

**APPROVED**

FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Minutes of the Education Meeting of the Board of Education held Tuesday, March 9, 2010, at Riverfield Elementary School-APR.

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m. by Chairman Mrs. Sue Brand. Other Board members present were: Mrs. Catherine Albin, 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 Superintendent Dr. Ann Clark, Fairfield Ludlowe HS Student Representative Sarah Finlaw, Fairfield Warde HS Student Representative Tom Wolff and members of the administrative staff. Approximately 35 people comprised the remainder of the audience.

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

2. Moment of Pride-

- Amy Gagnon, Riverfield School Physical Education Teacher, Recognized as Eastern District Elementary School Physical Educator of the Year by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education

Mr. Paul Toaso, Principal of Riverfield School, introduced Amy Gagnon, physical education teacher, who has been recognized by the State of Connecticut and by the Eastern District Physical Educators. As the Eastern District representative, Amy is up for National Physical Education Teacher of the Year along with five other PE teachers. Amy exemplifies what good teaching is all about; she puts children first.

- Christine Graf, grade 4, whose illustration will be on the cover of the soon to be published book, "Our Place, Fairfield" by Chris Gorman and Michelle Morfitt

Mr. Toaso introduced and recognized Christine Graf a current fourth grader at Riverfield School. Last year Riverfield students participated in an illustration competition, and Christine's illustration of the Gazebo on Sherman Green was chosen to be on the cover of "Our Place, Fairfield," which is a resource book for students about the town written by Mr. Chris Gorman and his wife Michelle Morfitt. They have written three "Our Place" books so far: Westport, Darien and New Canaan. "Our Place, Fairfield" will come out in the spring.

- Mr. Toaso also recognized Patrick Salts, grade 5, who won the town-wide spelling bee and will represent Fairfield in the state-wide competition. Mr. Toaso also recognized Brendan Sawyer, grade 5, who is a second place winner at the state level for the Reflections Contest.

3. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Business Meeting of February 23, 2010.

Motion carried: 6:0:3. Mrs. Brand, Mr. Liu and Mr. Mitola abstained.

4. Public Comments and Petitions-

Maureen Barre, Fairfield Ludlowe HS PTA President, commented in favor of the policy on breathalyzers. She stated that for the past 15 months the Fairfield Ludlowe PTA has researched and discussed the issue of underage drinking, and the routine use of breathalyzers at our high school dances has been unanimously supported. This is not a strategy to catch students who are drinking, it is a simple and reliable method to deter drinking and create a safe environment for all students where they can party alcohol free.

Hilary Long, Acorn Lane, commented on allowing parents, teachers and children an opportunity to give feedback to the school system. If Fairfield could ask parents, teachers and children to provide feedback every year about the facilities, staff, curriculum, specials, etc., it would help the principals and administration to manage better and parents, teachers and children would feel good that they can contribute to the educational environment.

5. Extraordinary Business-

- A. Mrs. Iacono moved, seconded by Mrs. Albin that the Board of Education hire Attorney Robert Mitchell of Mitchell & Sheahan, P.C. to act as legal counsel in the hiring of a superintendent.

Ms. Zahn stated that she will be voting against this motion. It has nothing to do with the individual; it has to do the process that the Board went through to get here.

Motion carried: 8:1:0. Ms. Zahn voted in opposition.

- B. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education authorize the Chairman to sign Form ED 042, Phase 5 of 5 for the Stratfield School Building Project.

Mr. Sal Morabito stated that Phase 5 is the FF&E, which is the furniture, fixtures and equipment that will be going into the renovated school. It includes new furniture for the new classrooms and some replacement furniture for what was deemed fair or poor and in need of replacement. The Building Committee had the architect survey all of the existing furniture and that was the basis of the bid package.

Board questions and comments followed. The Building Committee has already approved this bid package and it is really a formality to have the Board counter sign it for state funding.

Public Comment-

Jeff Peterson, a member of the Stratfield PTA, commented that the Building Committee has done a very thorough job. They have looked over these documents and given them a thorough review.

Motion carried: 9:0:0

- C. Ms. Zahn moved, seconded by Mrs. Dow that the Board of Education approve the Middle School Family & Consumer Science Curriculum.

Motion carried: 8:0:1. Mr. Mitola abstained.

- D. Discussion of an Operational Audit-

Mrs. Brand introduced Ms. Twig Holland, Town Purchasing Agent. Ms. Holland commented that services for doing an operational audit are considered professional services and as such are exempt from public bidding requirements by the Town Charter. Although they do not have to be publicly bid and the lowest bidder taken, the Town's policy for any projects for any importance or magnitude is to do an RFP (Request for Proposal). RFPs are sent out to known candidates and published on the website. When proposals come back, they are analyzed and a fairly collaborative effort takes place to choose the best one. The challenge for this audit is going to be framing the scope of work, what the deliverables are, the Board's schedule, what reports you want, and who will be involved in the audit for both the Town and Board of Ed side.

Board questions and comments followed regarding a timeframe for getting the audit done, will this be a joint effort between the Town and Board of Ed, who will be selecting the consultant, and having representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and RTM attend the meetings.

It was the sense of the Board to move forward with an operational audit.

This will be referred to the Finance, Budget and Community Relations subcommittee to bring forward a proposal to the full Board for consideration.

Ms. Holland offered to check what other towns and boards of education have done with respect to an operational audit and get a copy of their RFP. She will reach out to school districts that have just recently completed the process or have an audit in process and get their documents.

## 6. Presentation-

### A. First Read of Policy #5145, Use of Breathalyzers

Mr. Boyle stated that this policy suggests that the Board of Education endorses the use of breathalyzer tests at school-sponsored dances and other selected events both on site and off site to all students and their guests in order to provide a safe and healthy environment. Presently, students are given a breathalyzer test when there is a suspicion. In consultation with CABE, it was suggested that the Board should have a breathalyzer policy. This has been discussed with the high school joint leadership team, the high school administration, and with several parent groups who have supported our efforts in this area. The Board Policy Committee reviewed this at their last meeting, and the high school headmasters were there to discuss it.

Board questions and comments followed.

The Policy Committee will meet on April 21, review suggestions and revise the policy as necessary. This will be on the April 27 agenda for approval.

## 7. Reports and Recommendations-

- ◆ Sarah Finlaw reported that March 16 Fairfield Ludlowe High School will host the Town-wide Choral Festival. On March 18 at 7 PM there will be a Freshmen Forum on Under Age Drinking, and all freshmen and their parents are encouraged to attend. Battle of the Houses is coming up.
- ◆ Tom Wolff reported that at Fairfield Warde High School both the boys and girls basketball teams have qualified for the state tournament; boys skiing, bowling and wrestling have won State Championships. The Interact Club hosted their annual cross town talent show that raises money for charity, and for the second year has raised money for Haiti. The spring musical, *Into the Woods*, is in production. The Forum on Underage Drinking is scheduled, and currently being considered is integrating this with the Battle of the Houses. Attendance at the Underage Drinking Forum could benefit the houses in the competition as a way of an incentive to attend the forum.
- ◆ Mrs. Albin reported that the Fairfield Warde HS Chamber Orchestra will perform tomorrow at 7:30 pm at St. Anthony's Church on South Pine Creek Road. Last week she attended the CABE Day on the Hill and met with the legislatures. She also had a lengthy meeting with members of the Westport Board of Education and Representative Fawcett discussing bills that are in the state house and senate for consideration. She is also on a CABE taskforce that will be reviewing CABE's services and how they can improve them. If Board members have any thoughts to share, she will take them to the taskforce. She is also on the committee for this Convention this year.
- ◆ Mrs. Brand reported on the mercury levels that were investigated and found to be in safe levels at not only Stratfield School but at Burr and McKinley in the matting in the gymnasiums. There is the potential for PCPs to be in caulking and the school district is looking at that.
- ◆ Mrs. Dow reported that CABE is offering a newer service called "Pay Schools, which is similar to meal pay and the cost of this is less. The Board of Finance met last night on the Board of Ed budget. They will meet again on the Board of Ed budget on March 18.
- ◆ Mr. Fattibene reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee received a request to change a middle school bus stop. The committee convened, discussed it, made recommendations and the change was approved.
- ◆ Mrs. Iacono reported that the Finance, Budget, and Community Relations sub-committee will meet on March 15 at 5:15 p.m. The Special Projects Standing Building Committee met and

discussed the punch list items at Osborn Hill and Sherman. Most of the items are minor except some pending issues outside of Sherman and Osborn Hill which the committee is looking into. The RTM approved splitting of the bond funding for Osborn Hill and Sherman, so there is now money in the Osborn Hill account to pay the bills. The RTM committees will meet next week regarding the funding request for Fairfield Woods MS and the full RTM will hear the proposal on March 22.

- ◆ Mr. Kery reported that at the March 1<sup>st</sup> PTA Council meeting the Brian Fagan Award was presented to four teachers: Sean Patrick, F. Scott Mazuroski, Tara Hyder, and Mary Tapia. The Food for Thought Expo will be held on Saturday, March 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Fairfield Warde HS. This is a celebration of local farms, stores, restaurants and educators for the National Nutrition month. The Facilities, Technology and Long-Term Planning Committee met last week and discussed enrollment projections, how we currently get them, and ideas about other ways to get them. There was also a discussion on facilities planning principles. The goal of that discussion is to create a framework for future long-term planning as well as any potential redistricting in the event that the middle school expansion goes forward.
- ◆ Mr. Liu reported that the Fairfield Woods Middle School Building Committee met to review and approve an RFQ for a construction manager.
- ◆ Mr. Mitola reported that the Stratfield Building Committee met last Tuesday and there was a long discussion about blasting at the site. There is more rock than anticipated, but they have a handle on it. The contractor has been very cognizant about reaching out to the neighbors. The big discussion was Phase 5, FF&E. There was a ground breaking ceremony last week. There was also a PCB discussion. PCBs are an oily substance found in the caulk around windows, particularly in older buildings. There will be some testing at the school with respect to whether or not there are PCBs there. This is a relatively new requirement that the state is requiring. The project is moving along well.
- ◆ Ms. Zahn reported that Curriculum, Policy and Special Programs Committee tabled Policy #4121 and the draft of the policy on foreign exchange students until the next meeting. The High School Scholarship Foundation will meet on March 18. There will be no Evening to Honor Excellence this year. On April 29 there will be a "Women's Night Out" which will be their fundraiser.

8. Open Board Discussion-

Mr. Mitola commented on Nature's Classroom and asked if there could be a discussion about this at the next Board meeting. Parents need to be notified that this will not be taking place.

Mr. Kery asked for further clarification on a request for funding IDEA/ARRA that Board members received a copy of in their Friday packet. Ms. Leonardi stated that this was sent to the Board for information only. Mr. Kery also commented on the policy on grants. Discussion followed on this policy and on the Board approving grant requests.

Mr. Liu commented on information that was sent to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen as a follow up to questions at the Board of Finance meeting. As discussed in the Facilities subcommittee, the long range plans are not finished, and the subcommittee is currently reviewing and updating them. A follow up letter needs to be sent to the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen clarifying this. Mr. Mitola stated that the Board has approved the Facilities Plan. It always needs to be made clear that it is a working document. Board discussion followed on this. Mrs. Brand stated that perhaps at the next meeting it could be clarified that this is a work in progress. What it is now has been voted on by a previous Board and the subcommittee is looking at it and may be modifying it.

9. Mrs. Albin moved, seconded by Ms. Zahn that this meeting of the Board of Education adjourn at 9:46 p.m.

Motion carried: 9:0:0.

Stacey Zahn  
Secretary