

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #466

Farmington River Elementary School Music Room

MINUTES

Monday, April 7th, 2025

7:00 PM

Members Present: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner (via Zoom), 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. John Ayers, FRRSD Van Driver, commended the School Committee for the work that they did to pass the changes to the RDA - commenting that it was outstanding.
 - b. Lisa LaGrant, FRRSD parent, spoke on behalf of the FRRSD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) and emphasized a reminder to the School Committee that they are fiscally responsible for all students, including SPED students and middle/high school students.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:**
 - Meeting #464 from March 3rd, 2025
 - Meeting #465 from March 3rd, 2025 (Public Information Session)
 - a. **MOTION:** Carl Nett made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #465 (3/3/25 - Public Information Session). Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - i. There was no discussion.
 - ii. **VOTE to accept:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Phil Magovern, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. Douglas Miner was not yet present and therefore did not vote. Denise Hardie abstained from the vote as she was not present at the meeting on 3/3/25. The motion passed to accept the minutes from Meeting #465 (3/3/25 - Public Information Session).
 - b. Douglas Miner joined the meeting following this vote.
 - c. **MOTION:** Carl Nett made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #464 (3/3/25). Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - i. There was no discussion.
 - ii. **VOTE to accept:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. Denise Hardie abstained from the vote as she was not present at the meeting on 3/3/25. The motion passed to accept the minutes from Meeting #464 (3/3/25).
4. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - a. Superintendent Lee would like to extend his appreciation to those who helped with the Wellness Night, commenting on its success with good turn-out and very educational.

- b. FY26 Draft Budget: Follow-Up from Public Hearing of 3/31, Clarification of Revolving/Undesignated Fund Status, Vote to Approve
 - i. Carol Sauerhauser presented a follow-up from the Public Hearing on March 31st with further clarification on Revolving Funds and the Estimated Assessment with the New RDA Method that recently passed.
 - ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the FY26 Budget as it was presented at the Public Hearing. Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
 - 1. There was no discussion.
 - 2. VOTE - 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 to approve the FY26 Budget as it was presented.
- c. IFQ Business Manager Services FY26
 - i. Superintendent Lee wanted to inform the School Committee that they have posted an Invitation for Quote (IFQ) for the Business Manager Services for FY26 to the website. He is expecting TMS, our current provider, will be the only bidder, but prepared an IFQ due to the sizable cost of the services.
- d. MOA Chaperones for Overnight Field Trips
 - i. Superintendent Lee presented a written agreement regarding payment for employees serving as chaperones for overnight field trips. The purpose of this MOA is to document the practice that has been going on in the past.
 - ii. One Committee member asked if this position is an assignment or voluntary. Superintendent Lee clarified that union members who attend volunteer for the position to attend.
 - iii. MOTION: Stacey Schultze made a motion to approve the MOA Chaperones for Overnight Field Trips. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 - 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 accept the MOA Chaperones for Overnight Field Trips.
- e. MOA Compensation for Assignment during Preparation Periods
 - i. Superintendent Lee provided context for this MOA regarding compensation for assignment during preparation periods. He explained the reason for this MOA due to confusion in the Union Contract on the wording of "\$50/hour" versus "\$50/prep-period". This clarifies that missed preparation period will be compensated to \$50/prep-period, which aligns with the current practice.
 - ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to approve the MOA Compensation for Assignment during Preparation Periods. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 - 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 accept the MOA Compensation for Assignment during Preparation Periods.
- f. Annual School Choice Vote
 - i. Superintendent Lee presented the vote to accept School Choice students.
 - ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to open the district school choice enrollment in grades K-6 for the 2025-2026 school year and to close the district to school

choice enrollment in grades 7-12 for the 2025-2026 school year. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.

1. Superintendent Lee confirmed that currently no grade levels K-6 are nearing the enrollment capacity.
2. There was a discussion questioning why PK/EK is not part of the school choice decision - which is because we do not collect School Choice funds for PK/EK students.
3. There was also discussion clarifying what would happen if a student chooses out of the district for K-6 and returns to the district for 7-12. Superintendent Lee explained that they are considered a natural student.
4. 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 open the district school choice enrollment in grades K-6 for the 2025-2026 school year and to close the district to school choice enrollment in grades 7-12 for the 2025-2026 school year. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.

g. Surplus of Van 4 (Verbal Update)

- i. Superintendent Lee detailed the process and current status of the sale of Van 4. There were a few road-bumps along the way that required back and forth communication with the bidder and GovDeals.org (an auction program for government agencies looking to liquidate items). The profits from this sale will go into the Capital Stabilization Fund.
- ii. Superintendent Lee explained that the new van is expected early- to mid-June and this van would be a lease.

h. Check-In: 2024-2025 Superintendent's Work Year:

- i. Superintendent Lee shared an update on his current number of work-days for this year. Per his contract, his number of work days for the year is targeted for 94, and he has already worked this amount.
- ii. A Committee member asked if he anticipates working beyond 94 days again next year, which Superintendent Lee agreed would likely happen and segued into the next agenda item on the Superintendent's Work Agreement.

i. Amended Work Agreement for Superintendent FY26: First Read

- i. Superintendent Lee proposed amending his Work Agreement to shift from a .4 FTE (2 days a week) to .5 FTE (5 working days every 2 weeks) for next year. The rate in pay would be the same, but would only change the FTE status and the expected number of work days. He didn't propose a rate increase year-to-year, noting that since he is considered retired, there are earning limits that he is approaching.
- ii. Superintendent Lee proposed that the School Committee review this contract and can discuss/vote at the next meeting in May in preparation for the next fiscal year.

5. Subcommittees Reports:

1. FINANCE: Nothing at this time.
2. FACILITIES: Nothing at this time.
3. POLICY: Nothing at this time.
4. SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION: They did meet briefly and agreed on using the same

evaluation tools used last year to evaluate Superintendent Lee due to the emphasis on amending the RDA. They also discussed the timeline due to a number of the Subcommittee members leaving, and asked Denise Hardie if she could step-in to continue the evaluation process since she was the Subcommittee Chair last year. The expectation would be that they would start the DESE Superintendent Evaluation process for the next fiscal year.

6. Regional District Agreement

1. Update on Status: Our RDA has been submitted along with the supporting documentation to the Commissioner.
 1. Superintendent Lee followed up to confirm that it has been received and once he receives more information and/or approval, he will let the School Committee know.
2. Discussion of School Committee Composition under new RDA: Transition Planning
 1. There was discussion on the composition of the School Committee - specifically with how to proceed eliminating a seat for each town in conjunction with resignations. There was some confusion on how to proceed with the town clerks. Douglas Miner will be seeking more information on how to proceed.

6. Future Agenda Items:

1. Strategic Planning:
 1. Superintendent Lee would like to suggest launching a more detailed study on the declining enrollment and town population to combat this and improve the district. He has past experience doing strategic planning with previous districts and bringing in an impartial, third-party party to conduct the work provided valuable information on district strengths/weaknesses and how to improve the district.
 2. There was discussion on expanding early childhood programs and what potential scenarios would be.
 3. There were questions about studying the financial impact associated with different district configuration scenarios.
 4. There was discussion that both Otis and Sandisfield are considering undergoing strategic planning and this additional information on the district would be beneficial as well.
 5. Superintendent Lee noted that this topic will appear periodically moving forward and one of the first steps of this process would be to compile a list of questions on things we would like to know more about.
2. FREA Contract Negotiations 2025-2026
 1. Superintendent Lee reminded the School Committee that Teacher Contract negotiations are up for discussion again, which would go into effect for FY27. Typically, a School Committee member participates in the negotiations along with Superintendent Lee.

7. Other Items not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting:

1. Tuition Agreements with Vocational Schools:
 1. Steve Seddon from Sandisfield reached out to Denise and asked that the School Committee consider establishing tuition contracts between the towns and Vocational Schools. He asked that they consider sharing the costs of transportation between the towns if they agreed. Tim is going to look into the legality of this and how transportation factors into it.

2. Superintendent Lee will be working with Mike Saporito to look at addressing the current transportation needs of students that we currently know are attending.
 3. There was discussion on if the district should pursue tuition agreements with nearby Vocational Schools.
 2. PK Program moving to Full-Day Option:
 1. Superintendent Lee presented a discussion regarding providing a full-day option for PK. Due to low enrollment, the administration is exploring combining the PK & EK program and/or expanding the span-of-day from 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM to 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM, which would make it a full day.
 2. There are families of 3-year-olds that are interested in our program but are not able to continue pursuing it due to the time constraints.
 3. There is a concern if 3-year-olds are developmentally ready for a full day at school compared to the accommodations that daycares can provide.
 4. There was a question if this was discussed with the teachers of these grades. There are some changes that this decision will impact such as staffing as well as impact on classroom space.
 8. **Adjournment:**
 1. Phil Magovern made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 PM.
 2. Carl Nett 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