

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #479

Farmington River Elementary School Library

MINUTES

Monday, April 6th, 2026

7:00 PM

Members Present: Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett (via Zoom), Stacey Schultze

Also Present: Superintendent Timothy Lee, Carol Sauerhoefer, Caroline Stamm

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Carl Nett.
 - a. **Roll Call:** Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett (via Zoom), Stacey Schultze
2. **Public Comment:**
 - a. There was no public comment at this time.
3. **Review of Minutes:**
 - *Regular Meeting of March 2026 (#477)*
 - *Special Meeting March 30th, 2026 (#478)*
 - a. **MOTION:** Denise made a motion to approve minutes from Meeting #477 (3/2/26).
 - i. Kate Meierdiecks seconded the motion.
 - ii. There was no discussion.
 - iii. **VOTE to accept:** Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner (via Zoom), Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 5-0 to accept the minutes from Meeting #477 (3/2/26).
 - b. **MOTION:** Denise Hardie made a motion to approve minutes from the Special Meeting #478 (3/30/26).
 - i. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - ii. There was no discussion.
 - iii. **VOTE to accept:** Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner (via Zoom), Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 5-0 to accept the minutes from Meeting #478 (3/30/26).
4. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - a. **FY27 Budget: Status Update, Information Sessions Scheduled with Town Select Boards**
 - i. The budget was approved last week on 3/30, so it is moving to the towns for budget approval. Superintendent Lee will be in attendance with each towns' Select Board Meeting to present the budget and field questions.
 - b. **Projected Staff Vacancies for 2026-2027:**
 - i. Superintendent Lee reviewed open teaching positions that are still pending due to recent retirements.
 - ii. He also highlighted the position of District Treasurer that is still open following Jane Gleason's resignation.
 - iii. He also noted that there is a position open in the kitchen due to a staff

member's leave of absence in the first half of the year.

c. Upcoming End-of-Year Events and Notes:

- i. April 20th - April 24th is April Break
- ii. April 27th - May 1st is Screen Free Week
- iii. May 6th is the Special Olympics at BHRSD
- iv. May 15th is the PTA Ice cream social
- v. Upcoming Field Trips: CT Science Center with Grade 1 & 2
- vi. June 4th is the Spring Musical
- vii. June 9th is the PTA Field Day
- viii. June 15th is EK Bridging Ceremony
- ix. June 16th is 6th Grade Graduation in the afternoon
- x. Denise will be present as a representative of the School Committee/District at the MMHS and LMHS Graduations.

d. 2026-2027 School Year Calendar:

- i. Superintendent Lee presented the 2026-2027 Calendar, noting the later start date, and the changes to the professional development days. There were no questions from the School Committee.

5. School Committee New Business: Parent Request for Exception to Policy JEB - Update

- a. Superintendent Lee presented a brief overview of the request and the steps that have taken place since the last School Committee Meeting. He summarized his findings following the student's testing and teacher input.
 - i. Recommendations from staff concluded a mixed result, with some leaning on following data, and others concerned about rushing the student before they're ready.
- b. The School Committee discussed whether they should make an exception to the exception to early admit a student born after October 1st.
- c. MOTION: Denise Hardie made a motion to not change either policy at this time, and to deny the parent request for an exception to the early admission policy exception.
 - i. Stacey Schutze seconded the motion.
 - ii. The School Committee discussed thoughts on proceeding with an exception to the early-entrance-exception policy. There were concerns about correlating data that indicates social emotional issues with early entrance, as well as whether they should consider anecdotal stories of early entrance students. There was discussion on whether there is enough evidence to warrant a policy change. The Committee also discussed support of the teachers' recommendation since they are the Committee's educational partners.
 - iii. Meaghann Arnold, a member of the district, expressed concerns about student development with the combined 3-year-old and 4-year-old age groups and the effect on the development of a 4 or almost 5 year old student, as well as the implications of this on enrollment.
 1. As a response, Superintendent Lee reiterated that Farmington River's PK/EK program is an integrated PK, where the primary goal is a special education program where students with disabilities and delays can be integrated with non-special education students. This is to meet our child-find obligation.
 - iv. Alexa Bunnell, a member of the district, expressed her concerns about the decision and the district's obligation to their resident students.

- v. The School Committee discussed that a change to this policy would not just be for one student, it would be for all students in the future.
- vi. VOTE: Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze_were in favor. Douglas Miner (via Zoom) opposed. The motion passed 4-1, to not change either policy at this time, and to deny the parent requests for an exception to the early admission policy exception.

6. Rotating Committee Focus:

- a. Boiler and Heating Plant Update
 - i. There were some issues with fuel issues where the pump was not able to provide enough fuel to the boilers. There was a repair proposed and is currently underway, but has been more costly than anticipated and has taken away from most of the capital budget this year.
- b. PA/Phone System Project, Options and Quotes
 - i. Superintendent Lee provided a quick overview of the status of the PA system and the process to seek repairs. The most recent quote was around \$40,000 in cost, which is not money we have currently available. The vendor is able to split the payment between this fiscal year and next, which will allow us to begin the process as soon as the summer begins.
- c. Request for Funds Transfer:
 - i. Superintendent Lee is requesting to transfer \$30,000 from Health Insurance Active Employees to the New Equipment Line to help cover the cost of the PA/Phone System repairs.
 - ii. MOTION: Denise Hardie made a motion to transfer \$30,000 from Health Insurance Active Employees to the New Equipment Line to help cover the cost of the PA/Phone System repairs.
 - 1. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was a discussion regarding the boiler repairs taking most of the capital funds, and questions about shifting money between these lines which clarified that New Equipment is a general fund line, not capital.
 - 3. VOTE: Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner (via Zoom), Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze_were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 5-0 to transfer \$30,000 from Health Insurance Active Employees to the New Equipment Line to help cover the cost of the PA/Phone System repairs.

7. Ongoing Agenda Items:

- a. Strategic Planning: 2026-2027 Enrollment Projections
 - i. Superintendent Lee will discuss this further at the next School Committee Meeting.

8. Other Items not anticipated by the

- a. There is a member of the FRREA ESP Unit who is retiring and moving out of state and is closing on a house, so she needs to be out of state for the 3 days preceding the April break period which means that personal time cannot be used. Superintendent Lee found a clause about Other Extended Leave. He is looking for approval to grant this individual under Article 7F "Other Extended Leave."

- b. MOTION: Stacey Schultze made the motion to grant this individual 3 days under the FRREA ESP Unit, Article 7, Section F “Other Extended Leave.”
 - i. Kate Meieredicks seconded the motion.
 - ii. There was no discussion.
 - iii. VOTE: Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner (via Zoom) Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze_were in favor. The motion passed unanimously 5-0 to grant this individual 3 days under the FRREA ESP Unit, Article 7, Section F “Other Extended Leave.”

9. Warrants for Review:

- a. Warrants are available in the front office if anyone would like to review them.

10. Executive Session:

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an opening meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body if the chair so declares.

- a. Stacey Schultze made the motion to exit into executive session at 8:15 PM with the intent to adjourn immediately following executive session.
- b. Kate Meieredicks seconded the motion.
- c. Vote - Roll Call: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze.

11. Adjournment:

- a. Adjournment of the meeting was held during the executive session.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm