

SEP 14 2010

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION/BUSINESS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, August 24, 2010

Minutes of the Business Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, August 24, 2010, at 501 Kings Highway East, 2nd Floor Board Conference Room.

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin (left at 9:01 p.m.), Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Perry Liu, Mr. John Mitola, Ms. Stacey Zahn (left at 9:01 p.m.), Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 7:52 p.m.) and Mr. Tim Kery (arrived 7:55 p.m.). Mr. Paul Fattibene was absent. Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 125 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

1. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. A Moment of Silence was held for a fourth grade student from Osborn Hill, Teddy Gerber.
3. Approval of Minutes- Ms. Zahn requested that the Minutes be separated.

Mr. Mitola moved, seconded by Mr. Liu that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of June 7, 2010.

Motion carried: 5:0:1. Ms. Zahn abstained.

Mr. Mitola moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Education Meeting of June 8, 2010.

Motion carried: 5:0:1. Ms. Zahn abstained.

Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Business Meeting of June 22, 2010.

Motion carried: 6:0:0.

Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 27, 2010.

Motion carried: 6:0:0.

4. Old Business

- A. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Liu that the Board of Education approve the revised RFP for an Operational Audit.

Motion carried: 6:0:0.

- B. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve hiring Prismatic Services, Inc., to conduct an operational audit of the Fairfield Public Schools.

Mrs. Albin stated that the subcommittee received 8-10 proposals, 4 firms were selected and interviewed and Prismatic Services, Inc. was the firm the subcommittee unanimously selected. The subcommittee has a representative from the Board of Finance and from the RTM who sit in on these meetings.

Tatia Prieto, a representative from Prismatic Services, Inc., briefly described Prismatic Services, the team that will conduct the operational audit, and the steps that will be taken.

Motion carried: 6:0:0.

- C. Discussion of the Amendment to the Racial Imbalance Plan to be Submitted to CSBE by September 30, 2010-

Dr. Title stated that an extension of the deadline for the Amendment to the Racial Imbalance Plan to be submitted to the State was requested and granted to the end of September. Dr. Title stated that he has reviewed the recommendations and is in favor of moving them forward.

Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that in June she and a representative from the Cultural Diversity Task Force presented a list of recommendations to the Board of Education that the task force had worked on. Mrs. Cutaia-Leonard stated that she has reviewed the recommendations with Dr. Title and they are in agreement with moving forward with the recommendations made by the Cultural Diversity Task Force. There is one addition and that is the recommendation from the attorney at the State Department to include in the amendment the expansion of the opt in/opt out program at McKinley. This is a discussion item tonight and will be a voting item on the September Board agenda.

5. New Business

A. Discussion of the Middle School Feeder Pattern-

Mr. Mitola commented on the Recommendation for Changes to Fairfield Public Schools Middle School Feeder Pattern, a report prepared by Tim Kery. This report was made for informational purposes only; the actual report was not voted on by the subcommittee. It sets forth the position of Mr. Mitola and Mr. Kery and also sets forth some of Mr. Liu's concerns. Since January the subcommittee has created a set of Facilities Planning Principles to guide future long-term facilities planning, has issued an RFP for new enrollment projection methodology with a focus on better long-term projection accuracy and better long-term building by building projections at the elementary level, and has been working on clarifying elementary building capacity specifications to recognize the newer annex expansions and how classroom space is being used. Next the subcommittee began exploring the middle school feeder pattern. There was discussion about whether or not to include the elementary schools along with the middle schools, and the thought process by Mr. Mitola and Mr. Kery was to do the middle schools now because we know who is in the system for the next six years, K-5. The majority of the subcommittee felt that it would be difficult and probably not prudent to focus on the elementary schools without first getting the new projection numbers from the consultant. We hope to have that information by early winter. The following criteria was developed to guide the decision process with respect to the middle schools: do not split an elementary school, avoid having a single elementary school district articulate to a particular high school, avoid changing the high school feeder pattern, Holland Hill and McKinley should not attend the same middle and high schools, create the least amount of disruption, distribute the students according to the size of the middle schools, consider the impact on busing and walkers, consider the long term impact on the high schools, and the administration will review the educational viability of any feeder plan options. Six options were developed, and Option E best meets the criteria that drove the decision making process. Option E sends McKinley, Burr, and Stratfield to Tomlinson MS; Riverfield, Sherman, Mill Hill and Dwight to Roger Ludlowe MS; and Jennings, Holland Hill, Osborn Hill and North Stratfield to Fairfield Woods MS. Option E does change the middle school feeder pattern somewhat substantially but it balances the middle schools very well. This option was a 2 to 1 vote.

Mr. Kery stated that there were two key guiding factors. One was the educational concerns, and the other was can we fit the students into the schools and be able to balance them in a manner that is appropriate based on the size of each school. Mr. Kery reviewed all six options and how they measured against the criteria. Option E best met the subcommittee's criteria. It does require a significant amount of movement at eight schools, but the criteria outweighed this one negative. The subcommittee, by majority vote, recommends Option E. Mr. Kery stated that the criteria did drive this process; and although not ideal for everyone, when looking at it against the criteria this really is a viable plan.

Mr. Liu stated that this document was not discussed or approved by the full subcommittee in a public meeting so it can't be a facilities subcommittee report. It was prepared by one Board member, and even though there are facts in it, it has that one Board member's perspective. He asked Board members to take that into consideration when reviewing this document. Mr. Liu commented on several points that he disagreed with. He does not believe this is complete information to make a final decision, and he challenged the methodology by which the criteria was gathered.

Mrs. Iacono called a point of order to remind Board members that this is a Board meeting and Board members are to be speaking to each other not the audience.

Mr. Liu stated that redistricting to help the entire middle school feeder plan has never been discussed as a full Board and needs to be looked at. He also questioned why busing and grandfathering are an afterthought and that information is incomplete. He believes it is the subcommittee's job to provide the full Board with information and options instead of providing one choice. He stated that he is the opposing view on this, and it seems to him that the process is yet to be complete. He asked the Board to consider these things before rushing into an option he does not think has been fully thought through.

Board comments and questions followed on the feeder patterns, high school capacity, grandfathering, busing, and giving direction to the administration.

Dr. Title stated that the administration can be ready for the next meeting with most of the information. Costing out and looking at the pros and cons of grandfathering, may take a little more time. No matter which plan the Board picks, a grandfathering decision will have to be made. He suggested having the middle school feeder pattern on the September 14 agenda as a voting item and having grandfathering on the next agenda if needed. He encouraged the Board to decide on both of these items as rapidly as possible because they both impact budget preparation.

B. First Read of Policies-

- Policy #2410 – Line of Responsibility
- AR #2410 (Policy #2420.1) – Organizational Chart
- Policy #4121 – Appointment
- Policy #5125 – School Accommodations to Resident and Non-Resident Children in the Fairfield Public Schools

Ms. Zahn stated that these were reviewed at the last policy committee meeting. They are a first read tonight and will be on the next Board agenda for approval.

Board questions and comments followed.

- C. Dr. Rosato presented a textbook for consideration and adoption at the next meeting. It is for a senior level Modern European History course. This textbook aligns very closely with the newest adopted curriculum for this course, and there are online resources that go along with it.

6. Public Comments and Petitions-

Jeff Peterson, Stratfield School BOE rep, stated that Stratfield was prepared to move back to Fairfield Woods MS, but the suggestion of moving to Tomlinson has sparked confusion and anger. He urged the Board to reject the subcommittee's recommendation and take a closer look at the alternatives.

Randy Newell, Catamount Road, commented against Option E and encouraged the Board to look at not just feeder systems at the top but at the elementary schools while trying to fix some of the lack of parity from the last redistricting six years ago. He encouraged the Board to reevaluate the options.

Seth Block, Shrub Oak Lane, commented on the lack of information on the financial impact, the cost of bussing, and the lack of accurate demographics. He spoke against Option E. The Board is charged

to do something right not just do something. Children, families, and eight schools are all being disrupting. He asked the Board to come back with a plan that makes sense. Option E is a mistake.

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, commented that the Board is trying to just get something done, and the elementary schools and high schools will be impacted by this. It is one thing to do an RFP from one meeting to the next but redistricting is quite another. We need to use our space and correct some of the problems that were created in the last redistricting.

Jillian Shaffer, Middlebrook Drive, stated that the entire time her children have been in the Fairfield School System, redistricting has been hanging over their heads and it is not right. Many families will be impacted not only this time but again in a few months. This is a huge issue that should take months, if not years, to be done properly.

Trudi Durrell, Holland Hill parent and representing parents from other school districts, stated that the group of parents she is representing recognizes that there is a problem at the high school, yet for some reason the subcommittee is avoiding addressing it. There are at least three other plans not put forth tonight that would better balance the high school. She encouraged the Board to look at all of the data, all of the capacity and cost analysis, and consider if your ultimate goal is a short fix just to fill the middle schools for funding reasons or is the ultimate goal to balance K-12.

7. Reports and Recommendations-

A. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Title thanked the Board and the community for welcoming him to Fairfield. He stated that he has been working on an Entry Plan in which he has been talking to Board members, central office administrators, principals and eventually will be talking to town officials. He and Mrs. Brand have also talked about meeting with all of the RTM members as part of the Entry Plan. Fairfield is a very impressive school system, and he is here to make it better.

Dr. Title stated that he has been reviewing the recommendations from the Fuel for Learning Partnership, and in discussions with Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Cullen we are on the same page in terms of achieving the goals and a structure is in place already to do that. There is a Wellness Policy, a part-time dietician has been hired to help with a number of the initiatives including providing the nutritional information for all of the school lunches on the website, providing healthy food and snacks and looking at the food and snacks being served with the dietician to ensure they are as healthy as possible to help eliminate trans fat in the schools, and a software program has been purchased to make it as easily accessible as possible. We are moving ahead with the goals but in a different kind of structure. .

Dr. Title stated that Mr. Cullen inspected Stratfield School today and should have a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy on the 26th.

Dr. Title reported on Dr. Clark's car. The school system owns the car, and it is being stored at the Maintenance Department lot as a spare if one of the maintenance vehicles goes down. When the time comes to replace a maintenance vehicle, that car could be traded to recoup some of the investment. Dr. Title is not driving the car; no one is driving it.

Dr. Title commented on funding school districts will be receiving in the next month from the Federal government under a JOBS bill. Fairfield is slated to receive an estimated \$209,000. It is designed to rehire staff who were laid off, but Fairfield didn't lay staff off. The money can be spent over two years. Dr. Title will review the fine print, meet with central office administrators and come back to the Board with a recommendation in September/October after the year begins and we see if we needed to hire extra teachers because of enrollment.

8. Reports and Recommendations-

- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that West Nile was a topic of discussion at the Board of Health, just to have people be aware. Anne Pasco is the new President of the Fairfield Education Association.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow--No report

- ◆ Mrs. Iacono reported that at the Special Projects Standing Building Committee the Board of Selectmen agreed to appropriate \$100,000 seed money to get started on the Sherman Project that will now move forward to the Board of Finance.
- ◆ Mr. Kery--No report
- ◆ Mr. Liu--No report
- ◆ Mr. Mitola--No report

9. Open Board Discussion--None

10. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:26 p.m.
Motion carried: 6:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary