

**Farmington River Regional School District  
Farmington River Elementary School  
555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253  
Monday March 2, 2020  
Minutes #383**

**Members Present:** Nicholas DellaGiustina, Jessica Drenga, Carol Lombardo, Billie Pachulski, Jennifer Hibbins, Thomas Nadolny and Eric Jesner. Teresa DellaGiustina, School Committee Secretary

**Absent:** Deb Fogel, Arlene Tolopko

**Guests:** Meaghan Martin, Nanette Higgins

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 P.M. by Nicholas DellaGiustina, chair.

**Community Participation:**

**Approval of Minutes #382:** Nicholas DellaGiustina motioned to approve minutes #382. Carol Lombardo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously approved as submitted.

1. **Principal/Superintendent updates:** Thomas Nadolny spoke about Read across America. Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Tracy coordinated a few outsiders, the MA State Police Officers and some other community members, to come in and read to the students. The students look forward to this every year. They had a great time.

The camera system is now installed. A few staff members have access to the cameras via phone. They have the ability to check in and see if anything is going on in the school in case the alarm company calls with notification that an alarm has been set off. Each staff member will have an ID code to press upon entering the building, but visitors still have to get buzzed in to enter the school.

Tom completed an ELL student audit for the State. The School needs a process/program to follow for English Language Learner students. At Farmington River there have not been any students that fall into ELL, but a plan still needs to be turned into the State. The auditor said it looks good and we will probably get zero findings.

Jennifer Hibbins asked Tom if anything has been done for the Corona Virus. Tom sent home a letter to the families of our students explaining what we may be doing in case the School closes. There is minimal guidance from the Department of Education, but they are asking for a plan of action. There is nothing in our Emergency Planning dealing with a pandemic. Tom is talking with Laurie Flower about this. The State is pushing for the parents to educate their children at home. Tom is looking into different avenues to help the students at home. Laurie recommended Google classroom. She is working on a plan to give all students access to use this program. Tom wanted to address that Jeff Gray and his crew has been spending extra time disinfecting before and after the students are in school. Tom is following any guideline that the State is recommending. If they recommend closing school, we will do so. Right now our attendance is at its highest all year.

2. **Vote on changing the 4 year old PK Program to an Early K Program:** Eric Jesner explained in order to change the 4 year old PK Program to an Early K Program there needs to be a vote from School Committee. Eric reminded the School Committee that we no longer have the grant funding the PK Program. By switching over to Early K, we would be able to claim the 4 year olds under Chapter 70 and receive funding per student. We will not be losing any money by making the change. Jess Drenga motioned to approve the changed from PK to Early K programming. Billie Pachulski seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.
3. **Discuss and vote on the wording of the School Choice Policy:** Teresa DellaGiustina noticed there was a contradiction in wording between the School Bus Policy on School Choice students and the School Choice Policy. Teresa would like permission to change wording so the 2 policies have more clarity and coincide with one another. Jess Drenga motioned to approve the change in wording of the two policies so they are clearer to

read, Billie Pachulski seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to approve.

4. **Vote on the FY21 School Budget:** Eric Jesner wanted to discuss first. He informed the School Committee that the bid for transportation will be going out in the near future. Eric and Teresa are looking into the bus routes and the number of students on those routes to see if there is another way to accommodate students without the number of buses that are contracted. An example would be using a van rather than a full bus to transport a couple of bus routes. There are 2 audits in process at the moment. And lastly, Eric was contacted by Select Solar. They want Farmington River to purchase solar usage. It would save us 700 dollars a year. It is a 20 year contract. We can get out for 200 dollars or if someone wants to buy our contract. Eric asked School Committee if they would like to have the representative come in and talk to them at the next meeting. They would like to have that happen.

Eric passed out the updated budget. Eric reminded School Committee that since last month there was a student who will be going to a private school at our expense. The difference is Otis now has a percentage of 7.4 increase and Sandisfield now has an 8.79% increase from last year. It is a special needs school. The budget increased by 4.9 percent due to this added expense. Sandisfield Selectmen were told this in their last Select Board meeting. Jennifer did ask if there was any more relief that can be given to Sandisfield. Eric did remind her that the Committee did move 45,000 dollars from E & D to offset the split for the two Towns. At this point there seems there is no more room for cutting back. Jennifer has been told by Sandisfield residents that they are reluctant to pass the budget because they don't have the same pride as Otis residents concerning the School because the School is located in Otis. They feel it's just a place to send their kids and money to. Billie Pachulski thinks the way to change this way of thinking is for the parents to become more involved in the School's activities. Jennifer explained that it is a general thought. This thought is not coming from the parents; it is coming from the general public. Nick agreed with Jennifer that it is frustrating to see the budget increase. At this point Nick asked for a motion to approve the presented FY21 School Budget. Carol Lombardo motioned to accept the budget as written, Jess Drenga seconded the motion. The budget passed with 4 yes and 1 abstain.

5. **Vote on a day and time for the budget hearing for Otis and Sandisfield:**  
Billie Pachulski motioned to have the hearing on March 25, 2020 at 6PM.  
Jess Drenga seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

6. **Vote to move into Executive Session for a personnel matter and negotiations.** Nick DellaGiustina motioned to move into executive session,  
Billie Pachulski seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Roll Call: Nicholas DellaGiustina-yes, Jennifer Hibbins-yes, Carol Lombardo-yes, Jess Drenga-yes, and Billie Pachulski-yes

7. **Adjournment:** Nick motioned to adjourn School Committee meeting. Carol Lombardo seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 8:07PM

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa DellaGiustina  
School Committee Secretary

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