

Board of Education Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2015

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

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

1. School Community Session

1.1 Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance- President Doucette called the meeting to order and led in the pledge at 6:00pm.

1.2 Public Participation- Mr. Aaron Lusker approached the Board to request that the two 3rd grade students be allowed to participate in the 4th/5th/6th club after school. He noted that his daughter is in the 3rd grade and it is upsetting to her when she listens to her classmates discuss what they are doing after school and she is not allowed to participate. The Board noted that they have discussed a similar request in the past but will revisit the topic.

1.3 Celebrations

- **Opening of School-** The community joined in welcoming the students as they entered the school for the first time in the 2015-2016 school year. Students and staff are settled into their classes and excited for a new year. In total, there are 70 students in grades PreK-12 this year.
- **National Merit Scholar Finalist-** Senior student, Elias Kane, was one of approximately 1.5 million students to take the PSATs and has been selected as one of 16,000 semifinalists. This is a significant honor and he is still in the running to become a finalist. As far as anyone can remember, Fishers Island School has yet to have a student of this distinction. Congratulations to Elias and his hard work.
- **Preschool Social-** New Preschool teacher, Heidi Blanchard, held a small get together for her class where the students and parents were able to talk and get to know one another. It has been a couple of years since FIS has had preschool students, and they are adding tremendous value to the school's atmosphere.
- **Rural Schools Grant Award 2015/2015-** The district continues to receive federal funds. Business Manager, Lauren Poehlman, is also looking into other grant opportunities including state funding for security cameras.

1.4 Additions to the Agenda

- 3.12 Approval of a Parent's Request for Alternate Boat Transportation
- 3.13 Approval of Computer Donations
- 4.9 Third Grade Participation in 4th/5th/6th Grade Club

2. Reports

2.1 Warrants Approved by Claims Auditor Sharon Patterson- The Board questioned why Race Rock Gardening Co. was being shown under "Custodial Supplies". It was explained that Race Rock supplied mulch to the district for the playground which PE Teacher, Adam Baber, and custodian, Thomas Doroshevich, raked before the first week of school. The Board and community noted that many people had seen Mr. Doroshevich raking the mulch and were impressed with his work ethic. There were no other questions on the warrants.

2.2 Budget Status Report- Ms. Poehlman noted that there was still considerable work to be done on the report, however, she was able to eliminate negative balances. She will continue to work on this report and update the Board as requested.

2.3 Fuel Oil Bid- The Board has had time to discuss questions with Ms. Poehlman and feels comfortable sending the bid to oil companies.

2.4 Reserve Funds- The Board had previously asked for a clarification on the specific reserve fund that Ms. Poehlman has recommended. The Employee Retirement Reserve was proposed because it has the most flexibility and is used to offset funds when an employee has retired. Mrs. Finan questioned how often the regulations change with reserve funds, which Ms. Poehlman informed her is not often since many sections of the government are involved in these processes. Superintendent/Principal Goodwin has had some training with reserves and agrees with Ms. Poehlman's explanation as well as her support for creating this fund.

2.5 Prior Ferry District Invoices- It was recently brought to Superintendent/Principal Goodwin's attention that the school has an outstanding bill of about \$4,900 with the ferry district. Invoices have been historically sent to the previous Business Manager's email. Since the ferry district had never discussed these delinquent payments with the school's administration, the bills were left unpaid. Superintendent Goodwin and Ms. Poehlman were both concerned with the billing practice, as was difficult to see which freight deliveries actually made it to the school and which boxes belonged to which invoices. The ferry district and Ms. Poehlman will do some testing to ensure that the billing is accurate. These funds will come from the remainder of the 2014-2015 budget as they were invoices from previous years.

2.6 Fundraisers- Ms. Poehlman wanted to inform the Board that she will be reviewing processes and accountability on fundraising. New York State sets laws and guidelines on school fundraising and she wants to ensure that the school district is following these practices.

3. Action Items

3.1 Approval of the August 19, 2015 Board of Education Meeting- Motion made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

3.2 Approval of the 2015-2016 School Activities Leaders- Superintendent Goodwin supports all of the recommendations. Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by Thomas Shillo. All in favor/none opposed.

3.3 Approval of the Resolution to Establish an Employee Retirement Contribution Fund- Motion made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

3.4 Approval of the Resolution to Authorize the Business Manager to Allocate the Excess Fund Balance- Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

3.5 Motion to Establish the 2015-2016 Committees to the Board of Education- Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by Thomas Shillo. All in favor/none opposed.

3.6 Approval of the Proposed Student Activities as Approved by the Educational Advisory Committee- Orienteering and Kidding Around Yoga will continue to be offered during the recommended timeframes explained to the Board. Two additional activities being proposed were a table-top gaming club and an ultimate Frisbee club. There are many activities throughout the week that will add value to the students' day. The only day that there are not activities for the younger students is on Wednesday due to another community activity that is held on that day. The Board recommends that the orienteering club be separated into PreK-4th Grade and 5th Grade-6th Grade which Superintendent Goodwin will bring to the Educational Advisory Committee. It was also noted that PreK students must be accompanied by a parent in order to participate. Motion to approve activities made by William Bloethe, seconded by Thomas Shillo. All in favor/none opposed.

3.7 Approval of Professional Coursework for Carrie Sawyer- Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by Linda Mrowka. All in favor/none opposed.

3.8 Approval of a Replacement Compressor on the Heating System by Emcor Services- Emcor is in contract with the district and was pleased to hear of the study recently done on the heating system. The air compressor, which is a necessary component, is not working and must be replaced. Mr. Shillo noted that Z&S Contracting had recently done work on valves in the Math Room and may have ordered a compressor. This action item was tabled until Mr. Shillo checks on the current order for the school.

3.9 Approval of School Attendance Policy #5100- This was a second reading of the policy. Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by Linda Mrowka. All in favor/none opposed.

3.10 Approval of the Substitute Teacher Roster for the 2015-2016 School Year- Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

3.11 Approval of Proposed Hot Lunch Program by Chef Brian Buss for the 2015-2016 School Year- The pricing will remain the same as they previously were (\$4 for Elementary Students and \$6 for High School Students). Chef Busse also requested that the program increase to 2x weekly. The Board noted that they would like Chef Busse have menu detail distributed to families further in advance than he previously has. Motion made by Laurie Finan, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

3.12 Approval of a Parent's Request for Alternate Boat Transportation- A parent of two Fishers Island students, is requesting that his son be allowed to use the Popeye charter on a regular basis in order to better accommodate his lacrosse practice schedule. Though the father noted that his son does make it to practice, it is often inconvenient to have him change in the car and miss the first few minutes. Superintendent Goodwin had previously spoken to this parent and informed him that she would bring the request to the Board, though she would not recommend authorizing the request. Students are allowed to use charter boats under certain circumstances, it is not chaperoned appropriately as the ferry is. The Board agreed that allowing this exception to the transportation rules would inevitably lead to more requests. Motion to deny the request made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by Thomas Shillo. All in favor/none opposed.

3.13 Approval of Computer Donations- Technology Teacher, Mr. Kaplan had done some research and learned that he could receive computers to be used in his technology classes free of charge. He has reached to the organization Comps4Kids, who have agreed to donate several computers which he will pick up in a couple of weeks pending Board approval. The Board

thanked Mr. Kaplan for using resources wisely. Motion to approve made by Laurie Finan, seconded by Linda Mrowka. All in favor/none opposed.

4. Superintendent/Principal Report

4.1 Housing Committee Meeting Schedule Proposal- Carol Giles suggested that the committee meet 15 minutes before each Board meeting as this seems most convenient for the members. This was agreed upon by the members of the housing committee.

4.2 Security Camera System Needs- There are some blind spots in camera coverage which were inspected and will need to be addressed. Ms. Poehlman will look into security funding options.

4.3 Future Sailing Program: Next Steps- Several students expressed that they would be interested in joining a sailing club if offered by the school. The school is discussing with the yacht club the possibility of using their equipment. Mrs. Finan is also communicating with NESS, who has expressed interest in partnering with us. Superintendent Goodwin and Mrs. Finan will continue to update the Board on their progress.

4.4 Search for Speech and Language Pathologist- These specialists are in high demand and the district is having difficulty locating a qualified person to fill the position. FIS is in contact with Connecticut's LEARN organization who is also looking for a speech and language pathologist and having little luck. Superintendent Goodwin will review NYS requirements for speech services and share her findings with the Board.

4.5 Faculty/Staff Pledge to Students- Superintendent Goodwin shared a new poster that will be displayed in the school's front door. She believed that the most important thing for people to see when they wanted in the building was what the faculty and staff pledged to the students and families of the school. The staff had decided what they pledged to do and it is now being displayed in the school's entrance.

4.6 Child Abuse, Maltreatment, or Neglect in a Domestic Setting Policy #5460- This is a first reading of the policy and will be reread at next month's meeting.

4.7 Upcoming New York State Comptroller's Audit- The school had its first meeting with the Comptroller's office and was updated on the process of the audit. It was explained that the women who attended the first meeting would return in September at which time they will conduct interviews with several Board members and employees. Once interviews are conducted, the auditors will identify area(s) that are most at risk and begin testing. They will review external audits conducted as well as the recent forensic audit performed on the district's business office.

4.8 Student Health Records Update- Superintendent Goodwin updated that the school nurse, Dianna Shillo, has done an excellent job of updating records and communicating needs with parents. She recently came to the school on a weekend to work on records in order to ensure that all students were up to date to participate in sports.

4.9 Third Grade Participation in 4th/5th/6th Grade Club- After much discussion on the topic and weighing out what is most fair for the students 2nd Grade Teacher, Meg Atkin, volunteered to lead a 3rd/4th grade club after school twice a week. This seemed to be a fair compromise as it gave the 3rd grade the opportunity to do activities with their peers after school while not overwhelming a supervisor with a wide age range and large number of students. Motion to approve a 3rd/4th

grade club after school twice a week pending Educational Advisor Committee approval made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

5. Information Packet for the Board of Education- For informational purposes.

6. Public Participation- Mr. Dollar reported to the Board that the drama production is going very well and that 28 students are participating. The best possible date for the performance is November 6 and he would like to invite the Board to watch the performance.

7. Adjournment- Meeting was adjourned by President Doucette at 7:46pm. Motion to adjourn made by Linda Mrowka, seconded by William Bloethe. All in favor/none opposed.

Recorded by Alysanne Cochrane