

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #455

Farmington River Elementary School Library

Monday, September 23rd, 2024

MINUTES

6:30 PM

Members Present: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Also Present: Timothy Lee, Caroline Stamm

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Denise Hardie
 - A. Roll Call: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze
 - B. The meeting was recorded for archival purposes.
- II. **Public Comment:**
 - A. Amy Magovern, an Otis Resident, thanked the School Committee for their hard work and efforts to figure out an apportionment method and amendments to the RDA that works best for both towns. She also encouraged the School Committee to hold a public hearing so they can understand the new RDA and apportionment terms that will be included and to get feedback from residents and families.
- III. **Acceptance of Minutes:**

- Meeting #454 from September 9th, 2024

 - A. MOTION: Stacey Schultze made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #454 (9/9/24).
 1. Deb Fogel and Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 2. There was a discussion on a brief amendment to the minutes.
 3. Carl motioned to accept the minutes as amended.
 - a) Deb seconded the motion.
 - b) There was no discussion.
 4. VOTE to accept as amended: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes from Meeting #454 (9/9/24).
- IV. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - A. CAP Procurement Language: Food Service Program
 1. Tim withdrew the item that he thought he needed SC review and approval for, which can instead be done administratively. This item was originally a concern that arose from the Food Service Audit, needed to have language from the state to correct, and no longer needs School Committee approval.
- V. **RDA Discussion - Topic: Review sections VXIII and Section IV Revisions. Vote to approve or mark for further discussion**
 - A. Section 5: Budget

1. The Committee revisited the question from the last meeting on the terminology of “Maintenance” vs “Capital” for all expenses that are not operating but are required to carry the district from year to year. The Committee decided to keep the term “Maintenance.”
- B. Section 8: Admission of Additional Towns.
1. There was a discussion on adding language suggested by Christine Lynch about adding a timeline of approval.
 2. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 8 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 - a) Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
 - b) VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 8 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
- C. Section 10: Notice to Member Towns of Authorization to Incur Debt.
1. This section had no commentary from DESE which indicated that it may be boilerplate language.
 2. MOTION: Stacey Schultze made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 10 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 - a) Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - b) VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 10 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
- D. Section 11: Admission of Pupils Residing Outside the District.
1. This section also had no comment from DESE.
 2. The discussion involved the implication of School Choice on this section and adapted some of the language in this section.
 3. MOTION: Phil Magovern made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 10 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 - a) Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 - b) VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 11 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
- E. Section 12: Transition
1. The committee discussed suggestions from Tim and the feedback from DESE to remove some of the language in this section that referenced the formation of the district in the original RDA.

2. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 12 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 - a) Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - b) VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 12 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.

F. Section 13: Periodic Review.

1. This section is new and has not yet been reviewed by DESE.
2. The discussion compared CBRSD's language of their section on reviewing the RDA and considered fleshing out what a "review" would look like.
3. There was unanimous consensus to remove the bullet point saying "accuracy in apportionment of school committee members", as it is redundant based on what is written in other sections.
4. There was a discussion on who would be responsible for reviewing the RDA and determined it would be the School Committee's responsibility to review.
5. MOTION: Deb Fogel made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 13 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 - a) Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
 - b) VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 13 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.

G. Section 9: Withdrawal.

1. Tim provided initial context on the feedback from Christine Lynch from DESE.
2. Beginning with part A, Tim read through the language and explained the required steps for composing a plan for withdrawal as defined by DESE and noted that the School Committee would be responsible to oversee the process until the withdrawal date.
3. There was discussion on the timeline and when the combined School Committee would be disbanded, and if there are other committees (such as a municipal district formation committee) would be formed to do some of the work for each town and report back to the School Committee until it is disbanded.
4. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 9 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 - a) Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - b) VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 9 and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.

The School Committee broke at 7:41 for a brief break until 7:49 PM.

H. Section 4: Apportionment of Expenses Between Member Towns.

1. Tim began the discussion on Section 4 by discussing the definitions at the beginning of the section.
2. The Committee decided unanimously to give Tim the autonomy to replace the definition of Capital Expenses with the DESE definition as he comes across it.
3. Stacey suggested that we should add the definition of the Remaining Adjusted Operating Expenses (which is the Adjusted Operating Expenses after deducting the minimum local contribution).
4. Douglas suggested again adding a few sentences in plain language that says the School Committee shall define 3-4 different types of costs to be defined with the goal of being X. Additional sentence to give plain language of how to do that.
 - a) Many committee members expressed concern with including a rationale at the beginning of the section on apportionment and whether DESE would approve that.
 - b) There was consensus that this document should be the legal document that provides how the apportionment method is laid out. However it would be helpful to have a second document that breaks down the apportionment method in more layman terms to be presented at the public presentation or to be distributed to the public alongside the RDA to help understanding.
5. Carl suggested incorporating the context and definitions within the apportionment method rather than having the definitions and method separate afterwards. This may help others understand the apportionment method by defining the terms and the context/how they will be used in the apportionment method immediately following. The committee decided to give Tim the time to restructure the apportionment method to be this format with integrating the definitions in the method.
6. The committee proceeded to review the apportionment method language. Tim began this discussion/review by explaining the apportionment method that was presented at the last meeting, and provided context that the alternative version of the language presented was drafted by Stacey
 - a) The committee came to consensus to delete the last paragraph of the alternative method so that updating the apportionment method would rely on amendments.
- I. The Committee went through the language of the alternative method (v.2 proposed) and agreed on each portion of the language.
 1. Step 1: No questions, all agree
 2. Step 2: No questions, all agree
 3. Step 3: No questions, all agree
 4. Step 4: Discussion on modifying language, all agree
 5. Step 5: No questions, all agree
 6. Step 6: No questions, all agree
 7. Step 7: Discussion on modifying language, all agree

8. Step 8: Revision by using the language in the initial version combined with the first phrase of the new section. All agree.
- J. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the amended language from Section 4, giving Tim flexibility to integrate the definitions in the apportionment as already defined, and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.
 1. Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
 2. VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously to accept the amended language from Section 4, giving Tim flexibility to integrate the definitions in the apportionment as already defined, and to include it in the School Committee Draft of the RDA for DESE review.

VI. RDA Discussion - Topic: Further discussion of marked sections. Review next steps.

- A. MOTION: Stacey Schultze motion to approve the RDA as revised (including acceptance of the proposed apportionment method), and motion to allow Tim to send to DESE after his edit to Section 4 for their review.
 1. Carl Nett seconded the motion
 2. Discussion surrounding how long DESE will take to review the RDA and the timeline of the next steps in the process.
 3. Vote to accept - Roll Call: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections and the motion passed unanimously 7-0 to approve the RDA as revised (including acceptance of the proposed apportionment method), and motion to allow Tim to send to DESE after his edit to Section 4 for their review.

VII. Public Comment:

- A. Susan Ebitz - thank you to the School Committee, those on the committee who put in extra effort and the RAAC for all their efforts to amend the RDA.

VIII. Adjournment:

- A. Carl Nett made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 PM
- B. Stacey Schultze and Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
- C. Vote - Roll Call: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm