

# Board of Education Meeting Minutes

## January 21, 2015

Board Members Present: President Jamie Doucette, Vice President Laurie Finan, Linda Mrowka, and William Bloethe.

Also Present: Superintendent/Principal Karen Goodwin, Business Manager Marilyn Conroy, Board Secretary Alysanne Cochrane, and community.

### 1. School Community Session

**1.1 Call to Order/Pledge-** Mrs. Doucette called community session to order and led the pledge at 5:03pm.

**1.2 Public Participation-** Community member, Paul Giles, approached the Board to make a request. He asked that when making arrangements for the 2015-2016 school calendar, the Board take into consideration a trip he is planning to Morocco. Mr. Giles is plans to invite many Fishers Island community members on this trip including parents, students, and staff. This ten-day trip would fall on whichever dates the Board approves for the school's spring break. The group would leave on Friday to start the break and would return back for school ten days later to start school on Tuesday as previously practiced for spring break. The Board understands the value of this trip and will take consideration of plans while approving vacation dates.

### 1.3 Celebrations

**a. FIS Becomes ACT Testing Site-** FIS students will now be able to take the test on island. Mrs. Goodwin recognized Guidance Counselor, Gil Amaral, for his work in getting this done. The first test will be administered in April 2015.

**b. Moments Video-** Mrs. Goodwin played a slideshow of FIS moments that was recently created by Jane Ahrens for recruitment and advertisement. Various community members loaned pictures for the memorable video.

### 1.4 Additions to Agenda

**a. 5.10 First Reading of Financial Policies #6600, #6710, and #674**

**b. 7.1 Executive Session: Personnel Matter**

**2. Consent Agenda-** motion to approve made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by Laurie Finan. All in favor/none opposed.

**2.1 Treasurer's Report-** There were no questions or comments on the Treasurer's Report.

**2.2 Budget Status and Revenue Status Reports-** As a new practice, Mrs. Conroy included a Revenue Report.

### 3. Reports

**3.1 Warrants:** #25, #26, #27, and #28 totaling \$142,670.21 Approved by Claims Auditor Sharon Patterson. The Board does not have any questions.

**3.2 Audit Recommendations Action Plan-** An action plan is now documented and will be updated monthly. Mrs. Goodwin and Mrs. Conroy meet daily to discuss financial matters and are in close contact with the school's auditors.

#### **4. Action Items**

**4.1 Approval of the December 17, 2015 Board of Education Meeting Minutes-** Mrs. Finan abstains from voting as she was not present at last month's meeting. Motion made Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**4.2 Approval of a One-Week Foreign Exchange Students at FIS-** Mrs. Goodwin noted that this opportunity is not involved with a foreign exchange *program*, though she and the world language teacher are looking into that option/policies as well. This exchange student would attend FIS for one week in April and is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Her mother will be in eastern Connecticut for academic business and is a colleague of an FIS parent. The Board believes this would be a positive experience for both parties and will approve the exchange student pending evidence of good standing in her current school. Motion to approve made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**4.3 Approval of the 2015-16 Budget Development Calendar-** Mrs. Goodwin has integrated many of the budget meetings into regular monthly meetings. Mrs. Finan requested that we use "Google Invite" to send meeting time and date information. Motion to approve made by Laurie Finan, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**4.4 Approval of the Lifetouch School Photography Agreement for 2015-2016-** Lifetouch shared with the principal data to express that they are not making a profit off of FIS but would like to sign another contract. Some parents have expressed that they were not pleased with the quality/price of their child's photographs. Mrs. Goodwin stated that this is not a project that she can personally take on but will ask the community to look into other creative options and possible family portraits. The Board will postpone this action item until next month's meeting.

**4.5 Approval of Post-Secondary Planning Series-** This series will be funded entirely by the Rural School Grant. Many parents have responded and the vast majority have committed to attending. Motion to approve made by Laurie Finan, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**4.6 Adoption of Purchasing Policy #6700-** Motion made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**4.7 Adoption of Transfer Policy #6150-** Motion made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**4.8 Approval of Jennifer Burns as a Long-Term Substitute-** The Board does not know the extent of leave of the permanent teacher but she has not been in the classroom for two weeks. This candidate has been the substitute teacher in the short term, and is strongly recommended by Mrs. Goodwin. Motion to approve made by Laurie Finan, seconded by Linda Mrowka. All in favor/none opposed.

## **5. Superintendent/Principal Report**

**5.1 Building Renovation Project (Updates and Next Steps)-** The architects have submitted all required documents to the state. Mrs. Goodwin would like to discuss the options available for Phase II. The current goals of the Board include beginning the processes of Phase II. To do this, the Board would need to start using money from this year's budget. Due to unavoidable heating and roof repairs, Mrs. Conroy and Mrs. Goodwin advise waiting to referendum for Phase II until fall of 2015 (after July 1). This will allow the proper planning for budget monies. The Board agrees that is most fiscally responsible to wait. They will contact Mrs. Conroy with any further questions.

Mrs. Finan asked Mrs. Conroy regarding the tax cap for 2015-2016. She wanted to know if the Board can approve the same budget while staying in the allotted tax cap percentage. Mrs. Conroy could not give a definitive answer but will look into it.

Mrs. Conroy also informed the Board that she recommends we continue to calculate the accrued benefit liability.

**5.2 RFP for Audit Services-** Mrs. Goodwin will be looking for proposals from auditors. Mrs. Mrowka volunteered as the Board representative to look over RFP as well ask interview.

**5.3 Educational Improvement Grants-** A list if grants was handed to the Board as informational data.

**5.4 Honor Roll Data-** As requested by the Board, percentages of honor roll students from other schools was presented. The data shows that Fishers Island students fall in the average range of honor roll percentages.

**5.5 Board Representation for Tuition Student Selection Committee-** Sara McLean was previously on this committee and needs to be replaced by a current Board member. Meetings include inviting students to the various aspects of the selection process as well as selecting the final accepted students. Laurie Finan volunteered to serve on the committee, using Facetime for access.

**5.6 2015-2016 Student Recruitment Process Update-** Open House was a huge success with 32 attendees. Two FIS parents hosted informational coffees with prospective families which also helped the process. The school received a letter from a prospective student and her mother explaining how much they loved the school. The new recruitment process is working well.

**5.7 Community Partnership: Youth Group-** Pastor Whitman and representatives from the other island churches would like to start a non-religious youth group to get the island teens socializing outside of school. The group plans to meet for the first time later this month.

**5.8 2015-2016 School Calendar (First Reading)-** The Board was presented with two calendar options. The first option has two traditional vacations (one week in February and another week in April). The Teachers' Association also proposed an alternate calendar that they believe is less disruptive to learning. This alternate calendar does not include a vacation week in February. Instead there would be a longer (10 day) vacation in March, as well as a shortened (3 day)

vacation in April. The April vacation would have adverse weather days attached to it to allow a possible week vacation. The Teacher's Association believes that a March vacation would allow for more instructional time before and after testing. The Board expressed both positives and negatives of each option. They expressed individually which option would and would not work for them personally. They all agree that April's vacation should be moved up one week from the proposed calendars, as well as the movement of some other minor dates. Mrs. Goodwin will survey the parents and staff to see what months of vacation work best for them. The Board agrees to this practice and will have a second reading at next month's meeting.

**5.9 NY Solar Energy Program-** This is a free solar evaluation that the Board has previously discussed and would like to try.

**5.10 First Reading of Policies #6600, #6700, and #6741-** This is a first reading.

**6. Informational Packet-** For informational purposes.

**7. Public Participation-** A community member expressed that they would like the Board to take into consideration the advantages/disadvantages of vacation dates for all members of the Fishers Island School community. She is concerned that the Board will chose the dates that are suitable for the Board, and hopes they will make the decision that benefits the majority.

**8. Executive Session-** Motion to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter at 6:50pm made by Laurie Finan, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

**9. Enter Community Session-** The Board re-entered community session at 7:35pm. At this time, the board approved of the resignation of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Jill Paciorek effective February 13, 2015. This resignation includes the separation of agreement between the District and Ms. Paciorek and authorizes the Superintendent/Principal to execute such agreement and make any and all provisions necessary for its implementation. Approvals made by William Bloethe, seconded by Laurie Finan. All in favor/none opposed.

**10. Adjournment-** Motion to adjourn made at 7:40pm by William Bloethe, seconded by Linda Mrowka. All in favor/none opposed.

Recorded by: Alysanne Cochrane