

APPROVED

ENCLOSURE NO. 2

OCT 12 2010

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Tuesday, September 28, 2010

Minutes of the Business Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, September 28, 2010, at Fairfield Warde High School-Auditorium.

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 p.m. by Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin (left at 10:15 p.m.), Mrs. Sue Dow, Mr. Paul Fattibene, Mrs. Pamela Iacono, Mr. Tim Kery, Mr. Perry Liu, Mr. John Mitola and Ms. Stacey Zahn. Also in attendance were Fairfield Ludlowe HS Student Representative Allison Reich, Superintendent Dr. David Title, and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 250 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

1. Mrs. Brand led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Recognition of Teachers and Administrators Achieving Tenure-
Approximately 55 teachers and administrators were recognized for achieving tenure and presented with a certificate.
3. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Education Meeting of September 14, 2010.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

4. Old Business

- A. Mr. Kery moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that the Board of Education approve 'grandfathering' of all sixth and seventh grade students at their current middle schools until they complete eighth grade and that transportation be provided for those students. Parents may opt-out of 'grandfathering' and have current sixth and seventh grade students attend their new middle school if the purpose is to keep siblings together, and transportation will be provided for those students.

Dr. Title stated that three grandfathering options were studied internally with staff for possible educational, social and financial implications and this is his recommendation. The three options were: (1) no grandfathering, (2) grandfathering of existing 7th graders who will be entering 8th grade, and (3) full grandfathering of existing 6th and 7th graders. Dr. Title stated that he is recommending Option 3, full grandfathering of existing 6th and 7th graders so they can finish through 8th grade in that middle school regardless of whether their feeder school is changing. The opt out provision was put in for parents who may have a child in two different middle schools and feel strongly that they want both children together. Under this option they can be together at the new school, and there would not have to be extenuating circumstances. Transportation would be provided in both cases. Dr. Title stated that he believes educationally and socially the best case scenario is to grandfather all 6th and 7th graders because it doesn't force children who have attended a middle school to have to make an additional transition to a new middle school. There is room in the schools to accomplish this in terms of capacity and utilization. To determine how much grandfathering will cost is complex and time consuming work that Mr. Ficke did. Because of the way the kids are distributed, six additional buses would be needed. The buses are set by contract, including fuel, at \$57,000 per bus for a total of \$342,000, which represents about one quarter of one percent of the current year's budget. Dr. Title stated that there is no cost savings to only grandfathering the current 7th grade because the buses still have to go out to the far areas of town, there just won't be as many kids on them. Mr. Cullen and Mr. Ficke are here this evening if Board members have questions about the busing costs.

Mr. Ficke commented on how he arrived at the bus numbers. For the 'no grandfathering' option he took the numbers that are currently at each school, put them all into the new schools and divided out by 52 students per bus, which is the maximum number put on a bus when data is

compiled. Physical bus routes were not built for this scenario, just how many buses it would take. For the next options he had to physically start taking bus routes apart. He took the list of every student at the school and pulled all of the 7th graders out, then took the 7th graders and went stop by stop or house by house to find out whether they are a walker or a rider and broke it all down. When he was given the third option, he went back to last year's records and pulled the 4th and 5th graders out of those schools, taking their bus stops and feeding them into the current bus routes at the schools and trying to generate bus routes. There some issues in the far reaching areas of town where the bus spends 15 minutes picking up 15 kids and then has a 30 minute bus ride to get to school. Another area has only 13 kids on the bus and a 30 minute ride to school. He stated that he looked at the map across town to figure out if there was a street with five kids where the bus could make one stop and add a few more kids. He physically went through each and every route in four different scenarios down to 3 p.m. this afternoon. There wasn't enough time to complete Roger Ludlowe MS. It was very time consuming and he did the best he could. Mr. Ficke explained why Fairfield Woods MS requires no additional buses under "full" grandfathering while Roger Ludlowe requires four additional buses. This is because Woods is getting the injection of new students. Students are being pulled from the other middle schools and sent to Woods. Since the student base is increasing, there is automatically going to be an additional number of buses there.

Approximately one hour of Board questions, comments and discussion followed regarding the projected cost for busing, doing a bus route study, the possibility of needing more than six additional buses and the additional busing costs, reassigning students to different buses after school starts, length of bus routes, actual time students will be on a bus, the cost of busing for the second year, capacities and enrollment at the middle schools, the impact this will have on the students, the conditions for opt out, and what impact this will have on the budget. Concern was expressed that this is being rushed forward with incomplete information. If this motion is passed, the administration at the middle schools will need to be cognizant about planning with respect to Open Houses, concerts, etc. since there will be families with kids at two different middle schools. The key issue is to make the transition as seamless as possible for the kids.

Dr. Title stated that this is all an estimate. It assumes that 100 percent of the kids who are eligible to be grandfathered will take it. Even if a relatively small number of kids don't take the grandfathering, that helps because they can stay on the regular bus runs. Dr. Title stated that staffing is the biggest part of the budget, and a good estimate is needed of how many kids will be in each grade in each school so that we can staff appropriately. There are also a number of staff members who may be part time now and they need to know what the forecast is for the position next year. This information is all needed to build the budget.

Public Comments-

Seth Block, Shrub Oak Lane, commented that this is another incomplete study on a very difficult issue. The kids are going to be impacted educationally and families will be impacted financially. He hopes one of the Board members who voted last month would have the bravery to turn this over. It could save a lot of money.

Richard Joslin, Carriage Drive, commented on the cost and what happens if it costs more. He asked the Board to back and find an option that doesn't cost money for busing or is neutral on busing and neutral on teachers. These numbers are based upon actual enrollment, not the ADS projections which were the fundamental cornerstone of your Option E analysis. .

Debbie Strachan, Lynnbrook Road, stated that the Board is not thinking fiscally responsibly about what could happen later on. You can't vote on this without knowing much closer facts and dollar amounts.

Jane Dellipoali, Sigwin Drive, asked the Board to vote to grandfather all 6th and 7th grade students.

Michelle Stearns, Benson Place, commented that two weeks ago the Board voted for Option E without knowing the cost, impact on traffic, impact on buses, etc. Now you are talking about grandfathering at a cost estimate of \$342,000. She demanded that the Board demonstrate to the public how you are going to pay for it. This is a lose/lose situation; if we grandfather, something will be cut educationally; and if we don't, it is disruptive to the current 6th and 7th graders.

Paula Tommins, Wakeman Road, commented that she hopes one of the five Board members who voted for this would put it back on the table. Don't make these kids pay for poor planning. Do the right thing and grandfather. If you really want to do the right thing, scrap Plan E and redistrict properly from elementary school on up to the high school.

Eve Marks and Elizabeth Haney, Tomlinson Middle School students, urged the Board to adopt the recommended motion of keeping all 6th and 7th graders in their current middle school.

Heather Lajeunesse, Mountain Laurel Road, stated that she thinks the general consensus on the Board is that you support grandfathering. The problem she has is that it is a lot of money and she does not see where the money is going to come from. This plan still leaves huge inequities at the high school level. Address all the levels, do it at once or at least tell us what you are doing so that people can plan and prepare.

Heather Petrecca, Paddock Hill Lane, stated that when her daughter starts school in the fall she will be one of 71 graduating from Burr, and she will be torn from her fellow feeder schools at Fairfield Woods and isolated from other Burr families by grandfathering of 6th and 7th graders. She asked the Board to reconsider Plan E. On Friday she sent the Board plan, 11.1.2.2, which she put together with a friend and it accomplishes all of the criteria and creates a unifying experience for the entire town of Fairfield to go to 6th grade together and eliminates the problem of three middle schools splitting to two high schools. She asked the Board to consider 11.1.2.2.

Jillian Shaffer, Middlebrook Drive, stated that she is in favor of grandfathering although the money is a big problem. The schools are functioning. Support the kids where they are until you can come up with a plan that really works and are not spending more taxpayer dollars.

Suzanne Dammeyer, Thornhill Road, stated that she is against grandfathering. You can't look at spending this amount of money when you haven't even looked at the problems of the elementary and high school overcrowding. How can you pass grandfathering and expect to tell one family they must keep their children in a school and tell another family they don't have to because they have another younger child. That is unfair. If you pass grandfathering it should be equal.

Brigid Wykoff, Meadowbrook Road, stated that the Board is supposed to be discussing the pros and cons and asking questions, and this was not a discussion. She read from an article that was on the web from the Fairfield School Space Coalition. "If history repeats itself and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must man be from learning from experience?" She asked the Board to do it right for the children and if not for the children, for the town of Fairfield that you represent.

Suzanne Miska, Ryegate Road, stated that no matter how you do this you are affecting children, and they should not be the ones that have to bear the price of an ill conceived plan, one that didn't factor in that there would be a cost. She commented that she has received emails from members of the Board of Finance and RTM telling her that they are aware of what is going on. She asked how the Board can go in front of them and say we really need this money, we just weren't sure where it was going to come from. Think please.

Liz Lyons, Holland Hill Road, commented she is surprised that Plan E and grandfathering have been put before the public and before the Board so quickly without all of the considerations. She would like the Board to reconsider their option. She is in favor of grandfathering.

Susan Byrne, Cross Highway, stated that Option E should never have been presented as a no cost option. She now feels deceived because you can't have Option E without grandfathering, and she does not understand how Option E was ever presented without grandfathering. She wants grandfathering if Option E is the only option but does not think it should have even been presented as a no cost option.

Randy Newell, Catamount Road, stated in August the Board represented there were no bus rides over 50 minutes, which is not true because the high school bus serving his area is 1 hour and 2 minutes starting at 6:30 a.m. At the last meeting questions were asked about transportation costs impacting the middle school feeder options and the data was not available at that time. Now after the vote, we are hearing of a cost benefit analysis only on Option E and only on grandfathering. Grandfathering will have an impact of \$342,000 and there is a potential impact on bus times. Students should not be on a bus for 2 hours and 4 minutes a day. Has the Board looked at possible other impacts like special education? Is there an analysis on the facilities and capacity for special ed? Where is the analysis of Option E overall costs versus all of the options? Be brave and roll it back.

Vote on Motion carried: 7:0:2. Mr. Mitola, Ms. Zahn, Mrs. Iacono, Mrs. Albin, Mr. Kery, Mr. Fattibene and Mrs. Dow voted in favor. Mrs. Brand and Mr. Liu abstained.

B. End of Fiscal Year June 30, 2010 Report-

Mrs. McWain stated that Enclosure No. 2 is the final report for the end of year financial position for 2009-10. Explanations for the shortfalls and the balances are provided in the narrative of the report, modifications or additions to the initial report are underlined. The total amount of budget modifications was \$758,196, which is .54 of one percent of our budget allocation for 2009-10. This amount is the lowest that has been requested as a budget modification in at least 8-10 years. We ended the fiscal year expending our full budget allocation for 09-10, and we did not turn any money back to the town this year. There were minimal changes in some of the individual amounts that were identified in June when this was discussed at length.

C. Mr. Mitola moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education approve Policy #5128-Foreign Exchange Students as presented at the April 27, 2010 Board of Education meeting.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

D. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mr. Liu that the Board of Education approve Policy #5145-Use of Breathalyzers as presented at the June 8, 2010 Board of Education Meeting.

Mrs. Iacono commented that it was her understanding that a student survey was going to be done on breathalyzers and the Board was to get the results of the survey in order to make a final determination. Dr. Title stated that a student survey was not done. He stated that he does not believe it is a good practice on the part of boards to survey students as a way to determine whether a policy should be passed or not.

Board comments, questions and discussion followed.

Dr. Title stated that he supports the policy as it is written and is recommending it for approval. Currently there is no policy on this. This policy requires the use of breathalyzers at school sponsored dances. If there are other events where the school administration feels it might be necessary, with proper notice, they would be administered. This was passed by legal counsel in terms of constitutionality.

Mrs. Iacono stated that this body gave a directive and the directive was not followed. It should have at least been brought back to this table for discussion.

Board questions and comments continued.

Public Comment-

Wendy Bentivegna, Village Lane, stated that statistics at neighboring high schools that use breathalyzers indicate that breathalyzing will greatly reduce if not stop drinking at the dances. The Fairfield Board of Ed has an opportunity to say no to one aspect of underage drinking and that is drinking at school dances.

Nancy Billington, Fleming Lane, spoke in favor of the breathalyzer policy.

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, spoke in support of the breathalyzer policy. It is not just about the kids who are drinking, it is about the ones who are not drinking and are uncomfortable when there are students who have been drinking at their dances.

Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Melville Avenue, commented in favor of the breathalyzer policy. She applauded the Board's interest in examining this policy in the context of a broader conversation and encouraged the Board to continue that conversation in work with groups like RYASAP and the Fairfield Alcohol and Health Taskforce. She urged the Board to vote in support of this.

Kitty Connor, 165 Primrose Lane, stated that she hopes the Board knows from the 250 supporters from the Fairfield Warde community that there is a collective voice requesting that this policy be implemented. She urged the Board to vote for this policy.

J. Alfred Dunn commented that as far as the student survey is concerned, it was not a vote, it was a consensus. It is true that alcohol usage and other means of intoxication is going up. He is for this 550 percent. If it saves one life, it is worth it. Please pass it.

Melissa Petrafesa, Cynthia Drive, urged the Board to pass this. She is a recruiter and just watched someone who recently graduated from college have an offer rescinded because she had a DUI. If we can offer the support to help our juniors and senior to make better choices that will affect the rest of their lives, she is in favor of it.

Sam Audino, a student at Fairfield Ludlowe HS, stated that he is baffled at the indecisiveness of the student survey and stated that as a student it is important to him that his opinion be heard on something that is going to directly affect him. He stated that each year the AP Statistics course at Ludlowe does as a survey project to gather information about what students are thinking and they could easily have the breathalyzer survey as their project for this year. He asked where this will go next; will he eventually need to be breathalyzed on his way in to a football or soccer game.

Grey Walker, a junior at Fairfield Ludlowe HS, stated that last year he attended the junior prom and the environment is not as dangerous or as threatening as is believed. The probability of a student getting in while under the influence or consuming while at the event is extremely low. Not once was there a problem or situation there that in any way endangered the students.

Greg Convertito, junior class representative on the Student Representative Council at Ludlowe, stated that this policy operates on the basis that school dances are a privilege so breathalyzing is OK because you have to prove your eligibility for the privilege. According to the Student/Parent Handbook, dances are considered private social events and the handbook implies that school dances are a right of any student in good standing to attend not a privilege. Therefore, students should not have to undergo breathalyzing. The policy operates on the assumption that students are guilty until you prove yourself innocent.

Will Carroll, a freshman at Ludlowe HS, stated that the kids do drink, but if they are not intoxicated before going to a dance he does not understand why they would have to be breathalyzed. If they smell of alcohol or are intoxicated, then breathalyzers would be available to check.

John Convertito, Oyster Road, stated that he opposes this policy. The idea that the input from students is irrelevant is a frightening thought. This policy as written tells our students we don't trust you or your parents to get you from your home to a school function without drinking. If you want to make breathalyzers discretionary on a probable cause basis as the Constitution of this state says, that is fine, but to make it a unanimous or mandatory rite of passage to walk into a dance is wrong.

Debbie Strachan, Lynnbroad Road, reminded the Board that there are several surrounding towns that support using breathalyzers and it has been proven to help them. If you are saving one life, you are doing your job. Do the right thing and save one child from making the wrong choice.

Kate Mattison, Burr Street, spoke in favor of this policy.

Brigid Wykoff, Meadowbrook Road, spoke in favor of the breathalyzer policy.

Motion carried: 5:3:1. Mr. Liu, Mrs. Dow, Mr. Mitola, Ms. Zahn and Mrs. Brand voted in favor. Mr. Fattibene, Mr. Kery and Mrs. Albin voted in opposition. Mrs. Iacono abstained.

5. New Business-

A. First Read of Policies-

#3534.2 – Green Cleaning

#5119 – Student Discipline – Suspension and Expulsion

Elimination of Policy #5120 – Expulsion

Elimination of Policy #5313 – Substance Abuse

Elimination of Policy #5320 – Weapons

Dr. Title stated that Policy #3534.2-Green Cleaning is in response to a change in the Statute that requires the Board to have a policy about green cleaning. It is basically the CAGE recommended policy. Policy #5119-Student Discipline-Suspension and Expulsion was held over. There are several policies related to student discipline and he is proposing consolidating all of them into one policy. This is a much more detailed policy than you would typically see. This is such a legalistic process and there are so many pitfalls that you really want to make sure everything is spelled out and then have it mimicked precisely in the student handbooks so there is complete clarity about what the expectations are, what the consequences are and what the procedures are. Dr. Title stated that he is recommending that the Board appoint an impartial hearing officer to hear and decide expulsions. The advantage is that we are able to have consistency and it is not a cost item because the Board would need to have a legal advisor there anyway.

Board questions and comments followed. Mrs. Iacono stated that she really would like to see the Board maintain the current procedure, which is if you can't get three Board members then you get the hearing officer.

6. Report of the Superintendent-

Dr. Title had no report.

Mrs. Brand asked if there is a plan to incorporate budget reports at future Board meetings. Dr. Title stated that he will bring this up at the next Finance Committee meeting and discuss a format of regular budget reporting at Board meetings. Mrs. Brand also commented that the Board has a Long Range Facilities Plan and but does not have a student population plan. She asked if something like that is going to be addressed. Dr. Title stated that the next work of the Facilities Committee is to do a revision to the Board's Long Term Facilities Plan. With the funding cuts from last year the plan has to be revised. We are prepared to bring forward at the next Facilities subcommittee meeting a revised long term plan for the committee's recommendation. After that, the next step will be to bring it to the Board table. Dr. Title stated that Board members received a copy of the letter from the First Selectman regarding the roof replacement and there is some misunderstanding about how that fits into

the picture. All of that needs to be consolidated with the Facilities Committee and then as the new enrollment projections come in we can start planning even longer term what we need to do for the schools.

7. Public Comments and Petitions-

Betty Ann O'Shaughnessy, Queens Grant Road, stated that along with the student population report that was requested she would like the Board to look at the high school space issue. She also commented that when looking at the budget she saw that the resources are not allocated equitably between the two high schools and would like this Board to also consider that in the budget season.

Michelle Stearns, Benson Place, stated that a group of concerned parents put together a position paper that addresses Option E. We are asking the Board of Ed to reopen the discussion and put the redistricting plan back on the agenda at the next Board of Ed meeting. You must table the decision to implement Option E until you address the problems that are inherent in this plan and address the issues that were not resolved with this plan. She stated that there is also an online petition with 656 signatures. The Fairfield Citizen is running a poll; 178 people have voted and 75% are in favor of what she read.

Ann Marie O'Keefe, Burr Street, submitted letters on behalf of the Burr community. Many people of this town would like the Board to go back and reconsider your decision to implement Option E.

Krista Dougherty, Gilbert Highway, asked the Board to reconsider Option E. There are other options that meet your defined criteria. Take the time to discuss and compare these options.

Brigid Wykoff, Meadowbrook Road, commented that when the Board votes they have to have the costs. We don't have all of the bus costs. Do the elementary redistricting first then the plan.

Seth Block, Shrub Oak Lane, stated that he hopes the Board will look inside yourself as a body that represents the town, the school, the children and open this for discussion and reverse it because the students deserve better, the citizens of this town deserve better. He urged the Board to consider that.

8. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Iacono that this regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 10:35 p.m.

Motion carried: 8:0:0.

Stacey Zahn
Secretary