

# Farmington River Regional School District

## School Committee

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Meeting #456

Farmington River Elementary School Library

Monday, October 7th, 2024

MINUTES

7:00 PM

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

**Also Present:** Timothy Lee, Caroline Stamm

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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.
2. **Public Comment:**
  - a. Terry Ferrara, as a representative of the FRREA, presented a letter from the union in support of the recent vote to approve the amended RDA and apportionment method for DESE review. This was met with a round of applause from the School Committee in appreciation.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:**

- Meeting #455 from September 23rd, 2024

  - a. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #455 (9/23/24).
    - i. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
    - ii. There was no discussion.
    - iii. 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 minutes from Meeting #455 (9/23/24).
4. **Superintendent's Report:**
  - a. School News
    - i. Back to School Night: There was good turn-out for Back to School Night, which also family visits to classrooms, and even a sign-up for instrument lessons.
    - ii. After School Program (Dragon's Den): Dragon's Den is up and running again for the 2024-2025 School Year. Tim would like to recognize our 2 staff members who oversee the program: Amy Maxton, our Kindergarten Teacher, is the lead teacher/coordinator, and is assisted by Sue Olds, one of our paraprofessionals.
    - iii. Student Teachers: Tim wanted to acknowledge the various Student Teachers we have for this school year, many of which are from Westfield State.
  - b. Financial Update (verbal report from Carol Sauerhauser)
    - i. FY24 Reconciliation: Carol and Jane Gleason are still working on closing the books on FY24 and have asked for an extension to October 31st, but should be able to make that extended deadline.

- ii. E&D: The Business team will be working E&D in November
  - iii. FY25 Budget: Currently stable with the allocated budget.
  - iv. FY26 Planning: They are in the Planning Phase of FY26, and will begin to define the expenditures over the next few months in preparation for budget planning.
- c. 2024 MCAS
- i. Tim proposed postponing the presentation on the 2024 MCAS scores till the November meeting.
- d. Staffing changes and current needs
- i. We are currently .5 FTE above what we budgeted for paraprofessionals.
    - 1. The reason for this is complicated: There were several hires made at the beginning of the year due to retirements and an increased need for SPED students. There was also another change at one of the Middle/High Schools, who were able to provide a paraprofessional coverage for a placement that we previously were sending.
    - 2. Tim is aware of 2 mid-year leaves that we will be utilize coverage for.
    - 3. We are currently going to hold onto that extra FTE for now and will consider those needs for the FY26 year to anticipate needs.
    - 4. Van Driver: We are once again in need of a van driver. We had a hire at the beginning of the year and were very happy to have her join us, however she was able to take up an opportunity that she couldn't pass up. Tim invited anyone who knows of someone interested in van driving to reach out to him.
5. PRISM Grant in Collaboration with GRSD
- 1. The district has applied for a PRISM Grant in collaboration with Gateway Regional School District. We needed to apply for this grant with another school district due to the terms of the grant. It requires at least 3 elementary schools to apply for the grant, and since we only have 1, we were able to partner with Gateway who has 2 elementary schools and needed a third. Tim expressed his gratitude to Deanna at GRSD for collaborating with us.
  - 2. With this grant, we will be able to access and incorporate different progress assessment methods to track progress and intervention, such as bringing in a reading specialist for example.
  - 3. We currently do not know the range/size of the grant. The total grant will be split in thirds, with 2 of the GRSD schools receiving a third of the grant each, and we receive the remaining third.
6. Boilers, Heating oil supply line replacement, IAQ grant, other facilities updates
- 1. Boiler/Heating Oil Supply Line Replacement:
    - 1. Tim wanted to recognize Chris Graceffa for his efforts to make sure that the work to repair the Boiler Oil Supply line this was done, including staying on the phone with the repair companies to ensure that the work was being scheduled and completed on time.
  - 2. Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Grant:
    - 1. We have been approved for the IAQ grant. The state will subsidize at almost 100% on projects to improve the indoor air quality.
    - 2. After a review of the air quality in 2022-2023, they pointed to improving the air filtering, and to moisture control (such as putting up gutters to move water to the parameter drain).

3. We currently have invitations to bid on these projects and have received 2 of the 3 quotes on the work and are waiting to receive more detailed costs from the engineers on the project.
4. Stacey brought up another idea on how to bring money in to fund these projects in addition to the grant and will discuss this further with Tim at a later time.

## 5. **Subcommittees**

### 1. Membership Review:

1. POLICY: **Stacey Schultze (Chair)**, Melissa Bye, Denise Hardie
2. FINANCE: **Carl Nett (Chair)**, Denise Hardie, Douglas Miner
3. FACILITIES: **Phil Magovern (Chair)**, Deb Fogel, Stacey Schultze
4. SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION: **Melissa Bye (Chair)**, Deb Fogel, Phil

### 2. Chairs, meetings, and agendas

1. Agendas/Minutes Expectations: Subcommittees should have agendas & minutes to Caroline at least 3 days in advance to ensure that it is posted in compliance.
2. Meeting Frequency Expectations:
  1. There are no expectations on holding a meeting every month, but there was a discussion on the windows of time that are available to meet
  2. FINANCE and FACILITIES will meet Monday afternoons so Carol (for FINANCE) and Chris Graceffa (for FACILITIES) can attend/participate.
  3. POLCIY & SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION would meet in the hour preceding a meeting as needed.
  4. Denise encouraged that the subcommittees discuss when to hold their first meeting tonight following this meeting.
  5. There was clarification that the meetings do not need to have Zoom capabilities, but does need to have public agendas and minutes.
  6. There was discussion on having the FACILITIES Subcommittee composed of 3 Otis members, however there was consensus that it is okay due to the checks and balances with other subcommittees.

## 6. **Regional District Agreement**

### 1. Update on Status:

1. Tim reported that 2 days after our last meeting, Tim, with assistance from Caroline, reformatted the working draft and called it the “DESE Review Draft” and was sent to Christine Lynch at DESE. She confirmed receipt of receiving the draft and we have not heard anything since that time. Tim expects that if he doesn’t hear anything by the middle of next week, he plans to reach out to check-in.

### 2. Next Steps: Possible timeline and public information sessions

1. There was a discussion on how to hold a public hearing on the updates to the RDA, and ways to disseminate information to the public on the importance of their vote and the implications of both voting yes and voting no.
2. Tim asked what the process would look like to correct any suggestions or changes from DESE should there be any. The committee discussed the option of having Tim make small changes to correct their suggestions for the Committee to approve, or hold a Special School Committee meeting if there are substantial changes. They also pointed out that we’ve already changed a bit of the language based on DESE’s initial suggestions.

3. **MOTION:** Carl Nett made a motion to authorize Tim to make corrections to the RDA based on the feedback from DESE following their review.
  1. Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
  2. **VOTE to approve:** 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 authorize Tim to make corrections to the RDA based on the feedback from DESE following their review
4. Both towns are hoping to hold a special town meeting before the end of the calendar year regarding the RDA.
5. The committee discuss involving the town select boards to bring forth further consensus in support of the vote and to advocate support for the updated RDA.
6. The committee discussed different local groups that they can share information with to get the word out, and how to plan different information nights perhaps with the PTA, the Council on Aging, local firefighters, at the transfer station, etc.
7. There was also a suggestion to mail a 1-page informational flyer on the implication of a “yes” or “no” vote and perhaps mail it out to all constituents of Otis and Sandisfield. Denise, Stacey, and Melissa volunteered to begin working on this flyer, and will share it with the Committee at the November meeting.
8. The Committee Scheduled a Special Meeting for Wednesday, October 16th at 6:30 PM to discuss Public Relation/Information on the RDA.
  1. Denise will approach the Otis Select Board.
  2. Douglas will approach the Sandisfield Select Board.
  3. Before the meeting, Tim will be able to check-in with DESE on where they are at in the process.
1. **Graphs on the New Apportionment Method:**
  1. Carl put together and presented a few visual graphs to help explain how the new apportionment method would work.
  2. There was also a discussion on any other visuals that may be helpful to explain how the new apportionment works & is fair to both towns.
7. **Future Agenda Items:**
  1. The School Committee scheduled a Special Meeting for Wednesday, October 16th at 6:30 PM to discuss Public Relation/Information on the RDA.
  2. Stacey Schultze would like to put School Choice on the agenda for the next regular meeting with more information on her School Committee Training.
8. **Other Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting:**
  1. There were no other agenda items to discuss at this time.
9. **Adjournment:**
  1. Carl Nett made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 PM.
  2. Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
  3. **Vote - Roll Call:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

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Respectfully submitted,  
Caroline Stamm