

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Fairfield BoE, February 13, 2018**

NOTICE: A full meeting recording can be obtained from Fairfield Public Schools. Please call 203-255-8371 for more information and/or see the FPS website (under Board Meeting Minutes) for a link to FAIRTV.

Call to order of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education and Roll Call

Chairman Philip Dwyer called the Regular meeting to order at 7:35PM. Present were members Trisha Pytko, Jennifer Leeper, Christine Vitale, Jessica Gerber, Philip Dwyer, Jennifer Jacobsen, Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly and Jeff Peterson. Mr. Aysseh was not present. Others present were Superintendent Dr. Toni Jones, members of the central office leadership team, student representatives Molly Baker, Isabella Schichter and Paul Rivera, and approximately 30 members of the public.

Voting Summary:

Old Business

Approval of Sherman Educational Specifications

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Vitale seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Sherman Educational Specifications dated February 13, 2018”. Motion passed 8-0.

Approval of Mill Hill Educational Specifications

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Mill Hill Educational Specifications dated February 13, 2018”

Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Vitale seconded a motion to amend the Mill Hill Ed Specs as follows:

To change the second sentence in the first paragraph on page 2 under “Capacity” to read “Presently Mill Hill School has a functional capacity of 483 students with relocatable classrooms and 378 without relocatable classrooms.”

And to change the numbers in the chart on page 7 for “Functional capacity w/portables” in 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 to read “483” instead of “378” and to change the numbers on the same chart for “Functional Capacity w/o portables” in 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 to read “378” instead of “336”.

Motion passed 8-0.

Main motion, as amended, passed 8-0.

Approval of Amendment to Policy 9000: By Laws of the Board, Article II, Section 4, Committees

Ms. Leeper moved/Mrs. Gerber seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the By-Law Amendment to By-Laws of the Board, Article II, Section 4, Committees, as enclosed.”

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly made a friendly amendment to add the following to the end of B. 2. To read (new language in bold) “To provide a forum for the Superintendent, Superintendent’s staff and the committee to explore, research and vet new finance and budget related ideas prior to presenting to the full board, **in accordance with board policy and bylaws.**” The amendment was approved by unanimous consent.

The original motion, as amended, passed 7-1 (Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson in favor; Mr. Dwyer against.)

New Business

Approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Fairfield Custodians-Maintenance, The United Public Service Employees Union, Local 1779 and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019.

Mrs. Jacobsen moved/Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Fairfield Custodians-Maintenance, The United Public Service Employees Union, Local 1779 and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019.” Motion passed 8-0.

Approval of the TMS Roof Replacement Project 051-0145 RR

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Leeper seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education accept the TMS Roof Replacement Project 051-0145 RR as complete.” Motion passed 8-0.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the January 16, 2018 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 16, 2018.” Motion passed 8-0.

At 10:55PM, Mrs. Gerber moved/Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:30PM. Motion passed 6-2 (Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly in favor; Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Peterson against).

Adjournment

Mrs. Gerber moved/Ms. Pytko seconded the recommended motion “that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.” Motion passed 8-0. Meeting adjourned at 11:28PM.

Detailed Minutes:

Student Reports

Mrs. Baker and Ms. Schichter reported for FLHS: The Cheerleaders placed 2nd in FCIAC, the Co-op Girls Ski Team finished the season undefeated, the Gymnastics Team placed 3rd in FCIAC, Girls Indoor Track placed 3rd in State’s over the weekend; an upcoming Acapella concert will take place at TMS; 8th grade night was held; and course selection for next year recently completed. The Warde/Ludlowe basketball game takes place tomorrow night.

Mr. Rivera reported for FWHS: the winter sports pep rally was held last week; a distracted driving assembly, complete with simulators was held; electives night was held for incoming 9th graders; a breakfast at Barlow’s was hosted for Warde’s MVP’s (Mustang Values Personified); the Future Business Leaders of America Club is running a toy drive for Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital; the Dance team placed 10th in the nation at the Nationals in Florida.

Presentations

Dr. Jones introduced Mr. Gallagher from Milone and MacBroom. He presented 10-year enrollment projections last October, and this presentation adds some detail to that.

Mr. Gallagher presented the Enrollment Projections, Facilities and Scenario Planning. Using ed specs for Holland Hill, an elementary school space scenario was studied for several schools. The 2017 Capacity Methodology is educationally driven and reflects desired deployment of space, aligns with Holland Hill ed specs and accounts for district wide

programs. The 2016 Capacity Methodology is physical-space driven, does not align with the Holland Hill ed specs, and does not take district wide programs into account.

As of October 1, 2017, McKinley is racially imbalanced at 28.4% higher than the K-5 district average. Holland Hill has an impending racial imbalance.

Projections are based on birth data, historic enrollment, persistency ratio assumptions and demographic and housing data. Kindergarten enrollment has declined by about 20% over the last ten years. Rising Birth-K ratio indicates that a growing proportion of kindergarteners were born elsewhere.

The 2015-2016 Scenario Planning focused on reducing McKinley's racial imbalance to below 20%, using the BOE-approved Guiding Principles. Two comprehensive redistricting scenarios were determined to be viable. This would necessitate a 504 build for both Holland Hill and Mill Hill, as well as redistricting between 15% and 21% of elementary school students.

The 2017-2018 Scenario Planning focused on addressing overcrowding at Sherman and Mill Hill, phasing out all portables, and assessing potential cost-savings measures in light of the state budget. Scenarios that were deemed not viable were: Move 6th grade down to elementary, close a middle school, and close a high school.

Mr. Gallagher responded to Board questions:

- Any large exodus or influx is built in to the persistency ratio. There is a significant relationship with birth rate and persistency ratio. Reasonable assumptions are based on historical data, and will share those.
- Recent changes with state budget cuts might be reflected in upcoming years, but are too recent to be included in these projections.
- Affordable housing was not taken into account.
- Non-birthrate data is used, and the number of elementary PK-5 students is reflected differently in the Feb 2016 presentation. Since then, birth rate data has been adjusted; from an uptick to a downward trend. Will provide more information (in writing) on birth trend data.
- Home sales are included in the persistency data and birth data regression model.
- In determining the capacity of 273 for Mill Hill, support functions were assumed to be essential. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly did not feel this was realistic. Mr. Dwyer noted that without an addition at Mill Hill, there won't be any small spaces for essential services.
- Depending on the size, new housing developments might be included in the model.

Public Comment:

Steve O'Brien, FWHS teacher: The policy on political guidelines for teachers is too subjective.

Frank Sahagian, resident and Fairfield teacher: The policy on political guidelines for teachers does not clearly define what is balanced and fair.

John Whaley, FWHS English teacher: The policy on political guidelines for teachers is too vague.

Bob Smoler, FEA President: Asked the Board to narrow the political policy.

Jill Vergara, RTM District 7: Thanked the Board for moving so quickly on the ed specs and asked that the proper number of \$3.2M be reflected for Sherman in the waterfall.

Michelle DeMartino, Mill Hill parent and President-elect: Supports Mill Hill renovations.

Eric Sundman, RTM District 10: Supports Mill Hill renovation.

Shannon Messina, Mill Hill parent: Questioned air quality and portable safety at Mill Hill.

Old Business:

Approval of Sherman Educational Specifications

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Vitale seconded “that the Board of Education approve the Sherman Educational Specifications dated February 13, 2018.”

Mr. Dwyer said a separate building committee will be formed for this project.

Public Comment:

Eileen Roxbee, Sherman Principal: Thanked the Board for project approval.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Approval of Mill Hill Educational Specifications

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded “that the Board of Education approve the Mill Hill Educational Specifications dated February 13, 2018.”

Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Vitale seconded a motion to amend the Mill Hill Ed Specs as follows:

To change the second sentence in the first paragraph on page 2 under “Capacity” to read “Presently Mill Hill School has a functional capacity of 483 students with relocatable classrooms and 378 without relocatable classrooms.”

And to change the numbers in the chart on page 7 for “Functional capacity w/portables” in 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 to read “483” instead of “378” and to change the numbers on the same chart for “Functional Capacity w/o portables” in 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 to read “378” instead of “336”.

Mrs. Gerber based the 483 number on 23 general ed classroom sections with 21 students in each section – and includes the 5 portables; it is important to note that the capability exists for higher capacity. The ed spec is the goal, but if we had to, classrooms would be used for general ed before being broken into work spaces. Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Peterson and Ms. Pytko expressed support for the amendment.

Mrs. Vitale added that the 3 classrooms in portables could be moved into the bricks and mortar space, if space was used differently. Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly and Mr. Peterson agreed; the Board can advocate with other Town bodies to communicate the deficiencies. Ms. Leeper also supports the motion, changing the definition of capacity would be misleading to other Town bodies.

Public Comment:

Molli Hourihan, Warner Hill Road: Using capacity of 273 prioritizes the needs of all students.

Kelly Jacobsen, Acorn Lane: Air quality concerns at Mill Hill.

Mrs. Gerber said changing capacity numbers at this stage would potentially cause confusion, but this amendment will not change the plan moving forward; the intention is to move the project forward as quickly as possible. Mr. Dwyer and Mrs. Vitale support the amendment, but said both ways of looking at it have value.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Public comment:

Kelly Jacobsen, Fairfield Resident: Supports Mill Hill Renovation.

Janine Aliainello, Mill Hill Drive: Mill Hill is surrounded by wetlands and might not be the best spot for a 504.

Several Board members made it clear that the discussion of whether Mill Hill should be a 504 will continue, even after the approval of the ed-specs. Mrs. Gerber asked for a breakdown of a 504 vs. other numbers – how much does a general education classroom cost? Mr. Peterson wanted to make it clear that portables are suboptimal, but are not unsafe.

Main motion, as amended, passed: 8-0

Approval of Amendment to Policy 9000: By Laws of the Board, Article II, Section 4, Committees

Ms. Leeper moved, Mrs. Gerber seconded that the Board of Education approve the By-Law Amendment to By-Laws of the Board, Article II, Section 4, Committees, as enclosed.

Mr. Dwyer confirmed with Ms. Leeper that the committee's purpose is not to preview the budget on behalf of the Board. He expressed some concern over this being a management-type committee; the BoE is more centered on policy. Should be mindful that it will take 6 votes to eliminate this committee and will affect future BOE's. Ms. Leeper said the intent is not to be a management committee, rather to be a forum for ideas - such as pay to play.

Mrs. Gerber felt this committee could respond to what has been termed 'structural change' and supports the motion. Ms. Vitale felt the committee could assist with budget questions earlier in the process and supports the motion. Board members discussed language that could be added or altered to ensure that Board members cannot ask for information that would be too time consuming for staff, and also discussed the process by which the committee will take direction.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly made a friendly amendment to add the following to the end of B. 2. To read (new language in bold) "To provide a forum for the Superintendent, Superintendent's staff and the committee to explore, research and vet new finance and budget related ideas prior to presenting to the full board, **in accordance with board policy and bylaws.**" The friendly amendment was approved by unanimous consent.

The original motion, as amended passed: 7-1

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly, Mr. Peterson

Oppose: Mr. Dwyer

New Business

Approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Fairfield Custodians-Maintenance, The United Public Service Employees Union, Local 1779 and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019.

Mrs. Jacobsen moved, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly seconded "that the Board of Education approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Fairfield Custodians-Maintenance, The United Public Service Employees Union, Local 1779 and Fairfield Public Schools for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019."

Motion Passed: 8-0

Approval of the TMS Roof Replacement Project 051-0145 RR

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Leeper seconded "that the Board of Education accept the TMS Roof Replacement Project 051-0145 RR as complete."

Mr. Cullen said this was a very successful project. The actual numbers came in under budget with a 25.71% reimbursement rate. The Town only bonds what is approved and spent.

Motion Passed: 8-0

First Reading of Policies:

1311.1: Community Relations, Political Activities of School Employees

1311.2: Community Relations, Political Activities in the Schools/On School Board Property

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the impetus to these paired policies was the lack of any policy on this issue – these are brand new policies. The language is purposefully vague to allow administrators to implement the policy intent. Policies have been reviewed by administrators, the RTC and DTC Chairs, as well as the FEA President, Bob Smoler.

Dr. Jones said she could see how the policy for staff could be an operational procedure, but she would like a policy on political activities on school property. A big school event last year led to many questions from the community on what is permissible. Guidance is needed because according to law, the district is unable to stop all political activities. Mr. Dwyer added that he is comfortable with both policies.

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said the policies address group events and civic engagement through school groups. The Policy Committee will make a decision on moving these items forward. The public comment was very valuable. Would appreciate any input on language changes.

Policy 5144.1: Students, Use of Physical Force

Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly said new language is from state statute. It restricts training on who needs required training and prevention training.

Discussion of Facility Planning Considerations

Mr. Dwyer will get a series of special meeting dates to discuss this item; it is too difficult to discuss at the end of this meeting.

Waterfall Chart

The BOE adopted Facilities Plans in 2010 and again in 2015. The Facilities Plan is generally updated prior to the BOF Capital Planning Workshop each year. The idea is to remain under 10% principal and interest payments, as the Town requires.

Mr. Cullen said the waterfall chart is a living document with projects in priority order. It is constantly being revised due to project size/cost and whether Town bodies have issued approval. Estimates act as placeholders until improved numbers become available. Ms. Vitale questioned the \$25M assigned to Mill Hill. Priorities on this list have not changed since the Board last discussed it.

Facilities Considerations

Dr. Jones said the November 27, 2017 memo regarding the Ad hoc Committee was an effort to create an order to the ideas garnered from the community. The 'ideas' list was driven by the need for structural change and cost reduction; the Board may choose to bring closure to some of the items. She reviewed items on the list and pointed out that she does not favor consolidation to 1 high school. From an educational standpoint, educational quality would suffer.

Board discussion continued on the November 27 Memo. Several Board members were in favor of removing items from the list altogether, including consolidating to one high school. Other Board members asked about adding items to the list, such as moving ECC and adding magnet schools. Mr. Dwyer said this item will be on the next agenda for possible action.

At 10:55PM, Mrs. Gerber moved, Mrs. Jacobsen seconded to suspend the rules and extend the meeting to 11:30PM.

Motion Passed: 6-2

Favor: Ms. Pytko, Ms. Leeper, Mrs. Vitale, Mrs. Gerber, Mrs. Jacobsen, Mrs. Maxon-Kennelly

Oppose: Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Peterson

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the Minutes of the January 16, 2018 Special Meeting

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded "that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of January 16, 2018."

Motion Passed: 8-0

Superintendent Report

Dr. Jones reported that she would like to release "reserved" maintenance items by March 1 to allow time for the bidding process, if needed. To the Board, it will appear as a budget transfer at the end of the year. This is due to the new category that was created for the reserve status. A prioritized breakdown will be provided. Mr. Cullen added that the value of the projects adds up to \$436K, but may increase to approximately \$700K if additional painting and paving monies are released.

Community/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Vitale reported for PTAC: FAY is scheduled for some exciting programming, Tools for Schools training for parents will be provided and nominations are still being accepted for Administrator Awards.

Mrs. Leeper reported that the RTM voted to accept teacher contract.

Mr. Peterson reported that the BOF approved all items before it.

Open Board Comment

Mr. Dwyer reminded the Board of the Town Hall Meeting on 2/28 with Mr. Tetreau as moderator. Also, the Mill Hill resolutions will be on the February 21 BOS meeting.

Ms. Pytko said she volunteered to be a judge for Odyssey of the Mind.

Adjournment

Mrs. Gerber moved, Ms. Pytko seconded that this Regular Meeting of the Board of Education adjourn.

Motion Passed: 8-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:28PM.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Jessica Gerber
Secretary, Board of Education*