that he will propose modifying Curriculum Leader positions by making them .4 department heads and .6 teachers. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly asked for more specifics on this plan; Dr. Title also requested more specifics, and stated that this may actually cost the district money. Dr. Title stated that the Curriculum Leaders provide much needed support to the schools, and there is no duplication among any of the Curriculum Leader positions.

Mr. Patten stated that he will propose eliminating 4th and 5th grade WL and fully restore 6th grade WL; he would also like to add in the PTA facilities rental fees.

Mr. Convertito asked whether there may be any savings through custodial fees by adding custodians rather than paying overtime. Dr. Title stated that this matter is addressed through contract negotiations.

Mr. Dwyer asked for a sense of the Board regarding the expansion of pay-to-play; after some discussion, Mr. Convertito withdrew his request for this proposal.

Mr. Cullen responded to questions regarding the maintenance projects:

Mr. Cullen stated that all listed maintenance projects are health or safety related. Mr. Hatzis, the former FWMS principal, stated that the FWMS lockers are a safety issue; there are many injuries due to jammed lockers; and one set of lockers became completely loose from the wall and is no longer in use.

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Mr. Cullen stated that the HVAC system on the roof of FWMS is very loud to the neighbors; many complaints have been received; the floor of the McKinley gym has to be repaired; the Mill Hill administrative office area is extremely damp, a newer roof-top unit could provide a dehumidifier as well as a cooling unit. In response to Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Cullen stated the list of projects needed in the district is usually 5-6 pages long and over 2 million dollars. Mr. Dwyer stated only the most critical projects are brought forward.

Mr. Morabito spoke to the partial roof replacement at FWMS, one section that was particularly wet was a systemic failure and covered by warranty; other disbursed repairs are not covered by warranty.

Mr. Cullen stated that the FWHS small gym backboards are manual; a ladder is required to crank them up to get them out of the way; today's standards are all electric.

Mr. Cullen stated that the library carpet is 10-11 years old, is in a heavily used area, and in need of replacement.

In response to Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Cullen stated there is over 2 million square feet, with over 600 acres of to maintain.

In response to Mr. Patten, Mr. Cullen stated that if a roof can support it, the cost to install an HVAC school system is approximately \$500,000.

Dr. Title requested clarification on Ms. Karnal's figures for Guidance Counselors, and Mr. Llewellyn's specifics on his proposal.

Motion to adjourn (10:52 pm) moved by Mr. Convertito, seconded by Mr. Patten. Motion passed 9-0

*Jessica Gerber
Fairfield Public Schools
Board of Education
Secretary*