

FOSTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Location:

South Foster Fire Station
5 Mt. Hygeia Road
Foster, RI 02825

Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2011
Snow Date, Feb. 17, 2011
Open Session - 7:00 pm

1. Convene Meeting –

The meeting of the Foster School Committee was called to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, February 15, 2011 by Chair, Kathleen Swanson.

a. Roll Call –

All members were present – Kathleen Swanson, Chair, Shelley Pezza, Vice-Chair, and member, Patricia fountain. Also present were the Interim-Superintendent, Robert M. Wallace and FSC secretary, Mrs. McCullough.

b. Pledge of Allegiance –

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited all present.

2. Old Business (for discussion/action)

a. The Trust – Update –

Jay Punskey and Russ Godin were present from The Trust, the school department's insurer. They updated the School Committee on the Roof Collapse Emergency, the steps taken immediately and future steps in the process rebuilding the school's most recent addition which failed on January 27, 2011 when the roof in the library caved in.

The Trust is working with Odeh Engineers and has hired C & L Builders Inc. to oversee the project.

b. Odeh Engineers – Update –

David Odeh of Odeh Engineers, Inc. updated the School Committee on some of the structural damage incurred from the roof collapse. Once C & L Builders, Inc. and their demo team have removed the ceilings and insulation, Odeh will inspect the trusses very thoroughly and will determine an action and re-building plan which will be submitted to The Trust.

The Chair moved item **7b** up on the agenda for discussion and/or action.

7. Communication/Reports

b. Superintendent's Report – Non-renewals –

Mr. Wallace reviewed the lay-off notice (February 11, 2011) for Pat Slate voted on at the January 25, 2011 meeting that the School Committee approved. Due to the Roof Collapse, Mrs. Slate has not had hours and recommended moving the determined lay-off date from February 11th to February 1, 2011. On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee approved the determined lay-off date of February 1, 2011. Motion passed.

Vote = 3-0-0.

Mr. Wallace explained his determination and recommendation to lay-off the following teachers for the 2011-2012:

Laurie Murphy	Helen Dixon	Cathy Santosousso
Darlene Cardoso	Danielle Ford	Marianne Soscia
Maureen McEntee	Sharron Rothberg	Rebecca Payette
Sally Kouvo-Smith	Judy Jenkins	Angela Ruscito

Mr. Wallace was of the understanding that the School Committee wanted to plan for the most financial safety net. He understood his task to be determined by the possibility of being cut by the State of some \$200,000. He explained the magnitude of the twelve non-renewals:

- Physical Education – cut two (2) days
- Psychologist – cut two (2) days; out of compliance for I.E.P.’s
- Librarian – cut two (2) days; out of compliance with R.T.I.
- Speech / Language – cut two (2) days; out of compliance for I.E.P.’s
- Reading Specialist – cut one (1) day; out of compliance with R.T.I.
- School Nurse/Teacher – cut one (1) day; only the Nurse or Parent can administer drugs to students; prohibited from delegating duties to a non-certified nurse/teacher.
- Math Support – elimination; out of compliance with R.T.I.

Mr. Wallace told the School Committee that he does not recommend his recommendation. The Chair asked for a motion and received none. Discussion followed.

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to accept the Interim-Superintendent’s recommendation to non-renew the employment of Helen Dixon pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-13-2 for the 2011-2012 school year. Motion passed with regret.

Vote = 2-0-1.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – abstain

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded Mrs. Fountain, the School Committee voted to accept the Interim-Superintendent’s recommendation to non-renew the employment of Laurie Murphy pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-13-2 for the 2011-2012 school year. Motion passed with regret.

Vote = 2-0-1.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – abstain

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Mrs. Swanson, the School Committee voted to accept the Interim-Superintendent’s recommendation to non-renew the employment of Darlene Cardoso pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-13-2 for the 2011-2012 school year. Motion passed with regret.

Vote = 2-0-1

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – abstain

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Mrs. Swanson, the School committee voted to accept the Interim-Superintendent’s recommendation to non-renew the employment of Cathy Santosousso pursuant to R.I.G.L. 16-13-2 for the 2011-2012 school year. Motion failed.

Vote = 0-2-1.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – no

Ms. Pezza – no

Mrs. Fountain – abstain

Mr. Wallace expressed that he found no joy in these recommendations and that it is the most difficult part of his job.

2. Old Business (for discussion/action)

c. Budget 2010-2011 –

Mr. Wallace informed the School Committee that the current budget is a standard item for purposes of updating the School Committee. In January the School Committee balanced this year's budget.

d. Budget 2011-2012 –

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Swanson, the School Committee voted to accept the Interim-Superintendent's recommendation of the projected budget for 2011-2012 dated February 8, 2011 in the amount of \$4,134,079.00. Discussion followed. Mr. Wallace explained that the 5% has been factored in to this budget. An audience member suggested speaking to the Legal Counsel in regard to the 5% deduction taken by the Town Council before voting. Ms. Pezza amended her motion to table the 2011-2012 budget until after speaking to Legal Counsel. This motion passed. Vote = 2-0-1.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – abstained and wanted it noted that that motion was not seconded and there was a live motion on the table. Mrs. Swanson noted that the School Committee was not technically following Robert's Rules. Ms. Pezza read: 'the mover can modify as she pleases or even withdraw the motion without the consent of the seconder, if the mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.' Whoever made the second could withdraw after Ms. Pezza amended the motion. Mrs. Fountain said that is what she said.

e. Public Comment Policy –

The FSC secretary read the first reading of the 'Public Comment Policy'. The policy will be read for a second time at the next school committee meeting with any additional comments and then the School Committee will vote.

f. Emergency Management Certified Director –

Mr. Wallace updated the School Committee on the information concerning acquiring an Emergency Management Certified Director to oversee the Roof Collapse Emergency. Usually the local building inspector calls REM to request assistance and REM would appoint an individual. This line of action usually would entail a catastrophic event like Hurricane Katrina or the Gulf Oil Spill. The Trust holds the school department's policy and is basically the contractor; secures the architect and builder; they would be considered the Emergency Management Certified Directors.

g. Legal Services –

Mr. Wallace shared his opinion of making changes for legal services as the Committee is on the threshold of several issues, ie., grievance hearing, contract negotiations, contract compliance, the roof collapse issue, and IEP issues on the horizon that may ultimately require

legal services and having Mr. Piccirilli at this time is prudential. On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Swanson, the School Committee voted to continue the use of an independent legal counsel on as needed basis. Mrs. Fountain submitted to the Committee a RFP which was developed by another system as a sample and whoever the School Department continues with having them submit a proposal of their services, outlining exactly what would be provided in their scope as legal counsel and cost. Motion passed. Vote = 2-1-0.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – no

The RFP will be a future agenda item.

h. RFP – Transportation Bid –

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to accept the interim-Superintendent's recommendation to award the transportation bid to Ocean State Transit for the next three years and possibly for the next five. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

i. Grant Writing – Update –

Mrs. Swanson had nothing to update the Committee on.

3. Requests to Use School Facilities – Suspend Usage –

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain, the School Committee formally suspended use of Captain Isaac Paine School in light of the emergency situation. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

4. Approval of Minutes –

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to approved the amended Minutes of December 21, 2010 meeting. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee approved the Minutes of Tuesday, January 25, 2011 Open Session as presented. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms, Pezza, the School Committee accepted the Executive Minutes for January 25, 2011 as presented. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to accept the Emergency Meeting Minutes of Saturday, January 29, 2011 Open Session as presented. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

The Minutes from the Budget Workshop of Tuesday, February 8, 2011 will wait to be approved until the secretary can listen to the voice recorder supplied by Mrs. Fountain.

5. Approval of Warrants –

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Swanson, The School Committee voted to accept Warrant #14 in the amount of \$191,880.46. Motion passed. Vote = 2-1-0.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – no

6. New Business (for discussion/action)

a. April 2011 Spring Break –

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain, the School Committee voted approve the elimination of March 18, 2011 as a Professional Development Day and open school for student instruction. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to approve that if the school year extends beyond June 24th, to authorize the Superintendent to take days from the April break beginning with April 18th. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

b. Audit Report –

This will be a Future Agenda Item as the Audit is not yet complete.

c. Budget Review Committee Recommendations –

Mrs. Fountain reviewed the recommendations of the Budget Review Committee and submitted the Foster/Glocester Financial procedures for the Committee's review. This item will be continued on the March 2011 agenda.

d. Mileage Reimbursement –

As the current IRS mileage reimbursement equals \$.51 per mile, the Interim-Superintendent recommended the School Committee approve the increase of the mileage reimbursement from \$.20 per mile to \$.51 cent per mile for teachers traveling from West Glocester to PMS during the instructional day. Several teachers travel from one school to the other to cover needed education for students. This would need an MOA with the FTA to approve. Mr. Wallace will ask The Trust if the mileage is reimbursable. On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee voted to table Mileage reimbursement until March 22, 2011 and to authorized Mr. Wallace to move forward in speaking to the FTA about a MOA relative to the mileage reimbursement and follow up with the Trust. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

e. Resource Sharing with the Region – Technology

Mrs. Swanson invited Dr. Barnes to speak to item 6e. Dr. Barnes offered up established Resource Sharing examples between the districts: Building & Grounds – Joe McGovern, the Student Information System (MMS) – Alert Now (an informational call option to reach all families about important information such as school closings, etc.) – RINET, integrated relationship shared and prorated, E-Rate – internet access, also, the FG e-mail. Discussion followed. On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza the School Committee authorized the Superintendent to proceed with discussions with Dr. Barnes on one the cost relative to the resources we have been sharing and haven't been paying for and to explore the possibilities of sharing other resources come June. Dr. Barnes gave an example of the economy of scale - School World Web Site. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0. The Committee also asked Mr. Wallace to compose a report for services that are needed and cost of benefit.

f. FELT – relocation

Mrs. Lori Greenleaf, Director of the FELT program, shared her exploration of acquiring an alternate location for parents and children to meet. Mr. Mike Chippendale, Foster's State Representative, helped in this area and approached the St. Paul's church about using their facility for this purpose. Mrs. Greenleaf looked at the requirements and standards of RIDE for pre-schools, although FELT is not a pre-school and found St. Paul's church to meet those standards with the exception of a couple of minor issues. On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms Pezza, the School Committee approved resuming FELT operations on February 28, 2011 at St. Paul's Church as outlined by Mrs. Greenleaf. The School Committee thanked Mrs. Greenleaf.

Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0. Mr. Wallace will compose a letter of thanks to St. Paul's for use of the facility on behalf of the School Committee and the FELT program.

g. Superintendent Work Schedule/Emergency

Mr. Wallace relayed to the School Committee of his time when the roof of the school collapsed and that he has worked five additional days beyond what he is scheduled to work and he asked the School Committee to sanction and approve the additional dates of January 27, 28, 29, February 1 and 8. On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee approved and sanctioned the additional work days for the Superintendent owing to the roof collapse emergency for January 27, 28, 29 & Feb 1 & 8. The School Committee thanked Mr. Wallace for all his efforts and dedication during the roof collapse emergency. The Trust has been asked if this is considered an excess expense and it is reimbursable. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

At this point the School Committee revisited the 'Budget 2011-2012', item 2d.

The School Committee looked to legal counsel for advice concerning the Town's ability to reduce the maintenance of effort again this year. Ms. Pezza asked if the budget represented the 5% the Town cut of \$157,000 and Mr. Wallace said it is factored in to the budget. An audience member warned of an additional maintenance of effort by cutting an additional 5%. Mr. Piccirilli explained what happened this last year with the 5% reduction. The statute in RI that governs the maintenance of effort basically states that the Town must fund the School Department the same level that was funded the prior year. For two years only, fiscal year 10 and 11, the general assembly allowed town's to reduce the school's appropriation to 95% of the fiscal year 09 amount and expires at the end of FY 11. There are conflicting opinions around the state concerning the maintenance of effort level going into FY 12 and what the number should be. He suggested there is no simple answer. The Commissioner of Education said that School Committees should pass a budget that they think is responsible for operating their district. Mr. Wallace interjected that depending on who you speak with, the question remains, does the school department budget at 95% or 100%. As to what the general assembly does, it will be a wait and see scenario. On a motion by Mrs. Swanson and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to adopt a budget of \$4,271,555.00, which is level fund from the 2009-2010 budgeted amount. Motion passed. Vote = 2-1-0.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – no

7. Communication/Reports

a. Correspondence

Mr. Wallace included in the School Committee's packet the correspondence sent to Mr., Rogers, Town Council President, thanking the fire department and department of public works for the outstanding help securing the removal of snow on the roof after the collapse during the first critical hours. Also included were the official notification letter to the RI Commissioner of Education of the roof collapse and a letter from The Trust, legal counsel, explaining The Trust's role in the roof collapse. The last letter to the Board of Regents' requesting to modify the school year relative to the three (3) educational days lost as a result of the roof collapse. Mrs. Swanson relayed Mr. Roger's appreciation of the letter of thanks to the Town.

b. Superintendent's Report – Non-renewals

The Chair had moved this item up on the agenda.

c. Public Comment

An audience member suggested using the Alert Now and the web-site for meeting notification which may help getting more parents involved.

d. Future Agenda Items

Rosetta Stone Foreign Language – Ms. Pezza

8. Vote to go into Executive Session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business referred to in R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a) (1) Personnel (2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation

(9) Grievance(s).

a. Grievance(s)

b. Collective Bargaining

Ms. Pezza made the motion seconded by Mrs. Fountain. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

9. Reconvene Open Session

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee voted to go into Open Session. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

The Chair relayed that a grievance of the Essential Support Personnel was heard. The School Committee voted to deny the grievance on a vote of 2-1-0. Motion passed.

Vote as follows:

Mrs. Swanson – yes

Ms. Pezza – yes

Mrs. Fountain – no

Collective bargaining was also discussed and a sub-committee workshop was scheduled for February 28, 2011 at 5:30 pm. No votes were taken.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Fountain and seconded by Ms. Pezza, the School Committee adjourned at 11:00 pm. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain, the School Committee vote reconvene to Open Session. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee voted to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

On a motion by Ms. Pezza and seconded by Mrs. Fountain the School Committee voted to adjourn at 11:05 pm. Motion passed. Vote = 3-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helena McCullough
Secretary Foster School Committee