



FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
May 14, 2025

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2025 JUN 17 AM 8:35

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Veitch, Erik Andersen, Stephanie Pickup, Nicole Pacheco, Kelly Ochoa

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. Veitch at 6:30pm

Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:

Presentation of the 2025 Innovation Students Eversource Contest Winners: Jennifer Perrotti (Innovation Teacher):

Mrs. Jennifer Perrotti presented the Innovation Student Contest Winners. The students explained to the Committee the projects they entered into the contest.

Budget Update/Next Steps:

Superintendent Kohler thanked the Committee for transparency and support during the budget process. She stated a motion to cut the school budget at Town Meeting was defeated without the School Committee members having to defend it. This was a signal of strong community support. Discussion around potential next steps to address budget deficits, included exploring a Proposition 2½ override, partial budget cuts, and shared services with Acushnet. Superintendent Kohler would like an emphasis on collaborative input from the School Committee moving forward. Superintendent Kohler also mentioned that Committee members are participating in the search for the new Town Administrator. The goal is to find someone aligned with both the Schools and Community needs.

Fairhaven High School Storage Facility Update:

Superintendent Kohler stated construction is ongoing despite permit complications due to a state appeal. Temporary occupancy is expected. The Building Inspector determined the need for significantly more restrooms than planned, about 20 total. She informed the Committee that the District may need to seek capital funds for restroom construction. Superintendent Kohler also mentioned that The District was recently informed it must pay building permit fees that in the past were previously waived. The upcoming Phase 1 project may face a \$100,000 fee. A motion passed to submit a waiver request to the Select Board.

Receive update on FHS Phase 1 Project:

Superintendent Kohler updated the Committee that the Phase 1 project will begin once the Seniors finish classes. She stated there is an aggressive timeline that aims to complete work before the next school year. She stated communications will go out to the public.

Receive update on charging stations (Resource Lighting Rep):

Superintendent Kohler stated a consultant working with the Town proposed installing Level 2 EV chargers at four school sites, funded by a state grant. Concerns stated during the discussion were public access on school grounds, student safety, particularly at elementary schools, and already limited parking at the high school. Discussion ensued, more research and legal review is being planned.

Receive HVAC Study Results:

Superintendent Kohler shared the results of the HVAC Study with the Committee. There was concern from the Committee regarding the cost. Superintendent Kohler stated this is the type of thing they would make part of the five year plan.

Discuss Superintendent Evaluation Process:

Evaluation packets were distributed; Committee members will complete and submit by the June meeting. A summary evaluation will be presented publicly.

Update on Facility Assessment Process and Vote to Enter a Contract with the Selected Firm:

Superintendent Kohler stated there was a bid for companies to come and do an assessment on our buildings. A motion was made by Mrs. Pickup, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco to allow the District to enter into a contract with Euro Veteris Technical Associates for a Facilities Assessment Plan, passed, (5-0).

Upcoming Events:

The next School Committee Meeting will be held June 11, 2025.

New Business:

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa, seconded by Mr. Andersen to approve School Choice participation for the 25-26 School Year, motion denied, (0-5).

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa, seconded by Mr. Andersen to table the approval of the School Committee dates for the 25-26 school year until the June meeting, passed, (5-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Pacheco, seconded by Mr. Andersen, to allow the St. Michael Futebol Club the use of the Turf Field for their 2025 soccer season (5-0).

A motion was made by Ms. Ochoa to meet in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A, section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Fairhaven Educators Association (FEA), Unit C and litigation (G.L. c 40A judicial review) as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining/litigating position of the Fairhaven School Committee and the Chair so declares, seconded by Mrs. Pickup, approved unanimously (5-0)

Adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Sheri Souza
Secretary to the Fairhaven School Committee

Approved, June 11, 2025