

Farmington River Regional School District
Farmington River Elementary School
555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253
Via ZOOM Meeting #411
Monday February 7, 2022, 7:00PM

Attendance: Carol Lombardo (chair), Jennifer Hibbins (vice-chair), Jess Drenga, Carl Nett, Arlene Tolopko, Roger Kohler, and Deb Fogel

Guests: Don French, Mechanic from Dufour Bus Co. and Terrie Gardino, Administrator from Dufour Bus Co.

The meeting was called to order by Carol Lombardo at 7:00 P.M.

Community Participation: Kendra Rybacki, Food Service Director at Farmington River School. Kendra wanted to thank staff members for their help when a pipe broke in the kitchen. She was extremely grateful to: Candy Chaffee, Jeff Gray, Eric Jesner, Paula Subklew, Meaghan Martin, Jana Bush, and Teresa DellaGiustina, for taking time out of their jobs to help the Kitchen Staff clean up the water and help serve the students.

Lisa LaGrant, a resident of Otis wanted clarification on the budget concerning Special Needs funding. Lisa also would like to know if the School Committee is taking in consideration COVID safety measures even during MCAS testing. MCAS scores are a high concern for the School Committee, but she is nervous that concern overpowers the safety of the students when COVID is still an issue. Jess Drenga asked Eric Jesner to clarify the Special Education matter at this time. Eric stated that there was not a conversation about taking out of Special Education. The conversation was taking more money out of the School Choice Fund, not Special Education.

Rebecca Hamill, Preschool Teacher at Farmington River School, and a member of the Executive Board of the Teachers' Association. She read a statement created by the Association asking for five to ten sick days added on to this year. Staff had to use up their sick days for many reasons during COVID times. The statement is attached to the end of the minutes.

- 1. Approval of Minutes #410.** Arlene Tolopko motioned to approve Minutes #410. Deb Fogel seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.
- 2. Dufour to speak about bus maintenance.** Don French was in from Dufour Bus Company to answer questions and to discuss a bus that started smoking during a bus route. Don explained the situation and findings as well as the maintenance that was performed on

that bus. The bus is now safe to drive. Don wanted to clarify that the bus never caught on fire.

- 3. Principal/Superintendent monthly updates.** Tom Nadolny spoke about the past month's happenings. The total school enrollment is still 116 students.

There have been a few cases of COVID. Notifications were sent out to inform staff and student families. There is a new testing method now for COVID. Student and staff are sent home with test kits to test from home prior to coming into school. Tom is following the guidance from the State. Symptomatic students will still be tested at school.

After school program has started up again. Sixty to seventy students take advantage of the after-school activities.

Tom created a Principal's Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to discuss smaller issues that may help the community of the school communicate better together.

We had four snow days. The school year is extended out to the end of June. Tom petitioned the Commissioner for relief due to the five days we had to close for COVID at the beginning of the year. Tom was rejected any relief. He will reach out and try again.

Cash calendars are out.

Tom wanted to thank Eric for writing a grant for a healthier workplace. The program Eric chose included nutritional snacks for all the staff members.

- 4. Vote on the current year's calendar change.** Tom explained that the Teachers would like to take the last Professional Day and change the day from a full Professional day to a half a day Professional day. Jess Drenga motioned to approve the change from a full Professional day to a half Professional day. Deb Fogel seconded the motion. The vote unanimous to approve the calendar change.
- 5. Financial updates.** Even though the topic is not on the agenda, Eric Jesner gave the School Committee a rundown of the recent broken pipe in the kitchen. Eric took immediate action to research and set up meetings with the proper contacts to rectify the problem.

Eric needed a vote from the School Committee giving Eric the ability to sign a four-year contract with KMS Actuaries concerning the OPEB audit. Eric discussed the specific numbers of their cost. Jess Drenga motioned to approve Eric to the signing of the four-

year contract. Arlene Tolopko seconded the motion. The vote was approved unanimously.

Eric discussed the expense report with the School Committee. The expense report is attached to the minutes.

Eric and the School Committee decided on a date for a School Committee meeting before the Public Hearing. The date is Wednesday, February 23, 2022. The Public Hearing will be on Wednesday, March 2, 2022.

Carl Nett suggested posting the video to the website along with the minutes.

6. **Adjournment.** Roll call was taken to adjourn at 8:30P.M. Jess Drenga motioned to adjourn the meeting, Arlene Tolopko seconded the motion. Vote was unanimously approved to adjourn.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa DellaGiustina, School Committee Secretary

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Dear Members of the School Committee,

We are writing this letter in hopes that you would consider a way to help our staff who have been working through the pandemic and have been affected by testing positive for Covid 19, a family member testing positive for Covid 19, quarantining due to exposure to Covid 19, or lack of childcare due to Covid 19. Currently staff members are exhausting their sick banks, some even having to go unpaid due to Covid 19 related absences. We have recently learned that many other districts (Springfield, Worcester, and Boston just to name a few) have been supporting their school employees by adding Covid 19 sick days so that they are not forced to use their own sick days. We are requesting that this discussion be made a School Committee Meeting agenda item for the upcoming February meeting so that we can discuss this matter further.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to discussing this matter with you further.

Meaghan Martin
FRREA President