

FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 27, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Veitch, Erik Andersen, Donna McKenna, Stephanie Pickup, Kyle Bueno

ABSENT: Brian Monroe

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci, School Business Manager Nicole Potter

OTHERS PRESENT: Members of the community

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Veitch at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call of Committee Members: Mr. Andersen, Ms. Pickup, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Veitch

Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Pickup asked to amend the word exclusive to inclusive in paragraph one of the Questions from Individual Committee Members section. Motion to approve regular session minutes with the amended wording of inclusive rather than exclusive in paragraph one of the Questions from Individual Committee members section from September 13, 2023 made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved, (4-0).

Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:

Introduction of New Athletic Directors (AD's):

Mr. Balestracci introduced the new Fairhaven High School Athletic Directors, Mr. John Ricciardi and Mr. Donald Joseph. Mr. Ricciardi and Mr. Joseph addressed the committee stating they are off to a great start learning the job. Mr. Ricciardi stated they are focussing on building a stronger athletic community by emphasizing sportsmanship and leadership. They have created a Captain's Council to foster leadership and unity among the school, teachers, staff, captains, and coaches. Moving forward they are looking into different achievements and initiatives within the MIAA and community to further leaders in our community while also fostering and mentoring younger athletes. Mr. Joseph noted they were off to a late start and focused primarily on making sure the coaches and athletes had everything they needed. They are now able to expand on the roles and focus on the items Mr. Ricciardi mentioned. Mr. Andersen asked the duo if they could clarify the roles they are specifically taking on as Athletic Directors. Mr. Joseph stated he is coaching football in the fall, Mr. Ricciardi is doing the bulk of the AD work. During the Winter Season they will work together in the AD role and in the Spring session Mr. Ricciardi will be coaching Lacrosse and Mr. Joseph will be doing the bulk of the AD work. The Committee welcomed and thanked them both for accepting the roles and look forward to hearing about the progress in the future.

Update on Family Center:

Mr. Balestracci introduced Mrs. Morgan Matthews Byron, Director of the Family Center. Mrs. Matthews Byron updated the Committee on progress made over the Summer. She created a Google drive with all the districtwide documents translated into the home languages of our families, which is approximately 13-14 home languages. They also assisted in helping the families with new student registration and residency. Mrs. Matthews Byron also worked with the Rotary Club to get school supplies for students in the District. She stated having the Family Center open during the Summer allows Child and Family Services to come and service approximately 15 families a week. She spoke about the current needs of the Center. Housing is a concern with the cost increases as well as mental health and food insecurities. The Family Center refers the families to programs and resources that will help address these issues. Mrs. Matthews Byron also works closely with the unhoused students and DCF students to ensure their needs are met as well as the after school enrichment program. The upcoming events are Thanksgiving assistance, Holiday assistance, and enrichment programs two through four. Discussion ensued regarding procedures, advertising, and collaborations. The committee thanked, commended, and offered holiday help to Mrs. Matthews Byron. Mr. Veitch asked for a data update from last year. Mrs. Matthews Byron will provide that information to the committee.

Update on Class Advisors:

Mr. Balestracci advised the committee that all four grade levels at the High School have advisors and twenty two out of twenty three clubs in the contract are filled.

Upcoming Events:

The next School Committee meeting will be held October 11, 2023.

New Business:

Motion to appoint current Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci to the position of "Acting Superintendent" effective September 27, 2023 thru October 25, 2023 made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved, (4-0).

Motion to accept a donation of \$400 from Robert and Anne Kocor for East Fairhaven Elementary School made by Ms. McKenna., seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved (4-0).

Questions from Individual Committee Members:

Mr. Andersen asked for an update on the Leroy Wood Elementary School playground. Mrs. Potter stated there is a lot of interest in the project and will know more tomorrow, after the bid opening. The equipment that needs to be replaced has been ordered. Everything is in the works, the process is just taking longer than anticipated.

Mr. Veitch stated there is an opening on the School Committee. The Town has a volunteer page on the website where interested parties can apply. Mr. Balestracci noted the links are also on the Fairhaven Public Schools website.

FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 27, 2023

PAGE 2

Motion to adjourn made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mr. Andersen, approved, (4-0).

Adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Sheri Souza
Secretary to the School Committee
Fairhaven Public Schools

Approved October 11, 2023