

**Farmington River Regional School District
Farmington River Elementary School
555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253
Library
Friday, December 6, 2019 Meeting #380
7:00 P.M.**

Community Participation: None

Warrants: All that were present were signed

Guests: Lisa LaGrant, Linda Curtiss, Kendra Rybacki, Candy Chaffee, Jennifer Thomas

Present: Nicholas DellaGiustina, Jess Drenga, Carol Lombardo, Arlene Tolopko, Jennifer Hibbins, Deb Fogel and Billie Pachulski

Call to Order: Nicholas DellaGiustina call the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes #380: Minutes were accepted as submitted per majority of vote. Jess Drenga motioned to accept minutes as submitted, Carol Lombardo seconded the motion.

2 .PTA in to discuss environmental changes to the school: PTA members were present to discuss the option of switching over our plastic silverware with metal silverware. Linda Curtiss did state that there were other areas that need to be looked at as well. Nicholas DellaGiustina then started the conversation with the silverware because that is what the School Committee looked into for this meeting. Nicholas spoke to the Kitchen staff (Kendra Rybacki and Candy Chaffee) and Eric Jesner on the cost of the plastic silverware we purchase compared to biodegradable silverware that we could possibly purchase. Eric researched the cost of the current silverware bill for last year and the total ran 362 dollars for the school year. To purchase the biodegradable silverware, the cost would run 500 dollars more a school year. Eric also ran the figures to hire another person to monitor the garbage and the cost of the detergent that would be needed to wash the silverware. This total exceeds well above the extra 500 dollars to purchase the biodegradable silverware. Jennifer Hibbins questioned the Kitchen staff on the existing workers. Would it be possible to monitor the students without extra help? Nick pulled everyone back to discuss the route of biodegradable silverware as a starting point. Both the PTA and the School Committee agreed this is a great first step. There were other concerns brought up as well. The distributors provide most of our food in plastic containers and straws. Jennifer Hibbins brought that point up. Kendra's concern was the distributors. We can not change what is sent to us. Everything is state approved. Plus, the options for distributors in our area are minimal. Not a lot of people will deliver to Otis. Jennifer did suggest recycling the plastic instead of just throwing it out. Eric did bring up that our recycling is paper only. We would have to add the plastic as another service. Therefore, more money is being spent. Nick brought up the point that everything will come down to cost. The concern with the cost of changing over to green products will only increase the budget. The concern lies with the towns not passing the changes. One town already stressed that they don't want an increase in the budget. Nick brought back the

conversation on the School should start off small and work their way up. Silverware first, then move forward. All were in agreement. Jennifer Hibbins brought up solar panels. Eric has looked into this already. The initial cost is very expensive. Then you get credits on your bill. Again, the concern with Sandisfield not passing the budget comes to the table. The startup is up front. So we would need funding before we get the benefit. Nick again drew everyone back to the current topic of the silverware. All are in agreement to start the biodegradable silverware.

3. Principal/Superintendent monthly updates on school and staffing: Tom Nadolny was not present to discuss updates.

4. Jennifer Hibbins to talk about MCAS Meeting: Jennifer attended a MCAS conference in Cape Cod at the beginning of November. She felt she got a lot of useful information to share with the Committee. One of the meetings/talks was about community awareness and communication. Having All Boards meetings in the towns, which is already happening, is a great way of communication. Tom does attend Otis's All Boards Meetings.

An idea involving the designation of a School Committee member to be a political liaison between the Committee and the Towns, was brought up at the meeting. Jennifer suggested a budget schedule for all parties. The unfortunate circumstance of having a schedule is the timely manner Eric gets the information from the state. Most information is given in late January/February. Eric can estimate but not give a definite on the numbers. Run of the mill expenses can be discussed, but the bigger numbers that make up the majority of the budget is what isn't given until later in the year. A suggestion to have a monthly lunch with the Towns' Administrator at the school was suggested. This way they can see the school and how it operates. They may get more insight of where the money is being utilized or where money is needed. Another meeting was about a strategic plan. Some schools have a brochure that is sent out to all residents explaining what the School's goals and plans are within the school. This is a good way to involve everyone and educate everyone in seeing what the School has to offer and what the expectations are in the future of the School.

The last meeting was about re-framing diversity within the School. Materials are offered free online. Teresa DellaGiustina and Billie Pachulski did speak on this issue. Both spoke about Terri DiGrigoli, the School Adjustment Counselor. Terri does speak with all the students and spends time in all grades explaining bullying and friendship. Michael Saporito also holds assemblies on our Character Pledge themes, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility, and Citizenship. There are also all school walks that support the pledges. Students and staff dress up to support the theme of the walk.

Jennifer also brought up the idea of shared services with other schools for transportation to keep transportation costs down. Jennifer also brought up the idea of having every paraprofessional obtaining their 7D license to help keep costs down for subbing out the job when needed. Gateway already does this with their employees. Teresa and Eric thought theoretically this is a great idea, but too much is involved with obtaining a license and paraprofessionals would be pulled from their existing positions to drive. The pay differential is much different as well.

The Superintendent evaluation came up in the MASC conference. Jennifer brought a copy of state's guideline as how to conduct an evaluation. Billie Pachulski brought up the point of goals. That is what the purpose of the evaluation for the Superintendent is all about. Nick mentioned that the evaluation should be an executive meeting. Jennifer stated that the evaluation was mentioned as an open meeting. The majority did not like that. More research will go into looking into open to executive meeting. Overall there needs to be 2 separate evaluations. There needs to be one for the Principal and one for the Superintendent. This was agreed by all.

One environmental idea came up about going paperless. Agendas, minutes, etc. are all electronic. Committee members bring in laptops to communicate information. Social media is being used to share communication throughout the districts for purposes such as school closings and delays. Also for showing any school happens such as improvements that are being made, updates on the improvements.

OPEB came up. We do not save for the retirement of teachers. Other districts do have funds that are set up that accrue interest on the money saved. In the long term this would help and reduce money coming from each town. In the short term it would cost more due to setting up the fund from money the towns give us up front.

5. Financial updates: Eric Jesner discussed and presented expenditures and projections on the current budget. At this point, there is a 59,000 dollar surplus. This is due to Lee School being behind on sending us their tuition bill. Copies of the report are at the school if the public would like to see them.

Eric was presented with the question from another school concerning a late bus for after school purposes, such as extra help. School Committee wasn't interested at this point in time to look into this idea.

6. Adjournment: Vote to move into Executive Meeting only to return to School Committee Meeting with the purpose of adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm

Respectively Submitted by,

Teresa DellaGiustina, School Committee Secretary

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