

APPROVED

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION

REVISED

MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

Minutes of the Executive Session/Education Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, September 14, 2010, at Roger Ludlowe Middle School-Auditorium.

Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. John Mitola, Ms. Stacey Zahn, and Mr. Perry Liu (arrived 7:03 p.m.). Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. David Title and Mrs. Margaret Mary Fitzgerald.

1. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education convene to Executive Session to discuss Custodial/Maintenance negotiations.

Motion carried: 6:0:0.

2. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola to adjourn the Executive Session at 7:06 p.m..

Motion carried: 7:0:0.

3. Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand called the Education Meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mr. Perry Liu, Mr. John Mitola, Ms. Stacey Zahn, Mr. Tim Kery (arrived 7:40 p.m.), and Mrs. Pamela Iacono (arrived 8:00 p.m.). Also in attendance were Fairfield Ludlowe HS Student Representative Allison Reich, Superintendent Dr. David Title, and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 175 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

4. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Introduction of New Administrators and Teachers-

Mrs. Brand welcomed this year's new teachers to the Fairfield Public Schools. Approximately 45 administrators and teachers introduced themselves to the Board of Education and members of the public.

6. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Education/Business Meeting of August 24, 2010.

Motion carried: 7:0:1. Mr. Fattibene abstained.

7. Public Comments and Petitions-

Heather Lajeunesse, 455 Mountain Laurel Road, urged the Board to look at the district in its entirety before approving anything. She asked the Board not to vote yes to either of the plans.

Dr. Gerry Kuroghlian, Fairfield resident, urged the Board to look at *A Survey of the Literature on the Impact of Restructuring our Communities* done by School Administration Magazine in 1995. It is a comprehensive survey on communities in which redistricting has occurred.

Rick Morgan, Dudley Drive, commented on the number of students currently at each of the middle schools and the number that would be at each school under Option E. He also commented that no grandfathering has been approved, there are no busing costs and no analysis has been done on how busing will be handled.

Catherine Jones, Old Black Rock Turnpike, expressed concern that without a long term plan that includes more classroom space, redistricting is just shifting the problem from one school to another.

She spoke against both of the plans on tonight's agenda and asked the Board to take a step back and look at how many children will be affected by Option E.

Tammy Kirby, Aran Hill Road, asked the Board to make this decision sooner rather than later so families can move on and become a community again. If there is a change, she hopes the Board will grandfather the children.

Krista Dougherty, Gilbert Highway, asked the Board not to vote on any middle school feeder plan but to devote the next few months to focus on a town-wide redistricting.

Sydney Raha, Catamount Road, urged the Board to make a decision and vote tonight. You have all of the information, and we need to move forward.

Kathy Caulfield, Fairland Drive, spoke in favor of Option E. She asked that whatever plan the Board considers to please keep capacity and school size in mind.

Seth Block, Shrub Oak Lane, stated that nothing has changed since the last Board meeting. The plans were not well thought out, no financial impact study was done, and no demographic study was done. The only thing that changed is that another option was put in which is worse. You need to go back and address the entire town; and if you don't do that, you are doing the entire town a disservice.

Catherine Giff, Eleven O'Clock Road, encouraged the Board to move ahead on the feeder plan tonight.

Mary Hogue, Stonewall Lane, commented that this is an important issue that has to happen sooner rather than later, but at the same time it is a bigger issue than just middle schools. There are issues related to long term plans that have to be figured out. She asked the Board to make sure you do whatever you can to make one whole town picture happen.

Christine Vitale, Verna Hill Road, stated that this was not a rush judgment, a lot of time and discussion went into it by the subcommittee. Time is of the essence and the feeder pattern needs to be addressed now. She encouraged the Board to vote for Option E.

Mrs. Albin called a Point of Order. Under item VIII, "Citizens are asked to comment on any voting item at the time the item is under consideration by the Board." She stated that the public is asking the Board to vote or not to vote on something that the Board has not discussed yet. She asked if it is the Chairman's desire to have this comment again when the Board discusses the specific items that are on the agenda for a vote. Mrs. Brand stated that there is another proposal on tonight's agenda, and her concern is that if the Board discusses the new option and decides that it is going to be a voting item, and then decides to move it to the next meeting, the public would not have a chance to comment. Therefore, the public can either address it now or address it later and asked that the public not address it twice.

Emily Miller, Flintlock Road, stated that time is of the essence to get the funding to move forward with Fairfield Woods. Option E seems to work the best right now so go forward with Option E, make it work, and then in 5-10 years go forward from the bottom up again.

Guy Sullivan, Burr Street, commented that this is a discussion of long term planning and yet in the first paragraph of the report it says that we are going to circumvent the long term planning and make a short term decision. It is clear that the straw man fallacy was used in this report in order to create a justification for why Option E was recommended. To put in a short term solution to what is a long range problem is a mistake.

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, stated that there is more work to be done. Don't just look at walkers, look at the flow of buses to see what the cost will be of busing for each plan. The Board has not voted on the criteria or even said which is more important. All of the options need to

be presented at the Board table. The high school overcrowding must get on the Board's calendar soon because Fairfield Ludlowe HS is very overcrowded.

Nancy Billington, Fleming Lane, commented on the problems that have occurred in the past and are occurring again tonight with the PA system. Speaking for the Fairfield Ludlowe HS Executive Board, she stated that the Executive Board does not support voting tonight. This plan does not address the high school overcrowding issues. She asked the Board from a busing standpoint and an overcrowding standpoint to reconsider. She also asked if the Board voted on the criteria.

Christyn Whitney, Shrub Oak Lane, asked the Board to give thoughtful consideration to redistricting. Redistricting is never easy but would be easier if parents knew that a thorough and considerate plan had been established. What has taken place so far is neither. She asked the Board to delay tonight's vote until a well thought out comprehensive plan can be presented.

Jim Alfieri, Stratfield parent, commented that if the Board needs to have a placeholder or to get state funding to help Fairfield Woods MS, then maybe it is a good idea to create a plan that is least disruptive to the elementary schools. He urged the Board to look at more options.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated that redistricting is going to happen and asked that communication be stronger so parents don't have to go to every subcommittee meeting. She commented on the length of time students will be on buses and the cost for busing under Option E. The new option looks good; kids are put where they might actually be able to walk. Option E is wrong.

Marie Stalling, Brookfield Avenue, asked the Board to hold off on Option E and look at neighborhood schools. Wait until there is a better plan.

Mary Koeck, Bronson Road, asked the Board to spend more time on this.

MaryBeth Claflin, Glenarden Drive, stated that she has no objection to redistricting but thinks the Board should give this more time. There is nothing more disruptive than a plan that is not comprehensive.

Sue Dammeyer, 110 Thormhill Road, stated that she has no objection to redistricting but would like to have it done right with as little disruption as possible. She asked the Board to please not vote tonight and to take the time to consider what is truly in the best interest of the kids.

Anne Pasco, current President of the Fairfield Education Association, introduced herself to the Board and stated that she wanted to tell the Board and parents present that as the representative of more than 900 teachers, we are here to do our very best to educate your children and that is our primary goal.

8. Extraordinary Business

- A. Mr. Mitola moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve the contract between the Fairfield Board of Education and the Fairfield Custodians-Maintenance Local 1779 of Council #4, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, dated July 1, 2010-June 30, 2012.

Board comments followed.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- B. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education revise the authorized signers of the ED-099 Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs to designate David G. Title, Superintendent of Schools, as the person authorized to sign claims for reimbursement, and in his absence, Thomas Cullen, Director of Operations, as the second person authorized to sign claims for reimbursement.

Motion carried: 8:0:0. Mr. Mitola was out of the room during the vote.

- C. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education Approve Policy #2410–Line of Responsibility as presented at the August 24, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

Motion carried: 8:0:0. Mr. Mitola was out of the room during the vote.

- D. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education eliminate Policy #2420.1–Organizational Chart and replace it as an Administrative Regulation to accompany Policy #2410–Line Responsibility as presented at the August 24, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

Board comments followed.

Motion carried: 7:2:0. Mr. Fattibene and Mrs. Iacono voted in opposition.

- E. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve Policy #4121–Appointment as presented at the August 24, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

Board comments followed.

Public Comment–

Betty Ann O’Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, commented that the Board should at least retain a veto power on this.

Board comments continued.

Motion carried: 8:1:0. Mr. Fattibene voted in opposition.

- F. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board of Education approve Policy #5125–School Accommodations to Resident and Non-Resident Children in the Fairfield Public Schools as presented at the August 24, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

Board comments and questions followed. Dr. Title stated that this would be a cost neutral item. The Board would need to pay a procedural advisory to sit at the table or pay the same person to be a hearing officer.

Motion carried: 7:2:0. Mr. Kery and Mrs. Iacono voted in opposition.

- G. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve the following policies:

- Policy #5128 – Foreign Exchange Students
- Policy #5119/5120 – Suspension and Expulsion
- Policy #5313 – Substance Abuse
- Policy #5320 – Weapons

Mrs. Brand stated that Dr. Title would prefer to have these policies postponed to the next Board meeting on September 28.

Mr. Mitola moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn to postpone this item until the September 28, 2010 Board of Education meeting.

Motion carried: 8:0:0. Mr. Kery was out of the room during the vote.

- H. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Basic and Supplemental Textbook which has been reviewed and selected in accordance with the administration’s selection process and presented for the Board’s consideration at the August 24, 2010 meeting be approved.

Motion carried: 8:0:0. Mr. Kery was out of the room during the vote.

- I. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that the Board of Education approve the 2010 Addendum to the Fairfield Public Schools' Plan to Reduce Racial Imbalance to be Submitted to CSBE.

Board comments followed.

Public Comment-

Richard Joslin, Carriage Drive, commented that State Law 10-26e2c, states that the content of the plan should include the analysis of student achievement. He stated that he reviewed the CMT scores for the last 3 years and the minority kids in McKinley are 50% below in contrast to the majority which are at 89.10%. He stated that he thinks it is essential that any addendum to the plan should be focused on the achievement.

Motion carried: 8:1:0. Mrs. Iacono voted in opposition.

- J. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Kery that the Board of Education approve hiring MGT of America, Inc. to develop 10 year enrollment projections and elementary school space capacities.

Mr. Kery gave a quick overview of the process. The subcommittee reviewed the RFPs with the administration; 4 proposals were received, 2 did not answer the requirements of the request, and 1 was extremely costly. The response from MGT was encouraging and includes a long term enrollment projection methodology that incorporates 4 separate models as opposed to the cohorts survival model. Those models are: an average percentage annual increase model, a modified cohort survival model, a linear regression model and student per housing model. An alt/add is being recommended, and was requested in the RFP, to specify the capacity of the elementary buildings in our town. The administration spoke to MGT and was able to negotiate a price under \$25,000.

Board questions followed.

Public Comment-

Seth Block, Shrub Oak Lane, commented that he is dumbfounded that the Board is voting on a demographic study now, considering what the next agenda item is.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

- K. Discussion of New Middle School Feeder Pattern Proposal-

Mrs. Brand gave a brief PowerPoint presentation of Feeder Plan Option 9.9.10. Under this option North Stratfield, Jennings, McKinley and Stratfield would go to Fairfield Woods MS; Osborn Hill, Burr, Holland Hill and Riverfield would go to Roger Ludlowe MS; and Sherman, Dwight and Mill Hill would go to Tomlinson MS. Mrs. Brand stated that this plan meets the same amount of criteria as Option E, there is no cost differential, it is less disruptive since it only moves 4 schools (Burr, McKinley, Holland Hill and Stratfield), it considers the impact on the high schools, grandfathering is affordable and manageable because only 4 schools move, and it considers the impact on traffic in town. She stated that this is not necessarily being presented because it is the best choice, but it is an obvious one and needs to be considered.

Approximately 35 minutes of Board questions, comments and discussion followed regarding adding a last minute plan, the process in bringing this plan forward, costs, the need to determine if the criteria the subcommittee put forth is acceptable to the Board or not, and creating a singleton. Board discussion also followed on this new Option versus Option E.

Dr. Title stated that an answer is needed on the middle school feeder plan and grandfathering by the end of this month in order to start planning the transition. It doesn't matter if both of these decisions are made in two weeks or if one decision is made tonight and the other is made in two weeks. .

Mrs. Brand asked if the Board would like to have a discussion about the criteria, evaluate any of the proposals with criteria, and/or have this option considered along with Option E. No motions were made.

- L. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve Option E as the new middle school feeder pattern.

Mr. Kery stated that this is the most disruptive option, and the subcommittee did not weigh each of the criteria equally. Educational issues as well as balancing capacity seemed to take precedence over issues such as minimizing disruption or impact on busing. It might be useful in terms of process for the full Board to weigh in on the criteria. If the full Board feels the criteria is appropriate, it makes sense to continue forward with a vote. In terms of busing costs, the report from the administration had a busing analysis that said the difference between Option E and what we have currently would be cost neutral. Grandfathering is another issue and there would be more costs. Mr. Kery stated that he would like to hear from the members of the Board if there is any criteria they would like to have eliminated or changed.

Board discussion followed regarding the criteria, discussing all of the options at the Board table, the cost of busing, and the length of time on a bus.

Mr. Kery and Mrs. Iacono withdrew their motion so a discussion and vote on the criteria could be added to this agenda. It will require a 2/3 vote of the Board to add this item to the agenda.

Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola to add a discussion and vote on the criteria to this agenda.

Board comments, questions and discussion followed on adding this item to the agenda.

Ms. Zahn moved that central office take this over and make the decision. There was no second.

Board comments and discussion continued.

Mrs. Iacono called the question, seconded by Mrs. Albin.

Vote to add this item to the agenda failed: 3:6:0. Mrs. Brand, Mrs. Dow and Mr. Liu voted in favor. Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Iacono, Mrs. Albin, Ms. Zahn and Mr. Mitola voted in opposition.

Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that the Board of Education approve Option E as the new middle school feeder pattern.

Board comments and discussion followed regarding Plan E being disruptive, not addressing the high school issue, doing an overall redistricting throughout the entire town, concern with the timeframe established by the administration, and getting the best plan possible.

Mr. Fattibene moved, seconded by Mr. Liu to postpone a vote until the next Board meeting in the hope that a modified newly proposed plan could surface that may be a better plan.

Board comments, questions and discussion followed.

Mrs. Albin called the question, seconded by Mrs. Iacono.

Vote to Call the Question carried: 6:3:0. Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery, Mrs. Iacono, Ms. Zahn, Mrs. Albin and Mr. Mitola voted in favor. Mrs. Brand, Mr. Liu and Mrs. Dow voted in opposition.

Vote on Motion to postpone failed: 4:5:0. Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand, Mrs. Dow and Mr. Liu voted in favor. Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Mrs. Iacono, Ms. Zahn and Mr. Mitola voted in opposition.

Back to Main Motion: “that the Board of Education approve Option E as the new middle school feeder pattern”

Board comments continued.

Dr. Title commented that moving fewer kids is preferable educationally, but all of these plans that do that either change the high school feeder pattern or create a singleton, both of which he would not be in favor of.

Public Comment-

Jillian Shaffer, Middlebrook Drive, commented that it is unbelievable that the Board is going to vote on this. The reality is that you haven’t come up with a good plan in years past or now and until you do, you shouldn’t be voting on one. If you can’t do it, then hire someone who can.

Christine Sander, 25 Concord Street, stated that under this option the Board is going to bus children for an hour or more, spend that much more money on fuel and change the walkability when you have the opportunity to improve it. There are studies about how biking and walking to school brings children to school prepared in a way that riding a bus or in a parent’s mini-van does not. She would like to see her children have the opportunity ride their bike or walk to school.

Ginger Thompson, Elm Street, spoke in opposition of Option E. Redefine the lines and look at the long term.

Pete Donohue, Elm Street, questioned having to do this in two weeks. All of the criteria needs to be revisited and prioritized. Kids in a singleton group do ok.

Brigid Wykoff, Meadowbrook Road, spoke against Option E and busing kids across town.

John Convertito, Oyster Road, urged the Board to move this plan forward.

Heather Petrecca, Paddock Hill Lane, asked the Board to vote no on Option E; it creates a commuter school at Tomlinson, adds congestion to an already overcrowded corridor on Unquowa Road, and if grandfathering is passed as part of this plan, 7 elementary schools will all attending Tomlinson for 2 years. It sets unreasonable traveling distances and time for Stratfield and Burr. She asked the Board to consider creating a 6th grade campus with middle school becoming a 7-8th grade campus.

Elise McKay, Ludlowe Road, asked the Board to give guidance to the subcommittee on the criteria. She encouraged the Board to look at why there is a need to change the high school feeder plan. If Option E succeeds, Fairfield Ludlowe HS will be significantly more overcrowded than Fairfield Warde HS. Something needs to be done about the high school numbers.

Jill Kellerman, Brookfield Avenue, urged the Board to vote no on Option E. Consider other options that might be better and have children on a bus for as little time as possible.

Bonnie Newman, Woodside Circle, commented against Option E, and asked the Board to consider the time the children spend on the bus that is unnecessary.

Steve Guth, Ermine Street, expressed concern that three people on the subcommittee are making the decision on criteria and options. He questioned why all of the options are not being looked at and implored the Board not to vote on this option

Motion carried: 5:4:0. Mr. Kery, Mrs. Albin, Mrs. Iacono, Ms. Zahn and Mr. Mitola voted in favor. Mr. Fattibene, Mrs. Brand, Mrs. Dow and Mr. Liu voted in opposition.

9. Reports and Recommendations-

- ◆ Allison Reich--No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Albin--No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported that there is a new Medical Director, Bruce McDonald. Flu shot will be given at the Senior Center on September 29 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on September 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that the Board of Finance called a joint meeting with the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen and RTM to talk about money that is available to be spent in the future so we know the fiscal situation in town and are all on the same page.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene--No report.
- ◆ Mrs. Iacono reported that Special Projects Standing Building Committee went before the Board of Finance for seed money for the Sherman Project and was cut from \$100,000 to \$50,000. The RTM will meet the end of this month and will vote on the Sherman appropriation for seed money.
- ◆ Mr. Kery--No report.
- ◆ Mr. Liu--No report.
- ◆ Mr. Mitola--No report.
- ◆ Ms. Zahn--No report.

10. Open Board Discussion-

Mr. Kery expressed displeasure when looking at this year's enrollment and seeing the extended day kindergarten program was removed from our system. There should not be more than one blended class per elementary school and stated that he would like to have a more in-depth discussion on this at a future board meeting. Mrs. Iacono and Mrs. Dow concurred with Mr. Kery.

Jim Walsh, ex officio, commented on Dr. Title's report at the last Board meeting regarding Dr. Clark's car. Mr. Walsh stated that he is unsatisfied that the Board of Education plans to keep this car as a maintenance vehicle. The Board of Ed should either sell the car and give the money back to the Town or turn the car over to the Town. It was paid for with taxpayer dollars, and if it is not going to be used, it should go back to the Town in some formal fashion. He asked that this be a full Board discussion at the next Board meeting.

11. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Mitola that this regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 11:00 p.m.
Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary