



FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
November 13, 2024

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2024 DEC 30 PM12:39

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Veitch, Stephanie Pickup, Nicole Pacheco, Brendalee Smith via Zoom, Erik Andersen

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Monroe

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

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Monroe at 6:38 pm

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve regular session minutes from October 16, 2024 made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. Pickup, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Report of the Student Advisory Committee:

Fin Reynolds reported on the Fairhaven High School (FHS) upcoming activities such as football, drama, winter sports, yearbooks, colorguard, and fundraising.

Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:

Update on New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) Visit:

Superintendent Kohler told the Committee she was very happy with the outcome of the NEASC visit. She is very thankful to all the attendees. Superintendent Kohler also stated she received positive feedback from the NEASC Committee, saying the best feedback we received was how transparent our report is. NEASC did not see anything that went into conflict with the report. The NEASC Committee also found additional areas of good things that we did not give ourselves credit for and they also agreed with our area of growth. Superintendent Kohler stated the next steps are for NEASC to finalize the report, we should receive a draft around the holidays. She stated once the draft is received, the District will have a few weeks to correct anything that is factually incorrect, etc. The report will then go to the Commission in March for a determination for consideration to be a District that is accredited. Superintendent also commended Tracy Higgin, Andrew Kulak, along with all principals and writers for their hard work and dedication on this project.

Finance Calendar Update:

Superintendent Kohler stated interim Town Administrator Anne Carreiro formally requested from the District that we be quicker with our budget process. She noted that we did not get a budget calendar from the Town yet, so we will hopefully have an update in December for you on the actual dates and timelines. Superintendent Kohler also said the Town did indicate, so far, that they are anticipating requesting a level funded budget, which means the exact same dollar amount we have today for next year, and which in our case, there will be staffing cuts. She stated that she and Mrs. Potter have started looking at what that will mean for the District, what positions may have to go. She then stated it is also a dance with Net School Spending (NSS). Superintendent Kohler stated she would like to take guidance from the Committee on where they would like to go with this year's budget and discuss it more in December. Superintendent Kohler has also been working with the Legislative Committee and they have found a flaw in the funding formula with the District's that have under 2,300 kids, that can possibly affect us. There is lobbying work happening to get that corrected. Superintendent Kohler also told the Committee that she was notified by the Commissioner's office that there will be a 20% cut to Title I funding upfront. She reminded the Committee the District relies on the Entitlement Grants significantly, so it is important for the Town to do what they need to in order to help the District. Mr. Vietch asked for a Title I definition. Superintendent Kohler stated Title I is separate from NSS, it is a Federal Entitlement Grant that helps us bridge the gap, reading specifically. All our literacy work we do from K to grade 2 is funded through Title I. Ms. Smith asked if we know what the number is that will be cut. Superintendent Kohler does not have the number yet, she will share in December. Ms. Pickup asked if we can ask the Town to replace that number. Superintendent Kohler stated the Committee can direct her to request whatever number they see fit. Mr. Andersen asked if the Town stated why they are asking for the same level of funding? Superintendent Kohler answered no, Mrs. Carreiro was just predicting at the time. Superintendent Kohler mentioned we are going into negotiations as well.

Strategic Plan Update:

Assistant Superintendent Balestracci reminded the Committee they approved the Strategic Plan last June. He stated the Administration spent the Summer with the Principals to form an action plan, meaning who is still responsible for what. The first check in is next Wednesday. In the Communication section we have almost completed the entire plan in the first three months of the school year. Assistant Superintendent Balestracci stated the next step is developing a family feedback survey which will be developed this winter and administered in the Spring, giving feedback from all stakeholders in the District such as staff, students, families, and community members. He went on to say that in Teaching and Learning the Professional Development (PD) has been excellent this

year and well attended. Assistant Superintendent Balestracci also said the District has made good progress and is hopeful that the bulk of the task will be completed this year allowing us to be even more innovative moving forward.

Fairhaven High School Storage Facility Project# 57530

Superintendent Kohler read a letter from the Town's Building Commissioner (Attachment A) advising that permit #57530 for the FHS Storage Facility is under appeal, and to build at our own risk, it will be voted on at a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on December 3, 2024. Superintendent Kohler then refreshed everyone's memory with some facts that this project has been five years in the making and has been through four Building Commissioners. Superintendent Kohler has instructed Mr. Balestracci to let Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School Students to continue building, we are happy to take it at our own risk and we will see them on December 3rd and share what our concerns are. Ms. Smith asked what building at your own risk means. Superintendent Kohler stated she was told it is about having to take it down if the appeal goes through. She also reminded the Committee that our attorney and the Town's attorney had worked together to rectify the first permit pull, stating the Storage Facility is covered under the Dover Amendment.

A motion was made by Mr. Andersen to allow the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School Students to continue building the Fairhaven High School Storage Facility located at Alumni Stadium in lue of the permit appeal, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, roll call vote, (5-0).

Ms. Pickup asked if we are found in the right at the appeal meeting, will the Town reimburse the District for we are incurring for consulting, hiring an attorney. Superintendent Kohler will consult with legal counsel regarding that.

Upcoming Events:

Special Town Meeting will be held November 19, 2024

Next School Committee meeting will be December 13, 2024

Unfinished Business:

Fundraising Options for Facilities:

A motion to table the topic of fundraising options for facilities for a future meeting was made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

New Business:

A motion was made by Mr. Andersen to accept a donation of \$500.00 from the Father's Day Road Race Committee to the Fairhaven High School Band, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Andersen to establish a student activity account for the DECA Club, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Questions from individual Committee Members:

Ms. Pickup asked about teachers being reminded to not promote their own political views in the classroom coming off this very heated election. Superintendent Kohler stated yes, and asked if there are individual concerns about this to please bring them to the principals.

Any Business Not Reasonably Anticipated Within 48 Hours of the Posting of this Meeting:

Superintendent Kohler would like to add an update regarding Ballot Question 2, MCAS and next steps to the December agenda. Mr. Veitch agreed.

A motion to adjourn and go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the chair so declares was made by Mr. Andersen, seconded by Ms. Pacheco, roll call vote, approved (5-0).

Adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Sheri Souza
Secretary to the School Committee
Fairhaven Public Schools

Approved - December 18, 2024



Town of Fairhaven Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Building Department
Town Hall
40 Centre Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719
Phone 508 979 4019

To: Abutters appeal for Fairhaven High School Storage Building Permit

From: Richard Forand, Building Commissioner

Date: October, 15th 2024

RE: Permit revoke and reissued for- 12 Huttleston Avenue

Pursuant to 780 CMR, Section 105.6. The building official is authorized to suspend or revoke a permit issued under the provisions of 780 CMR wherever the permit is issued in error or on the basis of incorrect, inaccurate or incomplete information, or in violation of any ordinance or regulation or any of the provisions of 780 CMR. The building permit that you have received to perform structural build of a shed, at 12 Huttleston Ave. is being revoked do to it was applied for under the wrong application type. This build would fall under a commercial application. Please apply for a commercial permit.

This permit was revoked and reapplied for then issued on October, 15th 2024

On October 3rd an appeals letter was received by myself as Building Commissioner/ Zoning Officer that would appeal my decision of the issuance of a new permit.

In response to your request for zoning enforcement regarding construction at Fairhaven High School property located at 12 Huttleston, Avenue. Please be advised that on September 11th, 2024, I Revoked the residential building permit that had previously been issued for this project. Please note that there is no requirement in state or local law or regulations to provide notice of building permits to abutters. However, please see that a new commercial permit has been issued as of Today October 15th 2024.

Please also note that this office does not have jurisdiction to enforce Historic Preservation Restrictions on or any interests held by private trusts. I decline to take further zoning enforcement action at this time. You may pursue this matter by appealing the issuance of the commercial building permit to the Zoning Board of Appeals within 30 days of this letter. An application can be given and applied for at Town Hall 40 center Street, Fairhaven Ma.in the Building Department/ Zoning enforcement office.

Should you have any questions please call me at 508.979.4019.

Sincerely,

Richard Forand

Richard Forand
Building Commissioner / Zoning Enforcement Officer
Town of Fairhaven