

**Farmington River Regional School District
Otis/Sandisfield
555 Main Road, Otis MA 01253
School Committee Meeting #399
Monday, May 3, 2021, 7:00PM, via ZOOM**

Community Participation:

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

Absent: None

Jess Drenga called the meeting at 7:06 PM

1. **Approval of minutes #398.** Jennifer did not receive the minutes that Teresa DellaGiustina sent to the School Committee. Minutes will be voted on in the next meeting.
2. **Principal/ Superintendent updates.** Tom Nadolny updated the School Committee on the shutdown of the 2nd grade. Due to a student who contracted COVID 19 outside of school over vacation, Tom decided to shutdown the 2nd grade classroom only. Mrs. Tracy is coming in to teach remotely. Sarah has been vaccinated fully. The class will be out for 10 days. The parents were advised to have their children tested and quarantine for a 10-day duration. No one else has tested positive.

Enrollment is up for in person learning. 101 students are attending in person, 17 are still remote. Next year enrollment looks like K through 2 grades will have at least 20 students per class.

MCAS is still on. An abbreviated session will be conducted to both in person and remote learning students.

Sixth grade graduation will be held outside this year. June 8th will be graduation with the rain date of June 10th.

Tom needs the approval/vote from the School Committee for an out of state field trip to Nomads Outdoor Adventure Park for the 6th grade. This is on June 4th. The School Committee can not vote tonight on this topic because it was not on the agenda to have a vote. A special meeting will be held next week, Monday June 10th, to vote on the approval for this trip.

Tom looked into transportation for a late bus for after school events. Tom reached out to Dufour; the cost would be \$150 a day. It is pricey but Tom is still looking into this topic.

3. **Financial updates.** Eric Jesner discussed updates. Eric stated that at the next meeting he will do a comprehensive financial update. This would give Eric more time to better look at regional transportation and additional transfers to/from E & D funds which could potentially offset next year's budget.

Esser II Grant. The Senate and State House have both released their FY22 budgets. Neither has included the Governor's offer of using the funds to offset the contributions from each town.

The bid for the sidewalk and parking lot will be active on Friday May 11th. The bid has been put in the Berkshire Eagle. The opening of the bids will be May 27th in Eric's office. Once the bids are in, Eric will send a letter to the Towns stating the outcome. In order for the school to use the money in the Capital Revolving Fund, we are required to notify the towns letting them know how much money we will be using. The school does not have to get permission to use that money, but a three-week notification is needed for questions or for the Towns to say no.

A question came up about Summer School and the paving and playground project. Eric explained that the summer is normally the least busy time of the year. The summer usually has less students and staff in summer school. Summer is the most appropriate time for projects due to the amount of time allowable to get maintenance for the building/landscaping done. Work can possibly be done in portions, but we will have to work with the projects being done. If we do not do the work in the summer, there will never be a time the work can get done.

4. **Vote on the FY22 lunch rates:** Every year the School Committee must vote on the rate of the school lunch program. This does include what the Teachers/Staff pay for their lunches as well. Teresa DellaGiustina with the help of Kendra Rybacki explained that the state waived lunch and breakfast costs for FY22. Right now, the rate of lunch is \$2.80, and breakfast is \$1.60. The staff pays \$3.55. Reduced lunch is \$0.40 and breakfast is \$0.30. Reduced lunch is set by the state we can not alter that price. We have been consistently raising the price each year by 5 cents. We are behind with the state's suggested cost. If we are actively increasing the rate of the lunch program to "catch up" with the State's suggested rate, the State will not find the school at fault. Jess Drenga suggested not to increase the cost of lunch. Eric, not stating one way or the other, brought up that the parents are used to a slight increase each year in the cost of lunch/breakfast. If we continue to show the increase as usual, the parents will not be as shocked with the rate next year. Even though lunch/breakfast is free this coming year, the parents can see the progression of increase. There was a suggestion to raise the staff's cost of lunch. Teresa asked if Kendra could speak about the actual cost of making the staff's lunch. Kendra stated that the reimbursement is much higher still for lunches. The cost is not \$3.55 to make. It is also lower due to Berkshire Bounty and Guidos still donating food to the school. Kendra feels we should keep the rate the same at this time. Arlene Tolopko motioned to keep the school lunch program the same rate across the board for students and staff members. Carol Lombardo second the motion. The vote was unanimous for keeping the rate the same for school lunch and staff members.

5. **Vote on the tuition for the Pre School Program.** Eric Jesner spoke on behalf of the Pre School program. He stated that generally there is a 10% increase from year to year. FY20 cost for in district annually for 2 days a week was \$466.00, 3 days a week was \$699.00, 4 days a week was \$932.00, and 5 days a week was \$1,165.00. Out of district 2 days a week was \$932.00, 3 days a week was \$1400.00, 4 days a week was \$1864.00, and 5 days a week was \$2330.00. Our rates are incredibly low compared to other Pre Schools and daycare centers in the area. Roger Kohler motioned to go ahead with the 10% increase for the Pre School program, Carol Lombardo second the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of a 10% increase to the Pre School program.
6. **Discuss Superintendent evaluations.** The sub committee involved with coming up with the process and content of the evaluation for the Superintendent met and suggested next year to create a shared folder electronically rather than passing around a paper binder between Committee members. DESE does have the evaluation forms online for the Committee to utilize for the evaluation. This year was a trial run to see what needs to be done and when. Next year the Sub Committee would like to meet with Tom ahead of time to discuss the expectations of the goals set. A timeline will be discussed further as far as when to do the evaluation, especially since MCAS scores come out in September and one ongoing goal will be to work on raising those scores. Sub Committee meetings will continue to work on the progression of an appropriate timeline.
7. **Discuss and vote on the purchase of playground equipment.** Tom spoke with our salesperson about new playground equipment for the Pre School playground and adding a stationary slide for the playground behind the school. An estimated cost of \$35,000 to buy the equipment was given to Tom. Tom did get the price lowered to roughly \$29,789 if it is ordered before May 14th. Tom thought maybe the PTA could help by chipping in \$6,000 towards the structure along with our rural school grant, which is roughly \$19,800. This means we still need roughly \$4,000. The \$29,789 includes installation, but not removal. Both Towns will be contacted to see if they are interested in the playset. If no one wants it, then we need to figure out how to do the removal. Jess would like someone to investigate the fundraising money that was left over from last year's 6th grade class. Since they were unable to utilize that money due to restrictions with COVID, could the funds be gifted from last year's 6th grade class to help purchase the new equipment? Eric brought up using School Choice funds, since there is extra money in that account this year. The money can be used for anything benefiting the students.

Jess asked for a motion to use the Rural Aid Grant money of \$19,684.76 towards the new playground equipment and use money from the School Choice Funds to pay the difference of the total cost of the equipment. Arlene Tolopko motioned to approve the use of the Rural Aid Grant and School Choice Funds to pay for the new playground equipment. Deb Fogel second the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the payment of the playground equipment through Rural Aid Grant and School Choice funds. A letter will go out to both towns asking if they are interested in the equipment. There will be a deadline on the removal so that the playground is ready for installation.

8. **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made at 8:09 PM by Carol Lombardo, Arlene Tolopko second the motion. The vote was unanimous to adjourn School Committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa DellaGiustina, School Committee Secretary

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