

**FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**March 8, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Bueno – via Zoom, Ms. Kuechler, Mr. Andersen, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Monroe, Mr. Veitch

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Mrs. Kohler, Mrs. Potter, Mr. Balestracci, Ms. Bouchard, Mr. Kulak – FHS Principal, Dr. Nicholas Bettencourt – EHMS Principal, Ms. Pamela Pacheco – Wood School Principal, Ms. Wendy Weidenfeller – East Fairhaven School Principal, Ms. Tracy Higgins – Assistant Principal - FHS

STAFF ABSENT:

OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the community and staff

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Kuechler at 6:30pm.

Ms. Kuechler read the recording policies for the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Committee Members: Mr. Andersen, Mr. Bueno, Mr. Monroe, Ms. McKenna, Ms. Kuechler, Mr. Veitch

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from February 8, 2023 was made by Mr. Bueno, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved unanimously by matter of roll call: Mr. Andersen, Mr. Bueno, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Veitch, Mr. Monroe, Ms. Kuechler, 6-0.

Report of the Student Advisory Committee

Mr. Monroe was not in attendance. Ms. DaCunha spoke of spring athletics, culture club, and fundraisers.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Receive FY24 Preliminary Budget update

Mrs. Kohler presented. She stated that we have been invited to the Joint Selectboard-FinComm meeting being held Monday night. She stated that there is a shortfall within the Town's funds. It appears the Chapter 70 funds are coming in at \$600,000 more than last year. Our budget request is still what it was at about \$900,000 in order to embed the Family Center, to keep Unified Sports, add Middle School Sports, and add a maintenance person. Mr. Monroe asked about the Chapter 70 funds and where it goes, specifically referencing the General Fund. Mrs. Kohler assured him it goes to the Town and we will be watching the process.

Receive update regarding March 1 enrollment.

Mrs. Potter presented. She stated that we have remained pretty consistent at 1845.

Receive presentation regarding the 2023-2024 Fairhaven High School Program of Studies

Mr. Kulak and Mrs. Higgins presented. They reviewed the AP Capstone program and the next steps in the sequence. They went through the English Department and the AP Research project. They reviewed Profile of a Learner. They also are piloting a Senior Research Project this year to show demonstration of the skills learned in Profile of a Learner. There are some new electives: Modern US Issues and Contemporary World Issues. They also reviewed Math changes such as Sports Analytics and Data Science. Science changes were also reviewed. They reviewed New Science Pathways for Sophomores including Environmental Science in addition to Chemistry options. Mr. Kulak also discussed the national teacher shortages and its effect on Fairhaven. The Committee is interested in seeing the progress on the Research Projects.

Receive presentations regarding School Improvement Plans

Mr. Balestracci presented how the School Improvement Plans were done this year. He stated that each school drew from the 4 buckets we have been focusing on as a District: Climate and Culture, Communication, College and Career, and Engagement. The principals have been collaborative. Ms. Pacheco and Ms. Weidenfeller presented their School Improvement Plans for the Elementary Level. They reviewed college and career first. They are preparing children socially and emotionally and conducting school councils. They are participating in career visits and Junior Achievement. We are inviting Middle School and High School students as well as College Students. They also reviewed climate and culture. This extends from class level to community level. They have a Popsicle Social, orientation, and school tours. They are training our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to be collaborative and problem solvers. They pair with the community through Child and Family Services and a foster grandparent program. They spoke regarding



FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 8, 2023

PAGE 2

communication on all levels. They both do a weekly staff memo and weekly emails to families. They keep up with social media and staff utilizes apps to help with communicating. They spoke of student led videos as well as student council meeting and Open House and parent teacher meetings. They also spoke regarding the WIN Framework and its has expanded to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to ensure we are closing the gaps. They spoke regarding the writing revolution which expands writing in grades from K-5. We have hired an additional innovation teacher and implementing science standards while working with the classroom teachers. Afterschool programs are also taking off. The teachers have been doing a lot of EDL PDs as well as SEL.

Dr. Bettencourt presented next regarding the School Improvement Plan for EHMS. He spoke regarding the College and Career section first. He said they are looking at 2 aspects starting with the social emotional aspect. We look at transition meetings from elementary to middle school and providing small group enrichment with our counselors to help students work on soft skills. We are also expanding their interest inventories and really focusing on what they are interested in and would like to be exposed to. The second aspect they are also looking at is what the options are for high school. They are looking at Project Lead the Way as an area of growth. An example of this is the 7<sup>th</sup> grade now has medical detectives and 8<sup>th</sup> grade has robotics while 6<sup>th</sup> grade's focus is on the engineering side of things. He stated the focus is on helping the students developing life skills in safety and healthy relationships. We are also looking at culture and climate in the ways of social emotional health for our staff. An example of this is the PAC, or Principal Advisory Council which also allows the administration to hear the student voice through the educators. We are expanding on building connections through enrichment programs and monthly opportunities to come together. Regarding communication, the continuation of the Friday Finale and ensuring that teachers are linking with parents and guardians.

Mr. Kulak presented the FHS School Improvement Plans. He went over the College and Career aspect including the work of the College and Career Coordinator, interest inventories, and the increased opportunities for students. He reviewed the culture and Climate aspect including encouraging, receiving, and reflecting on student feedback, Unified activities and other club events, celebration and recognition of success, and reviews of the handbooks and expectations. He also explored the Communication bucket and reviewed the regular meeting with the Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning as well as Academic Leads, Newsletters, enhanced social media output, the Ambassador's Club, and digital in school broadcasts of student friendly information. Lastly, he reviewed the Student Engagement portion. He reviewed the purposeful PDs for staff to give them tools they need to meet the needs of our ever-changing population, program of studies reviews to remain relevant and ensure quality, and investigating the feasibility of implementing a flex block for enrichment.

Receive update regarding the storage facility shed at FHS Alumni Stadium

Mr. Balestracci presented. He stated we are now getting in to the cost out phase and are moving forward.

Receive update regarding Massachusetts Historical commissions contribution to the FHS Window project

Mrs. Potter presented. She stated that after 3 rounds of bidding we finally able to recommend West Mill Preservation as our lowest responsive bidder. Their estimate came in at \$88,100 and their alternate 1 came in at \$19,200. This means that they will be able to restore all of the windows in the library for the amount of the combined bids. We had a matching grant of \$50,000, then increased it to \$70,000, so we had a total budget of \$140,000. This project came in under budget at \$107,300. Mass Historic suggested we seek a unit cost per window so that we could potentially finish the windows. Spencer Preservation estimates that we have about 6-10 windows and are coming next week to get a count. After speaking with our representative at Mass Historic, they would like to put another \$15,000 towards the project if the Trust would match it, so instead of allocating \$75,000 we would need to allocate up to \$85,000. This will allow us do some of the interior work as well. There is a constraint of a June completion deadline. She also gave an update on the Trust balance. As of today, not including interest for this fiscal year, the balance is \$411,990, less the \$85,000, would be \$326,990. Interest accrued last year was \$217,518.

Receive staffing update

Mrs. Kohler presented. She spoke of the multiple hiring crisis across the United States. She also presented the Committee with the stats for Fairhaven teacher applications over the years. She reviewed the pathways to becoming a teacher as well. She also reviewed the recruitment efforts and focus groups with DESE.

Upcoming Events:

Next meeting: March 22, 2023

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Vote to increase the matching FHS Trust allocation for the FHS Window project from \$70,000 to \$85,000. Motion made to increase the matching FHS Trust allocation for the FHS Window project from \$70,000 to \$85,000 made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved unanimously, 5-0.

Vote to award Westmill Preservation for the Fairhaven High School Window project from bid opening 1/20/23. Motion made to award Westmill Preservation for the Fairhaven High School Window project from bid opening 1/20/23 made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved, unanimously, 5-0.

Vote to approve the 2023-2024 school year calendar. Motion to table this vote made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Mr. Bueno, approved unanimously, 5-0.

Vote to approve Superintendent's contract extension. Motion made to table this vote until after Executive Session made by Mr. Bueno, seconded by Mr. Veitch, approved unanimously, 5-0.

There will be Executive Session with return to regular session to discuss strategy contract negotiation with non-union personnel. Motion made to adjourn regular session to go to Executive Session with return to regular session made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved, 5-0, unanimously. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Andersen, Mr. Bueno, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Veitch, Ms. Kuechler.

Adjourned at 8:34p.m.

Returned to regular session at 8:45pm.

Vote to approve Superintendent's contract extension. Motion to take off the table the vote to approve the Superintendent's contract extension made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved unanimously, 5-0.

Vote to approve Superintendent's contract extension. Motion to approve the superintendent's contract covering a period of employment from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2029 as was presented and reviewed at our meeting this evening to authorize the Chair of the School Committee to execute this employment contract on behalf of the Fairhaven School Committee made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved unanimously, 5-0. By matter of roll call vote: Mr. Andersen, Mr. Bueno, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Veitch, Ms. Kuechler.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. McKenna, approved, unanimously, 5-0.

Adjourned at 8:47pm.



Tara M. Kohler  
Secretary to the School Committee  
Fairhaven Public Schools

