

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #460

Farmington River Elementary School Library

Monday, January 6th, 2025

MINUTES

7:00 PM

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. Nothing at this time.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:**

- Meeting #459 from December 2nd, 2024

 - a. **MOTION:** Carl Nett made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #459 (12/2/24).
 - i. Phil Magovern 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. The motion passed unanimously to accept the minutes from Meeting #459 (12/2/24).
4. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - a. **School News:**
 - i. The Holiday Concert, held on 12/19, was a great success with lots of beautiful voices and well attended by the community, preceded by the PTA baked potato dinner. Tim especially enjoyed the bell choir, and wanted to recognize Ms. Jeri, Ms. Cat, and Ms. Isabel for their hard work to make the concert a success.
 - ii. Springfield Symphony Petting Zoo - A member from the Springfield Symphony brought many different instruments that the students were able to try out - from woodwinds to brass, and strings to percussion.
 - iii. Upcoming Events this week:
 1. School Council Meeting on Thursday at 3:15 PM
 2. PTA Meeting on Thursday at 7:00 PM
 3. No School on 1/20 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
 - iv. The District is still seeking substitute teachers/paraprofessionals. If you know someone who is interested, they can call the Front Office, Principal, or Superintendent.
 1. Minimum Requirements: For being a classroom teacher, prefer teacher licensure or at least a bachelor's degree and experience with kids. All

employees must pass a background check/fingerprinting.

- b. Request for FY 25 Funds Transfer: Business Office Benefits to Audit Expense:
- i. Tim presented a request with context that an annual audit is a requirement of public schools. Prior to his departure, the former Business Manager Eric Jesner procured an audit for FY22 and FY23 with Powers and Sullivan.
 - ii. Carol Sauerhauser has been in contact with Powers and Sullivan to complete the audit of FY22, FY23, and FY24. Tim and Carol were able to negotiate the cost of the audit from the typical \$35,000/year to \$20,000/year. Additionally, Tim explained that there is a separate audit of the retirement system schedules and other post-employment benefits that is not covered by the initial audit.
 - iii. Tim proposed moving the cost of these audits over from the budgeted business manager benefits expenses. In order to cover the additional audit of retirement system schedules and other post-employment benefits, Tim asked to amend the proposed motion to transfer \$25,000 instead of the listed \$20,000.
 - iv. There was a brief discussion on the use of Powers and Sullivan for auditing purposes in the future. Tim indicated that he is open to looking for other options.
 - v. MOTION: Stacey Schultze made a motion to approve the Superintendent's request to transfer \$25,000 from the Health Insurance Active Employee budget line to the School Committee Audit Expense budget line.
 1. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 2. There was no further discussion.
1. VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. The motion passed unanimously to approve the Superintendents to transfer \$25,000 from the Health Insurance Active Employee budget line to the School Committee Audit Expense budget line.
- c. Bus Contract IFB and IVAQ Grant Updates:
- i. Tim put together Invitations to Bid, which are due back on January 16th, 2024. Tim has had very little interaction with bidders, with only 3 questions from 3 potential bidders. He will have an update at the February meeting.
 - ii. There was a discussion regarding the questions that were posed by the bidders.
- d. IVAQ Grant Update:
- i. Tim updated the Committee on the indoor air quality work in the building (such as dehumidifying in the summer and removing mold/moisture/water). Work on these improvements could start as early as June when the school year concludes.
 - ii. There was a deadline of December 31st, 2024 to receive and respond to quotes for this work. We received and accepted quotes for 4 different contractors to complete the work.
 - iii. Tim explained that they underestimated the cost of the work and will likely need to cover a portion of the cost with District maintenance and/or capital funds.
 - iv. There was a brief discussion on potential other sources of funding for this work.
- e. Detail: FY25 Capital Projects - Completed and Planned:
- i. Tim would like to table this discussion until a later meeting when he has more information available. There was no opposition to tabling this discussion.
- f. Tuition Agreement between the Farmington River Regional School District and the Lee Public Schools:

- i. In lieu of deferring the discussion on Capital Projects, Tim proposed looking at the Lee Public Schools Tuition Agreement.
- ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss the FRRSD-LPS Tuition Agreement.
 - 1. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was no discussion.
 - 3. VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. The motion passed unanimously to amend the agenda to discuss the FRRSD-LPS Tuition Agreement.
- iii. Tim explained the context of the previous tuition agreements with LPS and their concerns with it's lack of detail in the education plan and costs. He reached out to the Superintendent from the LPS, and asked that they modify their tuition agreement to look more like the tuition agreement contract with BHRSD. LPS updated their tuition agreement and sent it back promptly.
- iv. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the Farmington River Regional School District and Lee Public Schools Tuition Agreement as presented.
 - 1. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was a discussion on the benefits of the detail added into the agreement. Tim also noted the addition of inviting members of the FRRSD School Committee to attend the LMHS Graduation.
 - 3. VOTE to accept: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. The motion passed unanimously to accept the Farmington River Regional School District and Lee Public Schools Tuition Agreement as presented.
- g. FY26 Draft Expenditure Budget
 - i. Carol Sauerhauser was not able to attend this meeting, but Tim was able to present the documents on the FY26 Budget Updates.
 - ii. Tim began by explaining that the budget numbers presented are conservative and he anticipates the final numbers to be lower. He explained the proposed changes and causes behind the changes (detailed in the resource document). He then presented the expected State and Federal Grants that would help offset costs of the budget.
 - iii. Following the presentation, Tim asked the Committee members if there was an anticipated budget change or a limit to what they would be comfortable with seeing increase. The consensus was that there isn't an exact percentage expectation, but was they are more focused on a few key points, such as a conservative and fiscally responsible budget, the budget process as a whole, and being mindful of the outcomes of the RDA changes.
 - iv. FY26 Budget Calendar:
 - 1. Tim reviewed the timeline of the budget process.
 - 2. Tim discussed scheduling the Public Hearing. He proposed targeting March 12th at 7:00 PM, with a Snow Date TBD. The Committee decided to hold off until the February or March meetings to discuss scheduling a special meeting to approve the budget pending the RDA discussion.

5. Subcommittees Reports:

1. **FINANCE:**
 1. There are no upcoming Finance Subcommittee meetings.
 2. Looking beyond approving the budget, future Finance Subcommittee meetings will focus on strategic planning. There was discussion on the Finance Committee's role in finalizing the FY26 budget.
2. **FACILITIES:**
 1. They have not met since the last meeting. They will plan to meet in the spring after the budget process to identify projects to focus on.
3. **POLICY:**
 1. They will convene prior to the next regular School Committee meeting, and will prepare policy to present to the School Committee.
4. **SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION:**
 1. They have not met yet; Melissa has reached out to the members to schedule their next meeting.
 2. Denise will share documentation from last year's review as a launching point, and they have discussed using the same evaluation model as last year due to the RDA process, and will convert to the DESE model the following year.
5. There was discussion about the requirement to post agenda and minutes for the Subcommittees. The Committee will look at neighboring districts and the MASC requirements to see these Subcommittee meetings will need posted agendas and minutes.
6. **Regional District Agreement**
 1. **Update on Status:**
 1. The RDA is being reviewed by the legal department of DESE. There was no specific timeline on how long the legal department will take to review the RDA, but the representatives at DESE acknowledged our timeline constraints.
 2. **Public Information Planning: Update/Review Narrative**
 1. Denise, Stacey, and Melissa created a drafted RDA narrative. There was a brief discussion on the narrative, and specific edits to be made.
 2. The Committee discussed next steps to work on informing the public about the updated RDA. Ideas discussed included reaching out to voters directly, sharing the RDA Narrative with the local newspapers, sharing information on the town's social media groups, creating a PowerPoint for use in the Public Hearing, etc.
7. **Future Agenda Items:**
 1. Nothing at this time.
8. **Other Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting:**
 1. Nothing at this time.
9. **Adjournment:**
 1. Carl Nett made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 PM.
 2. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 3. **Vote - Roll Call:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm