

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee Meeting

Meeting #444

MINUTES

Otis Town Hall
1 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253
Monday, February 5, 2024
7:00 PM

Members Present: Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Carol Lombardo, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett

Also Present: Tim Lee, Carol Sauerhauser, Caroline Stamm

Absent: Melissa Bye, Phil Magovern

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Denise Hardie
 - A. Roll Call: Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Carol Lombardo, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett
- II. **Public Comment**
 - A. There was no public comment at this time.
- III. **Acceptance of Minutes**

- Meeting #443 from January 8th, 2024

 - A. Carl Nett made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #443 from 1/8/24.
 1. Douglas Miner seconded the motion.
 2. There was a brief discussion about amendments to the minutes
 3. VOTE to accept: All were in favor, with no objections. The motion passed to accept the minutes from Meeting #443 with amendments (1/8/24).
- IV. **Superintendent's Report:** Tim presented his report with the following highlights:
 - A. Math Night: Math Night was a great success as the first for the school. Exploratory math activities were led by teachers and was very enjoyable for all families who attended. Thank you to parents for attending and staff/teachers for the great collaboration in putting it together.
 - B. John Berman Assembly: The PTA sponsored the "Leave 'Em Kinder" Assembly with John Berman for students in Grades 4-6th.
 - C. PTA Cash Calendars: The longstanding tradition of Cash Calendar sales has begun to raise money for the PTA.
 - D. Staff Highlight: Bethany Mielke: Highlighted in our Newsletter, Bethany Mielke - our 4th Grade Teacher - was applauded for her newly published professional article on peer observation on improving teacher efficacy and the power of having teachers observe each other.
 - E. 100th Day of School: Today marked our 100th day of school, which is always a significant celebration for our students as they are learning math and how to count.
 - F. Plumbing Issue: Due to a failure in the plumbing and water system earlier in the day which resulted in unexpectedly dismissing school at 10:30am this morning. The issue has since been resolved and school will resume as normal tomorrow.

- G. Request for Special-Education-Related Fund Transfer Approval: Tim presented two requests for fund transfers within the category of Special Education:
1. Request to transfer \$100,000 from the Special Needs Out of District Non-Public Tuition Line to 2 lines: \$80,000 to Special Education Needs Related Services, and \$20,000 to Elementary Special Needs Supplies.
 - a) Tim explained the purpose of moving the money from the tuition line to the other lines to cover specific services and supplies.
 2. Request to transfer \$30,000 from Special Needs Transportation to Special Education Speech Services
 - a) There are increased referrals for eligibility to receive speech services.
 3. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to approve the above special-needs-related fund transfers.
 - a) Carol Lombarod seconded the motion.
 - b) There was no discussion.
 - c) VOTE to approve the fund transfer requests: All were in favor, with no objections. The motion passed to approve the two special-needs-related fund transfers.
- H. Request for Approval - Invitation to Bid on 7D Vehicle with Wheelchair Lift:
1. Tim explained the current situation with the District's vans and his process with research about the bid process, estimated costs, and timeline related to securing a new 7D vehicle with wheelchair lift.
 2. MOTION: Carl made a motion to approve submitting the invitation to bid on 7D vehicle with a wheelchair lift.
 - a) Deb Fogel seconded the motion
 - b) VOTE to approve submitting the invitation to bid: All were in favor, with no objections. The motion passed to approve submitting the invitation to bid on 7D vehicle with a wheelchair lift.
- I. Job Posting: School Business Administrator:
1. While Tim has full confidence in Carol and has enjoyed working with both TMS and Carol as a colleague, Carol's role through TMS has been more in the capacity as an invested consultant and there have been certain limitations to the way TMS assigns duties and operates in general. He explained his reasoning behind reopening the job posting, citing the main proposal is to have dedicated, in-person staff member as an employee of the district.
 2. Tim reviewed the details of the job posting. The School Committee discussed how this role would operate within the district as well as comparing options
 3. MOTION: Carl made a motion to approve posting the School Business Administrator position and proceed with the candidate search.
 - a) Deb Fogel seconded the motion
 - b) VOTE to approve submitting the invitation to bid: All were in favor, with no objections. The motion passed to approve posting the School Business Administrator position and proceed with the candidate search.
- J. FY25 Preliminary Budget: Projection of Revenues and Offsets, Preliminary Assessment Worksheet:
1. Carol presented the preliminary budget, which is a currently a level-services budget.

2. This will be further discussed in the Finance Subcommittee meeting and will be brought back to the School Committee with final edits/discussion, and then will move forward.

V. School Committee Policies:

A. Policy EFD (School Nutrition Charge): 3rd Reading & Vote to Approve

1. Carol Lombardo made a motion to approve Policy EFD. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 - a) VOTE: All were in favor, there were no objections, and the motion passed to accept Policy EFD.

B. Policy ADF (Wellness Policy): Discussion:

1. The Committee discussed some highlights from the proposed edits from the Wellness Committee, such as Celebrations and Teacher Activities in the Classrooms.
2. The discussion will continue with Nurse Grace Terry, Principal Laurie Flower, and Tim, as well as in the Policy Subcommittee meeting. The Wellness Committee meets again on February 15th.

VI. Subcommittee Reports:

A. Finance:

1. Phil Magovern, chair, was not able to attend tonight's meeting and Carl Nett provided a brief update.
2. They are continuing to work with Carol and Tim on the budget, and looking at town assessment options.

B. Facilities:

1. Plan to meet every 2 months unless there is a more urgent matter that requires attention/deliberation.
2. Discussed the relationship between the Superintendent and the Facilities Subcommittee, updates on the boiler repairs and the air quality rant, longer-term capital projects (such as the roof), and the option to have a Capital Stabilization Fund.
3. Will meet next in March.

C. Policy:

1. There is no update. Will meet again before the next School Committee meeting.

D. RAAC:

1. At the last RAAC meeting, there was a 5-1 vote to return options on the the town assessment methodology to the School Committe for deliberation.
2. MOTION: Carol Lombardo made a motion that the deliberation of town apportionment be returned to the RAAC for further evaluation.
 - a) Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - b) The discussion began with concerns that about the assessment methodology options that was presented at the last RAAC meeting.
 - c) Jon Sylbert, RAAC Chair/Sandisfield Town Manager, presented a breif update on the RAAC - noting the assessment methodology presentation and the aforementioned 5-1 vote.
 - d) The discussion continued surrouding the amendment process and the impact of tax rate changes would be on residents if the methodology changed. There was public comment from Sue Brofman (RAAC Member),

Heidi Utenis (Otis Resident), Susan Ebitz (Otis Resident), Frank Tolopko (RAAC Member)

- e) Denise explained the process of amending the Regional Agreement and assessment methodology and the history of the formation of the RAAC.
 - f) VOTE to return the deliberation of town apportionment to the RAAC for further evaluation: Carol Lombardo and Deb Fogel were in favor. Denise Hardie, Douglas Miner, and Carl Nett were opposed. The motion fails.
3. Carl Nett discussed having a special, dedicated meeting to look at facts and data from verifiable sources regarding town assessment methodology so that everyone can find consensus about conclusions the data is indicating.

VII. Other items for discussion not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours before the meeting:

A. Special Meeting to discuss town apportionment facts/data.

- 1. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to hold a special meeting to discuss facts and data from verifiable sources (such as DESE/DOR).
 - a) Douglas Miner seconded the motion.
 - b) There was no discussion
 - c) VOTE: Denise Hardie, Douglas Miner, and Carl Nett were in favor. Deb Fogel and Carol Lombardo were opposed. The motion passes 3-2.
- 2. Denise will consult with Tim to decide a date and time for this meeting.

VIII. Adjournment:

- A. Carl Nett made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 PM.
- B. Carol Lombardo seconded the motion.
- C. Vote - Roll Call: Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Carol Lombardo, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm