

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #448

Farmington River Elementary School Library

Monday, April 1, 2024

MINUTES

7:00 PM

Members Present: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett

Also Present: Tim Lee, Carol Sauerhauser (via Zoom), Caroline Stamm

- I. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Carl Nett
 - A. **Roll Call:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett
- II. **Public Comment:**
 - A. Denise Hardie would like to thank members of the Otis Selectboard who received a request to the Otis Recreation Committee to include students in recreation activities from other communities with no fee.
 - B. Denise Hardie would like to bring to everyone's attention regarding MASC:
 1. MASC is creating a Rural Schools Committee. The Committee would be meeting every other month via Zoom looking at issues common to rural schools. If anyone is interested in joining the committee, they should let her know.
 2. MASC is holding a Berkshire Legislature Forum on April 11th.
- III. **Public Comment:**
 - A. Carol Lombardo made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #447 held on 3/25/24. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 1. **VOTE:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, and Carl Nett voted in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed to accept the minutes from Meeting #447 held on 3/25/24.
 - B. Phil Magovern made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #446 held on 3/4/24. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 1. **VOTE:** Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, and Carl Nett voted in favor. Denise Hardie (via Zoom) abstained from the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed to accept the minutes from Meeting #447 held on 3/4/24.
 - C. Phil Magovern made a motion to accept the minutes from Meeting #445 held on 2/26/24. Deb Fogel seconded the motion.
 1. There was discussion around verifying a few of Carol Lombardo's votes during the meeting. The tapes will be reviewed and edits will be made to the minutes to reflect the correct votes.
 2. Carl Nett made a motion to approve the minutes from MEeting #445 held on 2/26/24 with the amendment to review the votes and edit the votes.

3. VOTE: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, and Carl Nett voted in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed to accept the minutes from Meeting #447 held on 2/26/24.

D.

IV. Superintendent's Report:

A. 2024-2025 School Year Calendar, Review/Approve:

1. This calendar was vetted by the Educators Union with the school beginning before Labor Day.
2. Tim reviewed significant dates within the school calendar, including the start of school on August 28th, and closely follows the Lee Public Schools Calendar.
3. Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has a comprehensive list of holidays.
 - a) Denise would like to see how other schools denote these holidays.
 - b) Carl - have a secondary holiday calendar with other holidays?
 - c) Carl asked Tim - what would you propose as a course of action that would be for implementation of this calendar
 - (1) Margin at the bottom that denotes other holidays. To inform others.
 - (2) Good Friday - take off description.
4. MOTION: Carol motioned that SC accept the 24-25 school calendar, with the edition of any religious holidays below. Phil seconded.
 - a) VOTE: Unanimous vote.

B. Superintendent's Work Year:

1. Tim brought forward his contract as he as currently reached 95 days by the end of March. Because of this, he seeks consent from the School COmmittee to continue the remainder of the school year at 2 days per week at the rate of \$550.
2. Denise, Carl, and Tim have previously discussed this.
3. Moving forward, Tim feels confident that he should be able to
4. Tim is asking the SC to approve additional work days under item * of the superintendent work agreement, as not to exceed 24 work days for the remainder of the school year, or as not to exceed 13380.
 - a) Deb Fogel, so moved. Carl, Phil, and Denise seconded.
 - b) Into next year, he should be able to work a rate that is more consistent with the schedule.
 - c) Denise - Tim referred to a learning curve that he had, but also recognize that there was a lot of institutional knowledge that was lost in the changeover that required additional time.
 - d) Carl Nett views that this is an
 - e) VOTE: all in favor, unanimous.

C. School Choice Flyer:

1. Distributed across the county publicizing to promote the school as an options for School Choice - as
 - a) School Committee would like it as a picture file to help distribute the flyer online and in other channels.

D. Budget Update:

1. Carol Sauerhauser was asked to walk through our budget update on expenditures, school choice and ESSER III funds, and other grant balances.

2. There was a discussion on the ESSER III funds that will need to be used by September 30th, 2024, and

E. School Business Administrator Search, Verbal Update:

1. There was interviews this morning, and coming out of it, Tim presented the resume for Julia Saari-Franks, who is a strong candidate for the SBA position.
2. Tim asks the School COmmittee for their endorsement and permission to enter into discussions with Julia about a job offer to start either the end of this year for overlap with TMS or on July 1st.
3. Tim reviewed the numerous places that the job was posted, and the process that narrowed the search down to two finalists.
4. Carl asked if filling this position narrows down the days that Tim will be required to work - Tim explained that it would.
5. Carl asked if hiring this position would be more cost effective - it would costs about \$20K more than the cost of engaging TMS between the salary and the cost of benefits.
6. Carl voiced concerns about signing a 3 year contract versus having a probational time. Tim suggests that it should be presented as a 3 year contract with a termination clause.
7. Carl asks if we hired this person there would be a benefit in reducing other costs. One of the questions posed this morning in her interview was about capital projects to inquire about her experience with the bidding and procurement process. Her response immediately about the building repair project - which would save money through resources and grant.
8. Carl supports this despite the high administrative costs.
9. Carol L's noted that hiring TMS we tap into an expertise, however Carl N. reminds her that we have a new attorney retainer
10. Douglas asks why she is leaving her current position.
 - a) Tim explains that she's been in the quasi-leadership roles for a while. Phil explained that the impression given is that she would like to step up to the administration role and is frustrated with her current role, and looking at a small district would be a good fit.
11. Denise asked about the hybrid/in-person role. Tim explained that in talking to her, he hasn't fleshed out the exact work plan, but Julia expressed that she favors working in-person and that she would have the ability to work remotely if weather is bad.
12. Carl reminded that the goal of searching for a SBA is to have someone in-person, so it would be beneficial to have her in the building
13. MOTION: Denise makes a motion to support Tim in pursuing hiring Julia.
 - a) Carol L seconded
 - b) Unanimous accept.

V. Wellness Committee:

- A. Denise provided context behind how and why this
- B. Carol L asks what would happen if this isn't up to the standards of the folks doing the audit. Tim explained that it would be flagged for revision and what needs to be changed. Carl noted that if they don't have this in place, they would automatically flag it automatically.

- C. Denise reminded the committee that the policies that Rob brought forward last year was a result of the SPED audit and the need to
- D. MOTION: Douglas made a motion for the SC to suspend the policy adoption policy for the duration of this meeting. Melissa seconds
 - 1. All in favor, unanimous.
- E. MOTION: Carol makes a motion to adopt the wellness committee with the grammar/spelling corrections as needed.
 - 1. Deb seconds
 - 2. All in favor unanimous

VI. Subcommittee REports:

- A. Finance: Discussed the apportionment methodologies, purchase of a 7D van, and capital
- B. Facilities: Not met since the last meeting, looking to have a meeting at the end of the month. Still dealing with the short term issues of the boiler, and long-term capital stabilization fund. Not meeting every month, but doesn't seem like there are present issues
- C. Policy: Not a meeting since the last general meeting, but will be meeting before the next SC meeting to look at a Civil Rights policy (brought forth by Sarah as part of her Audit).
- D. RAAC: There hasn't been a meeting since the last SC general meeting, but there is another on April 18th.
 - 1. Withdrawal:
 - a) Denise recommends to table this discussion of the amendments until after the discussions on apportionment methodologies have come to an agreement.
 - b) MOTION: Denise move to table this item to a later date. Deb Fogel seconds.
 - c) Discussion: Douglas would prefer to table this to a date. Carl thinks we can table this indefinitely until the apportionment methodology has been resolved. Denise
 - d) WITHDRAWAL: Denise withdrew her motion, Deb withdrew her second. Unanimous to allow Denise to withdraw her motion
 - e) NEW MOTION: Denise made a motion to be readdressed no later than February School Committee Meeting 2025. There was no second and the motion fails.
 - f) Carl is comfortable tabling this indefinitely to wait to discuss this until we have reached a decision on the apportionment method. Douglas asks if we can set a sooner date and can re-table this if we are not prepared to discuss.
 - g) Table this discussion until converge on decision on apportionment no later than the July 2024 Meeting
 - (1) Denise, so moved, Deb seconded.
 - (2) Unanimous approved.
- E. Evaluation of the Superintendent:
 - 1. Carl and Denise are the Subcommittee, and have a meeting with Tim on April 24th to discuss Superintendent Goals

VII. RDA Discussion - data re: apportionment:

- A. Carl presented the updated data from the financial
- B. MOTION: Melissa to ratify this document with the updated data, unanimous in favor
- C. Carl began the explanation of the variables that will go into determining changes in apportionment methods
- D.
- E. Carl took questions as members of clarification.
 - 1. Douglas Miner made a point of clarification that as a SC Member that we represent the school and is in the best interest of the town. He clarified that he will be looking at this through the lens of what would be the best for keeping this district and school open.
 - 2. Phil agrees with Douglas, but echoes that we need to keep this as simple as possible in order to be able to explain this to town members to be able to vote.
 - 3. Carl - this isn't a one-vote issue, if it doesn't pass, the SC would have another ability to readdress the issue. He also noted that what would be both the best to improve the district, but without overdoing what is necessary.
 - 4. Carol expressed that we need to do so in moderation - somewhere in the middle where people are the most agreeable and are conscious of the cost increase on individual taxpayers.
 - 5. Carl - we need to be careful not to speculate what the vote will be, but we also need to consider what would be the best
 - 6. Denise agrees with Douglas that we need to keep the financial sustainability of the district and what is best for the children of the district.
 - 7. Phil asked Carl for an example of how this would be written into the RDA. Carl doesn't believe that would be difficult, but what is more difficult
- 8. We would have some key parameters for FY25, which show that the numbers have a
- 9.

VIII. Other items not reasonably anticipated:

- A.

IX. Suggested items for future agendas:

- A.

X. Adjournment:

- A. Carol Lombardo made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 PM.
- B. Phil Magovern seconded the motion.
- C. Vote - Roll Call: Melissa Bye, Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie (via Zoom), Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm