

FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 10, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Veitch via Zoom , Brian Monroe, Donna McKenna, Stephanie Pickup, Nicole Pacheco

MEMBERS ABSENT: Erik Andersen with notice

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Student Advisory Member Elizabeth DeCunha, Student Advisory Member Fin Reynolds, Parent

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

Roll Call of Committee Members: Ms. Pacheco, Ms. Pickup, Mr. Monroe, Ms. McKenna, Mr. Veitch via Zoom

Delegations, Visitors, Etc.

Mrs. Jennifer Paulino, parent and member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve regular session minutes from December 13, 2023 made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mrs. Pickup, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Motion to approve executive session minutes from December 13, 2023 made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mrs. Pickup, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Motion made by Ms. McKenna to take the agenda out of order and meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose: Purpose (2) to conduct collective bargaining session with AFSCME Council 93, specifically to deliberate regarding a response to a Level Three grievance filed by AFSCME Council 93 because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee, then to return to regular session, seconded by Mrs. Pickup, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Regular session adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Regular session resumed at 6:57 pm.

Report of the Student Advisory Committee:

Ms. DeCunha updated the committee on the Fairhaven High School (FHS) Club Activities. Mr. Reynolds spoke about the drama club, Mr. Fairhaven, and recent FHS Athletics.

Public Comment:

Mrs. Jennifer Paulino, liaison to the Elizabeth Hastings Middle School (EHMS) and the East Fairhaven Elementary School (East) PTO's encouraged families to become involved as Town Meeting members in order to help support the school budget.

Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:

Receive Fundraising Update:

Mrs. Kohler commended the PTO, parents, and community for all the hard work fundraising for the EHMS Athletic Program. Mr. Balestracci noted the EHMS PTO raised \$7,200 to help fund the program. He is excited to let the Athletic Directors know the program will be up and running in the Spring. Mr. Balestracci also stated there is a new online fundraising platform being used called Snap! Raise that will help streamline the handling funds in the future.

Initial Draft Budget Presentation:

Mrs. Kohler presented the initial draft budget (attachment A). She has met with every department and school. They made cuts upfront where necessary. She believes the budget document is a philosophy statement on behalf of the School Committee. On December 19, 2024 she brought to the Town \$25,149,917. As of today the number has already grown to \$25,310,194 due to out of District changes and the number has continued to grow since Covid. She stated this budget request represents level service with the secretary back, the SPED teacher back, and our middle school athletics back. That was put forward in last year's budget, so she is putting it all back on the table in this budget. Mrs. Kohler also noted that if asked what she would like to add. She answered she struggles with what she can add and promise results at the same time, but she would like a middle school program for the type of students that are serviced out of District, also having the Administration Center redone. The other two items on her wish list is a part time communication consultant and possibly stipend someone to do some attendance work since per the Commissioner, attendance has been an issue since Covid and will become more of an issue in the near future. Mr. Monroe asked when they will receive a more detailed look at the budget. Mrs. Kohler responded they will have harder numbers in February and by the March 7th meeting have a hard copy done. Mr. Veitch asked for a comparison of current out of District costs versus bringing the program in house. Mrs. Potter will provide that information at a future meeting. Mr. Monroe asked about the middle school security guard. Mrs. Kohler stated that it is contracted support to help with directing traffic amongst other things and that is continued in the budget.

FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 10, 2023

PAGE 2

Receive Update Regarding Facilities:

Mrs. Kohler stated one of the items added to the budget will be the concept of facilities. Mrs. Kohler presented a list (attachment B) of the facilities that will need updating in the future. Some items are not big enough to take to Town Meeting,, but are small enough we can try to rectify in District and if not propose a Capital Improvement Plan moving forward.

Mrs. Pickup asked to better explain during the budget process how the municipality money works. Mrs. Pickup asked about \$600,000 the public believes the District received from the Town, but did not. Mrs. Kohler stated the \$600,000 comes into the Town from Chapter 70. The \$600,000 was not given to us and at the same time our budget went up because of contractual raises, out of district costs, and the cost of goods and services. The extra \$600,000 was supposed to capture that and help school districts. Mrs. Kohler also stated the District brings in 2.5 million dollars for Acushnet tuition that goes directly into the general fund, that offsets our budget. Our budget is not inflated, it is written to the penny. The District takes the Town's taxes very seriously and we are almost 60% of the Town's budget at one time and are not only 40%, she does not believe the District is the problem. With that we are not making our kids' needs, especially with the growing rate and cost of out of district.

Discussion ensued regarding the facilities list and update.

Enrollment Update:

Mrs. Kohler handed the Committee the current enrollment numbers (attachment C). She also told the Committee we will be reaching out to the Town Clerk for a list of potential Kindergarteners for the 24-25 school year in order to send out informational letters to those applicable. The Administration office has also been in contact with the Town Planner who is including us in some conversations that may affect future enrollment. This has been very helpful.

NEASC Update:

Mrs. Kohler reminded the Committee that we are the first district in Massachusetts that has been approved by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as an accredited district. Mrs. Kohler presented the Committee with a letter from NEASC dated August 2023 (attachment D) stating what they commend us on and what our areas of growth are. Mrs. Kohler reviewed a few points noted in the letter.

Upcoming Events:

The possible School Committee retreat schedule for January 24, 2024 has been postponed.

The next School Committee meeting will be held February 7, 2024.

Unfinished Business:

Acushnet School Committee Update:

Mrs. Kohler shared an email sent by the Acushnet Superintendent Paula Bailey (attachment E). Mrs. Kohler also informed the Committee that she had a lunch meeting with Mrs. Bailey and shared some concerns over the money surrounding school choice. Mr. Veitch reached out to Ms. Downing, she requested a meeting with the two chairs, vice chairs, business managers, and superintendents. The Administration office will work to find a date that works with everyone's schedule.

Motion to adjourn and go into Executive Session, not returning to open session, to discuss strategy in preparation for contract negotiations regarding nonunion personnel made by Ms. McKenna, seconded by Mrs. Pickup, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Sheri Souza
Secretary to the School Committee
Fairhaven Public Schools

Approved February 7, 2024

State Code		FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Budgeted	FY25 Budgeted	FY25 Budgeted
1000	District Leadership & Administration	129,713	218,806	277,278	201,700	246,200	246,200
2210	School Leadership	29,376	34,642	42,519	58,125	65,225	65,225
2250	Tech/Maintenance Agreements	5,351	0	2,780	6,200	28,975	28,975
2357	Professional Development	26,295	62,782	42,349	79,823	82,951	82,951
2410	Textbooks	44,287	37,924	99,559	54,905	56,802	56,802
2430	Instructional Equip./General Supplies	97,479	174,140	204,340	159,708	188,363	188,363
2440	Other Instructional Services (Tutoring)	99,418	96,088	92,086	84,450	89,780	89,780
2450	Instructional Technology	309,490	470,370	454,956	248,308	353,549	353,549
2710	Guidance and Adjustment	543	329	0	18,605	18,000	18,000
2800	Psychological Services	18,643	13,617	12,740	9,000	9,000	9,000
	TOTAL INSTRUCTION	630,882	889,892	951,329	719,124	892,645	892,645
3200	Medical Health Services	3,280	11,082	18,195	9,441	9,866	9,866
3300	Transportation Services	1,236,807	1,642,392	1,713,425	2,134,943	2,160,233	2,160,233
3500	Athletics/Student Activities	173,082	233,894	226,408	303,894	383,691	383,691
3400	Food Service	165,487	42,952	0	1,200	1,200	1,200
3600	School Security	209	115,354	3,291	2,000	35,000	35,000
	TOTAL STUDENT SERVICES	1,578,865	2,045,674	1,961,319	2,451,478	2,589,990	2,589,990
4110	Custodial Services	1,715	1,600	1,726	1,500	1,500	1,500
4120	Heating of Buildings	219,933	218,094	247,399	228,000	240,000	240,000
4130	Utility Services	357,100	354,147	266,360	397,750	402,260	402,260
4200	Maintenance	647,389	895,111	991,286	311,025	321,925	321,925
4225	Building Security Equipment	21,765	2,280	3,657	29,582	30,882	30,882
4400	Networking and Telecommunications	2,171	12,648	1,840	2,500	2,500	2,500
	TOTAL MAINTENANCE	1,250,073	1,483,880	1,512,268	970,357	999,067	999,067
5260	Non-Employee Insurance	3,390	3,390	3,390	3,390	3,390	3,390
5300	Lease Agreements	49,185	51,943	46,352	49,900	28,950	28,950
7100	Capital Expenditures	727,161	155,068	126,868	0	0	0
9000	Out of District Tuitions	1,177,789	1,067,477	1,207,809	1,057,447	1,545,753	1,638,303
	REDUCTION*				-200,000		
	TOTAL REQUEST		22,179,843	22,910,638	23,753,641	25,149,917	25,310,194
	INCREASE					1,396,276	1,556,553
	PERCENTAGE INCREASE					5.88%	6.19%
	*Override Failed to Support					As of 12/19/23	As of 1/10/24



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
Commission on Public Schools

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August 24, 2023

Tara Kohler
Superintendent
Fairhaven Public Schools
128 Washington Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Dear Mrs. Kohler:

The Commission on Public Schools, at its June 25, 2023 meeting, reviewed the report from the recent Collaborative Conference Visit to Fairhaven School District, including Fairhaven High School, Elizabeth Hastings Middle School, East Fairhaven Elementary School, Leroy L. Wood Elementary School, and granted continued status as a candidate for district accreditation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The Commission was impressed with many of the programs and services and wishes to commend the following:

- the pride in the school community felt by staff, students, and parents
- the comprehensive school safety protocols in all schools
- the dedication toward meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of all students
- the mutually respectful and caring relationships between students and staff
- the opportunities for students to engage in civic activities
- the flexible grouping model for instruction that supports rigorous, personalized student learning
- the targeted instruction and flexible grouping model for supporting students at the elementary level (WIN block)
- the commitment to team-building culture, student enthusiasm, and consistent instructional support that holds learners accountable
- the 1:1 technology used across all curricular areas and grade levels to support, enhance, and demonstrate student learning
- the structures for collaboration across the district and high level of collaboration among teachers
- the community partnerships between the high school and outside projects and organizations
- the faculty's commitment to facilitating student success
- the safe and healthy working environment for students and adults
- the cleanliness of the school buildings, which supports teaching and learning

The Commission was pleased to note four (4) of the six (6) Foundational Elements in the Standards for Accreditation have been met by the district. The Commission noted that the following Foundational Elements have not been met by the district and have been included as a Priority Areas for Growth:

- the school has a written document describing its core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate (1.2a)

- there is a written curriculum in a consistent format for all courses in all departments across the school (2.2a)

The Commission was pleased to see that the Collaborative Conference visiting team confirmed the following Priority Areas for Growth. The Priority Areas for Growth should be used by the district as the basis for its District Growth/Improvement Plan or School Growth/Improvement Plans.

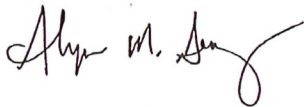
- the schools will complete a profile of a learner that includes the skills, knowledge, understandings, and dispositions necessary for student success at all levels (1.2, 1.2a, 2.1, 3.2)
- the schools will complete the written curriculum in a consistent format that includes units of study with guiding/essential questions, concepts, content, skills, instructional strategies, assessment practices, and the profile of a learner for all courses in all departments (2.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4)
- the schools will improve the consistency of coordinated and directive academic and social-emotional interventions and services for all students to support their success and well-being (4.1, 4.5)
- the schools will further engage educators in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being (3.2, 3.3)

The Commission congratulates the administration and faculty for completing the first phases of the Accreditation program: the Self-Reflection and the Collaborative Conference Visit. The next step will be the development, submission, and implementation of the District Growth/Improvement Plan or School Growth/Improvement Plans. Once the Growth/Improvement Plans have been completed, they should be submitted to the Commission office by email to cpssreports@neasc.org. Please submit the plans to the office no later than November 1, 2023. Additional information and a School Growth/Improvement Plan template can be found in the Commission's *Accreditation Handbook* available on the website at <https://www.neasc.org/resources-schools-public>.


The district is scheduled to host its Initial Accreditation Visit from October 27, 2024-October 30, 2024. The focus of the visit will be on the district's and schools' implementation of the Priority Areas for Growth as included in the District Growth/Improvement Plan or School Growth/Improvement Plans.

The district's accreditation status will be reviewed when the Commission considers the Initial Accreditation Report. Please notify the Commission office immediately of any changes in the names of the principal and/or superintendent along with their corresponding e-mail addresses by submitting this information electronically to cpss-air@neasc.org.

Sincerely,



Alyson M. Geary



Kathleen A. Montagano

AMG/KAM/mms

cc: Andrew Kulak, Principal, Fairhaven High School
Nicholas Bettencourt, Principal, Elizabeth Hastings Middle School
Wendy Weidenfeller, Principal, East Fairhaven Elementary School
Pamela Pacheco, Principal, LeRoy L. Wood Elementary School
Brian Monroe, Chair, Fairhaven School Committee
Peter Marano, Chair of the Visiting Team
Kevin McCaskill, Chair, Commission on Public Schools

FAIRHAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2023-2024 MONTHLY ENROLLMENT REPORT

	30-Aug	1-Sep	2-Oct	1-Nov	1-Dec	2-Jan	1-Feb	1-Mar	1-Apr	1-May	3-Jun	Last Day
East Fairhaven Elementary School												
PreK (YOG 2037 & 2031)	0	19	22	21	22	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
K (YOG 2036)	0	39	39	41	43	44	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 1 (YOG 2035)	47	47	48	49	49	49	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 2 (YOG 2034)	47	47	48	52	53	53	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 3 (YOG 2033)	49	49	49	51	51	51	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 4 (YOG 2032)	43	43	43	44	44	44	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 5 (YOG 2031)	57	57	56	58	58	58	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	243	301	305	316	320	321	0	0	0	0	0	0
LeRoy L. Wood Elementary School												
PreK (YOG 2037 & 2031)	0	19	19	20	21	21	0	0	0	0	0	0
K (YOG 2036)	0	67	67	67	66	66	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 1 (YOG 2035)	62	61	60	60	61	62	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 2 (YOG 2034)	61	61	61	61	61	61	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 3 (YOG 2033)	73	72	71	71	71	71	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 4 (YOG 2032)	83	82	83	83	82	82	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 5 (YOG 2031)	76	75	74	75	75	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	355	437	435	437	437	438	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elizabeth Hastings Middle School												
Grade 6 (YOG 2030)	137	137	140	142	141	140	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 7 (YOG 2029)	143	143	142	144	143	143	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 8 (YOG 2028)	147	147	146	148	149	148	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	427	427	428	434	433	431	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairhaven High School												
Grade 9 (YOG 2027)	138	136	141	139	139	141	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 10 (YOG 2026)	156	154	153	152	152	152	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 11 (YOG 2025)	143	143	142	143	139	136	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 12 (YOG 2024)	150	152	153	152	152	152	0	0	0	0	0	0
SP/PG	3	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	590	587	591	588	584	583	0	0	0	0	0	0
Out of District												
All Grades	17	17	16	16	16	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	17	17	16	16	16	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	1632	1769	1775	1791	1790	1790	0	0	0	0	0	0



Tara Kohler <tkohler@fairhavenps.net>

Checking In

Paula Bailey <paulabailey@acushnetschools.us>

Thu, Dec 14, 2023 at 12:13 PM

To: Tara Kohler <tkohler@fairhavenps.net>

Cc: Mark Balestracci <mbalestracci@fairhavenps.net>, Jennifer Downing <jenniferdowning@acushnetschools.us>

Hi Tara,

I missed you yesterday at the Old Colony Roundtable. I hope all is well. As you know, my SC Chair responded to your SC Chair regarding Acushnet wanting to add another high school option -- ORR. Our district wants to continue the strong relationship we have with Fairhaven and continue to have Fairhaven be an option for our 8th graders who must choose a high school placement.

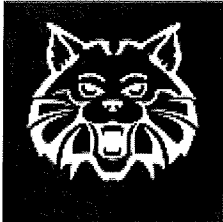
We have not heard anything back and my School Committee is wondering if we are all set to add ORR to our list of high school choices. Is this something you are okay with or do you want to schedule a meeting with my committee members. They are eager to get moving with this.

Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you,

Paula

Acushnet Public Schools

708 Middle Road, Acushnet MA 02743



Dr. Paula J. Bailey

Superintendent

paulabailey@acushnetschools.us
(508) 998-0260 option 5

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