June 16, 2014

Page 3996

The Fairfield Area School Board met on Monday evening June 16, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the high/middle school cafeteria with these members in attendance: Mr. Mark Greathouse, presiding; Mrs. Pamela Mikesell, Mrs. Agatha Foscato, Mr. Bruce Lefeber, Mr. Brad Rigler, Mr. Mickey Barlow, Mr. Chuck Hatter, Mrs. Marcy Van Metre and Mr. Lonny Whitcomb, Jr. Also present were Mr. William Chain, Superintendent; Ms. Patricia Weber, MS Principal; and Mr. Brian McDowell, HS Principal; Ms. Brooke Say, Solicitor; and Ms. Karen Kugler, Director of Curriculum and Special Programs. There was an Executive Session prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters.

**Minutes**

There were no minutes to approve.

**Presentations**

There were no presentations.

**Student Representative Reports**

There were no student representatives present.

**Public Comment**

Darren Hebenton, taxpayer and parent spoke to the Board about the cutting of second grade teaching position. Questioned why certain members of the Board chose to be board members as they are not here for education. Expressed his desire for the Board to listen to Mr. Chain and the education members and not cut the position.

Deana Kohler, taxpayer and parent spoke about wanting to hear from the Board directly instead of all the rumors that are flying around the community. She and her family moved here two years ago for the schools and now concerned that she made the wrong choice. Hoping that the Board is “not robbing from Peter to pay Paul.” Questioned Brooke Say’s role.

Rhonda Myers, taxpayer and parent read a statement on behalf of April Brewster, who had emailed each of the board members and had not received any responses. Questioned the teacher to student ratio if the second grade position was not restored. Reminded the Board that their number one job was to make decisions on behalf of children. Mr. Lefeber and Mrs. Foscato both responded that they had not received an email from Ms. Brewster.

June 16, 2014

Page 3997

Tammy Wile, taxpayer, classroom volunteer, and parent to two children in the district expressed grave concern about the second grade position and it not being filled. Expressed that teachers already have a large job and increasing class size will make it impossible. Feared that the Board would take away other programs such as Title I or Reading Recovery, both of which her son participated in during kindergarten and first grade and soared to success.

Greg Murray, grandparent, taxpayer, and classroom volunteer had a list of items to address from both the Finance Committee and previous Board meeting, and would be at the next board meeting to address the other concerns. Express his disbelief with the Board that he has only ever seen two board members in the elementary. Felt that if they had kids in the district then they would be in the schools. Reminded the Board that paying to educate kids through his tax dollars was part of his responsibility as a community member. Prior to grandchild entering school, he and his family has shopped around for where to send the child and they chose Fairfield, but now concerned that we won’t be able to attract good, young teachers due to them getting beat up in the paper. Finally reminded the Board that our teachers’ salaries are at the median level for the state of Pennsylvania.

Bob Stanley, taxpayer and was allotted six minutes to talk as his wife, Caroline had waived her three minutes to him. Mr. Stanley spoke of visiting the elementary school on two separate occasions since the last Board meeting at the invitation of Mrs. Sturges. He presented to the students on Pennsylvania government, Paleontology, NASA history, and Military Service and what we owe to our nation. Mrs. Sturges’ students had written him thank-you notes and of the 20 he received he read one aloud to the audience. He spoke to having seen the children in school and was very impressed and is now worried about combining three classes into two. Stated his is a fiscal conservative but realizes that at times you can’t be when it involves what’s best for the kids.

Lisa Sturges, taxpayer, teacher for the District, and FEA president acknowledged at the last board meeting that Mr. Barlow was correct in calling in to question her decorum and she apologized for it. Stated she was at the last Finance Committee meeting and doesn’t recall there being any discussion of not replacing the second grade teacher. Agreed that although she and Mr. Rigler would rarely ever agree, but that they do agree that are the two and a half hour finance meeting, the budget was only addressed in the final half hour. Doesn’t under-stand how we can have a proposed budget which includes a second grade teacher with a zero

June 16, 2014

Page 3998

percent increase and not fill the position. Pointed out that she had invited Mr. Stanley in as a result of Mr. Lefeber pointing out at the last meeting that the community would like to be involved in the schools. Feels that the Board likes to make decisions and then put them in Mr. Chain’s lap and wash their hands of the effects of the decision, but that their decisions for have cause and effect.

Sherry Hill, parent, taxpayer and volunteer spoke regarding class size. Wants children to continue to receive the one-to-one attention some need and that can’t happen if the Board “blows up the class size.” Googled class size on the internet and found nothing about class sizes over 20 being effective. Tired of the “we and they, every one of you was voted to support the children.”

Heather Burgess, parent, taxpayer and teacher in Frederick but her kids go here for a reason. Spoke to class size as she teaches in classes of 38-42 and it isn’t working. Son in both Title I and Reading Recovery this year and started the year below average and is now above average due to those programs.

**Consent Agenda:**

None

**Other Action Items:**

None

**Other Discussion Items:**

A. Elementary Second Grade Position -

Presentation by Mr. Chain on history and board policy regarding class size. Mr. Rigler clarified for the audience that the Board never intended not to have three second grade teachers. Mr. Chain pointed out at the last Board meeting when the motion to, “Move to grant permission for the administration to advertise and recommend for hire an elementary teacher for the 2014-2015 school year,” was not passed that resulted in the administration not being able to hire or accept an internal transfer into that position, as the position no longer existed. Mr. Chain further explained that if it was the Board’s intention to retain that position that an amended motion would have needed to be passed. After extensive discussion of the Board’s intentions and what needed to be done in order to restore the position. Mr. Lefeber asked that

June 16, 2014

Page 3999

it be pointed out that this Board hasn’t furloughed any teachers and has added three new courses (AP). After a lengthy discussion of options and clarifications to options by Mr. Chain including certification requirements and if transferring a person who is certified but not currently teaching is an internal transfer. Options included:

1. Reduce the number of librarians
2. Reduce the Title I Reading Teachers
3. Hire a new second grade teacher
4. Eliminate Middle School exploratory teacher

Mr. Chain requested the Board provide the third option as the resolution to the situation. Mr. Whitcomb, as the Chair of Education Committee, made a motion to advertise outside for hire an elementary teacher including the opportunity for internal transfers, and this was seconded by Mrs. VanMetre. Public comment follows.

**Motion:** Move to advertise outside for hire for an elementary teacher including the opportunity for internal transfers.

Margaret Finafrock, parent, taxpayer, and substitute District worker, spoke to the need to hire another teacher for second grade.

Michael Post, taxpayer and parent spoke to wanting to maintain the great program here and the need for the second grade teacher since it is already in the budget and didn’t understand why it’s in question.

Bob Stanley, taxpayer spoke to the need for the second grade teacher and acknowledging that the Board are elected officials like he is and that they are trying to make lots of different people happy.

Shelly Kline, taxpayer and parent spoke to class size and the need to keep it where it is by hiring a new teacher.

Linda McMullen, taxpayer and District teacher spoke about class size and how students come in with such varying skill levels that large classes make it very difficult to meet every student on their level.

June 16, 2014

Page 4000

Following the public comment regarding the elementary position, Mr. Rigler wanted to amend the original motion to include a motion **to return the AD to a part-time position**. Mr. Rigler made this amendment to the motion which was seconded by Mr. Hatter. The board did not vote.

Mr. Chain assured the board that once another support staff person with at least half time status was to resign, that he would be adding to the AD’s duties. Mr. Whitcomb felt that if they were going to relook at the AD position that it should be at the next meeting where the public would have time to be notified and be able to come and speak to the move. After a lengthy and heated discussion, in which Mr. Barlow stated he was tired of the public perception of Board and that they are being portrayed as bad people. People are going out into the public stating that the Board was going to cut athletic programs and assistant coaches. He didn’t know how or why it got out there but he is tired of it and feeling intimidated and attack at meetings. Mr. Barlow stood and announced “I’m done! I’m done!” At Mr. Rigler’s urging saying, “We need your vote,” Mr. Barlow returned to his seat stating “I vote no.” The Board retired to Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. for Legal and Personnel matters.

The Board returned from the Executive Session at 9:55 p.m., with Mr. Rigler with-drawing his amendment to the original motion, followed by Mr. Hatter withdrawing his second. The Board then passed the original motion on a unanimous roll call vote.

On a motion made by Mr. Rigler and seconded by Mr. Hatter, the following was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**Motion:** Move toreturn AD to half-time status until such time at least a half-time vacancy in support staff presents itself.

On a motion by Mr. Hatter, seconded by Mrs. Van Metre, and unanimously approved by the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Mr. Mark Greathouse Ms. Karen Kugler

Board President Director of Curriculum & Special Programs

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_