

**Farmington River Regional School District
Otis/Sandisfield
555 Main Road, Otis MA 01253
School Committee Meeting #396
Wednesday, February 3, 2021 6:00PM
Via Zoom**

Meeting called at 7:04 PM

Community Participation: None

Guests: list attached

Members Present: Jess Drenga, Carol Lombardo, Billie Pachulski, Jennifer Hibbins, Arlene Tolopko, Roger Kohler, and Deb Fogel. All remote

Absent: None

1. **Approval of minutes #395.** The minutes were motioned by Jennifer Hibbins to be held off until the following meeting in March. Arlene Tolopko seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve Minutes #394 in next month's March meeting.
2. **Principal/Superintendent update:** There is one new Otis student entering the school. Tom Nadolny asked for a vote for a switch in the upcoming $\frac{1}{2}$ day Professional day. He would like to switch the May Professional Day to February 12th. Tom explained that the state is now asking for evaluations to occur. They were temporarily on hold from last year. The time is needed to complete the evaluations. All teachers need to be evaluated. Jennifer Hibbins thinks it is not enough time to tell the parents and guardians about this change. Tom did offer to move the day to a March date. Jennifer would like to see that happen instead. Tom suggested March 12th. Billie Pachulski motioned to move the May $\frac{1}{2}$ day Professional day to March 12th upon the agreement of the Teachers' Union. Carol Lombardo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously passed.

Jennifer Hibbins asked a question concerning the pool testing regarding COVID. She knows there is a cost involved. Tom spoke with Denise Zuidema the school's nurse, and they are both in agreement not to participate. Our school is so small that the pool testing is more geared for large schools with a bigger population.

Roger Kohler asked what the process is of evaluating the Principal/Superintendent. Jess explained that an evaluation is done every year, but last year was on hold per the state. There is

a form online through DESE/DOE that has recommendation on how to evaluate and what areas to evaluate.

3. **Discussion on FY22 Budget.** Eric Jesner went over the FY22 budget. The only changes between the presented budget in January to this budget are an increase in Workmen's Comp. and insurance. Berkshire County Retirement's assessment was adjusted, so Eric entered that amount in. There was a drop in the total Operational Expenditures due to the \$100,000 removal from the budget. This dropped the Operating Expenditures down over 3.5% which is less than the current budget for FY21. It is a reduction of roughly \$172,000. As of right now, there is \$100,000 of E&D going into the budget. The reason is due to the state funding for COVID. Roger Kohler asked about the \$100,000 that is going to be carried over to next year. He wanted to know if it was the anticipated cost of the state hitting the schools with cuts in funds. Eric agreed with Roger's question. It is the anticipated cost, which now can be rolled over into next year's budget.

Roger Kohler asked if Farmington River has ever tried to publicize the preschool program? Tom answered saying yes, but mostly word of mouth is used. The PTA did create brochures for the school which were distributed to doctor offices and other businesses to promote the school. School Choice was on hold this year by School Committee, due to COVID, and there were roughly 6-10 students that were turned away for this reason. Tom then stated that it is an area that needs work, and he will investigate a better way to promote school choice.

Roger Brown wanted to reconcile a couple of numbers. School choice is at 21 students. We also get school choice for any 4-year-old preschooler. Three-year-old preschoolers pay tuition. Tuition is paid, regardless of where a student lives.

Eric asked when to schedule the Public Hearing for the budget. Eric would like to have the hearing in February. That way a discussion/meeting can be scheduled if any changes need to be done before the Towns' meetings. The majority would like to schedule for Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 6PM.

Eric went over a grant that we received this year for COVID. It is the ESSER 2 Grant. The Grant allows the School Committee to use some of the grant funds to lower the assessments to the towns. But the School Committee is only allowed to offset the assessments by the increase of their minimum local contribution. After the calculation, the School Committee is allowed to allocate an offset of \$41,641 towards their assessment. This is not required; it must be voted on by the School Committee. This information is new as of the past week. Webinars are going to be set up on what you can spend the money on. This option is available for School Committee. Eric reminded everyone that this is just a draft. Numbers can be used for reference, but they are not set yet.

4. **Adjournment.** Carol Lombardo motioned to adjourn to into Executive Session only to adjourn after the Executive Session is over. Billie Pachulski second the motion. All were in favor, the vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa DellaGiustina, Secretary of the School Committee

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