

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD  
December 15, 2014**

The Regular Monthly Meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, December 15, 2014 at 8 PM at the Education Center, 501 Kings Hwy East, Fairfield.

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by Moderator Pamela Iacono.

PRESENT: 41                                        ABSENT: 9                                        VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Donovan, Herley, Meyer, Sundman, Schindler, Steele, Bateson, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Dean, DeMartino, Palmer, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Way, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Braun, Durrell, McCarthy, Melaragno, Iacono, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Tymniak, Cafferelli, Farnen, Perugini, Ryan

ABSENT: Lipp, Ambrose, Burshtein, Varian, Gerber, Semmel, Smey, Li, Neuberger

**ITEM 1 ON CALL:** PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Moderator Iacono asked Laura Devlin, State Representative-elect to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and asked the Body to keep our troops in our thoughts during the holiday season. Selectman Cristin McCarthy Vahey thanked the Body for its hard work and for being “amazing” as she heads to the General Assembly with Ms. Devlin.

**ITEM 2 ON CALL:** APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 24 MEETING

The minutes were approved with the correction that Ms. Iacono was elected Moderator on page 1 with 40 in favor and 1 abstention (Schindler).

**ITEM 3 ON CALL:** REAPPOINTMENT OF GEOFFREY G. MULLEN TO THE EMPLOYEES’ RETIREMENT BOARD

Joe DeMartino, District 4 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded. Mr. Mullen was present and explained that he had previously served on the Police & Fire Retirement Board.

**VOTE:** Geoffrey Mullen’s reappointment to the Employees’ Retirement Board was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**ITEM 4 ON CALL:** REAPPOINTMENT OF MITCHELL FUCHS TO THE GREATER BRIDGEPORT TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Julie Gottlieb, District 6 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

**VOTE:** Mitch Fuchs’ reappointment to the GBTA was approved with 38 in favor and 3 abstentions (Wolk, Jacob, Cafferelli).

**ITEM 5 ON CALL:** REAPPOINTMENT OF ROBERT M. STILSON TO THE SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING COMMISSION

Jennifer Hochberg, District 7 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

**VOTE:** Robert Stilson's reappointment to the Solid Waste & Recycling Commission was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**ITEM 6 ON CALL:** APPOINTMENTS OF CHARLES P. MACDONALD JR., PATTY A. PALMER & ANTHONY J. SANTACAPITA TO THE SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING COMMISSION

Tom McCarthy, District 8 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded. Messrs. MacDonald and Santacapita were present.

**VOTE:** The appointments of Messrs. MacDonald and Santacapita and Ms. Palmer were approved by unanimous voice vote.

**ITEM 7 ON CALL:** TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: "RESOLVED, THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 10-153(B), THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE FAIRFIELD SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION, FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2015 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018, IS REJECTED."

Michael Herley, District 1 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Chris Tymniak, District 9 thanked those present for the information and presentation to the committees. He felt a better job could have been done in negotiating a fairer contract as he would prefer an HAS vs. a PPO. He asked Eric Fiedler of AON Consulting if this is the same health care plan as the teachers to which Mr. Fiedler replied yes.

Mr. Tymniak asked if the same plan will go to the rest of the employees to which Mr. Fiedler said he could not comment because they have not come up for negotiation. Mr. Tymniak continued that there are 38 employees in this bargaining unit with over \$5.8 million in salary. Thousands of Connecticut residents' healthcare plans have been changed through no fault of their own. The only change here is a higher co-pay with the first year's savings of \$30,000. He asked Atty. Seor when negotiations start if they have an outline of where they want to be.

Atty. Seor said the Board of Finance wanted a health plan that would save the BOE money. The savings were not achievable in a high deductible health plan.

Mr. Tymniak said now is the time to change the plan as an entirety. BOE contracts have not gone to arbitration since the early 1990's. These contracts have been endorsed by the RTM for 20 years.

Atty. Seor explained that in interest arbitration the arbiters compare the settlements that are coming in around the state. All agreements are off the table and old proposals are on the table.

Mr. Tymniak said that although we have attorneys and consultants who provide us the best information possible and negotiate on our behalf, he believes a better job could have been done.

John Donovan referenced the backup materials distributed and the November minutes in which Mr. Dwyer estimated a 1.7% budget increase which he is trying to reconcile.

Atty. Houston clarified that the net salary increase for the FEA was \$3.9 million and the 1.7% budget increase and salary mitigation percentage is purely coincidental.

Bryan Cafferelli, District 10 said he appreciates the work that the administrators and teachers do, but the constituents are asking that we save money. In 2012/2013 the average salary was \$138,000 for this 38-member bargaining unit.

Dave Mackenzie, District 3 noted that at last month's meeting in response to Rep. Gottlieb's question the net savings on the teacher's contract was 1.7%. He felt the contract was unnecessarily rich to have a 2.7% increase on a high end salary. He asked that the Cadillac tax be taken into consideration.

Michael Herley, District 1 stated that some of the information is muddled and requested that a representative of the BOE be present at these meetings to answer questions in the future.

Sheila Marmion, District 6 said arbitration could be much more costly than the proposal before us. Progress has been made, but it may not be as fast as you would like.

Kevin Hoffkins, District 7 asked what AON's role is. Mr. Fiedler explained AON is a human resources consulting firm which provides strategic guidance on employee benefits to the Town and BOE.

Mr. Hoffkins noted that if we are trying to save money then we should approve this deal since the PPO is more advantageous than the HSA.

Gaylord Meyer, District 1 noted that her constituents are asking that we stop raising taxes and hold the line on spending and debt.

First Selectman Tetreau noted the Town had a surplus in FY14.

Ellen Jacob, District 9 clarified that Rep. Meyer meant debt service which Mr. Tetreau indicated was between \$26 and \$28 million. Ms. Jacob indicated there is a large capital program coming from the BOE including two large school projects so the entire picture needs to be considered.

Allen Marks, District 6 said the administrators have given back in this contract. We have the highest premium sharing in Fairfield County. He asked that we look at what we get in return for these salaries – a very good overall education system.

Cindy Waldron, District 4 noted that the administrators work on a 12-month salary scale vs. 10-month scale which Atty. Houston confirmed.

Michael Herley asked what positions are included in this union. Ann Leffert replied the headmasters, housemasters, principals and asst. principals, guidance coordinators, athletic directors and curriculum leaders.

Mr. Hoffkins asked if there were other towns with HSA's that were saving significantly. Atty. Houston said the high deductible plans when applied to our demographic did not save as much as the plan that was negotiated.

Mr. Hoffkins said comparing ourselves to the options available in the private sector because we have restrictions of state law and bargaining units.

Laurene O'Brien, District 5 asked everyone to be cognizant of the end game. This Body did not negotiate this from the beginning; look at what you can gain and what you can lose.

**VOTE:** The resolution to reject the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the School Administrators passed with a vote of 21 in favor and 20 opposed.

**IN FAVOR:** Donovan, Herley, Meyer, Sundman, Devlin, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, DeMartino, Way, Braun, McCarthy, Melaragno, Jacob, McArdle, Pontrelli, Tymniak, Cafferelli, Farnen, Perugini, Ryan

**OPPOSED:** Schindler, Steele, Bateson, Dean, Palmer, Waldron, Garskof, O'Brien, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Durrell, Iacono

**ITEM 8 ON CALL:** CONSIDERATION OF FAIR TV ORDINANCE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Ordinance co-sponsor Sheila Marmion, District 6 stated this ordinance is designed to provide clear broadcast standards. It establishes a bipartisan commission so FairTV can continue primary programming of government and education meetings and secondary programming. We get tremendous value from FairTV. We have limited resources and this ordinance is designed to focus on primary and secondary programming – education and government.

Ordinance co-sponsor Kathy Braun, District 8 stated in researching other towns, we have not found any other towns with clear broadcast standards. This will form an independent commission similar to the Ethics Commission whose appointments must be unanimously approved by the Board of Selectmen not a majority. This should not be politically influenced.

Ellen Jacob, District 9 said the Committee has done a great job. She feels “safe” the way the ordinance is written. FairTV has been a great service and tool to the community.

Jay Wolk, District 6 thanked the sponsors for their hard work. There are 24 cable TV franchises in the state set up under federal law to provide a window into our government. Each local committee operates under town leaders such as the selectmen or council. This is SOP. He will send everyone excerpts from the current policies and procedures instituted in 2007 for FairTV Government Access channel that are mirrored in the other 23 franchises. He recommends that FairTV continue to operate under these policies and procedures.

**ITEM 9 ON CALL:** DISCUSSION & REFERRAL TO THE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE ANY PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE PROPOSED REDISTRICTING ORDINANCE

Redistricting Committee members Phil Pires and Chris Tymniak opened the floor to amendments.

**AMENDMENT:** Ellen Jacob, District 9 moved to refer to the Redistricting Committee an amendment to increase the number of representatives from 4 to 5 per district as currently proposed, duly seconded.

Ms. Jacob felt there are extensive changes in the proposed redistricting with a lot of adjustments with new representatives and polling places. There will be more coverage particularly with new districts for some of the existing representatives.

Kathy Braun, District 8 spoke in favor of the amendment. She felt reducing the number of representatives will not make this Body more accountable or efficient. All representatives work very hard for their constituencies.

Nathaniel Schindler, District 2 stated that liberty is best served with more representation and will support the amendment.

Carol Way, District 5 noted that 9 people were absent from tonight's meeting. If there were 31 people present under the proposed redistricting then only 31 people would be deciding on a critical issue.

**VOTE:** The amendment to increase the number of representatives per district from 4 to 5 failed with 11 in favor, 26 opposed and 4 abstentions.

**IN FAVOR:** Schindler, McCullough, DeMartino, O'Brien, Way, Hoffkins, Braun, Melaragno, Jacob, Pontrelli, Ryan

**OPPOSED:** Herley, Meyer, Sundman, Steele, Bateson, Ference, Dean, Palmer, Waldron, Garskof, Gottlieb, Marks, Marmion, Wolk, Zezima, Hochberg, Newman, Pires, Schwartz, Durrell, McCarthy, Iacono, McArdle, Tymniak, Farnen, Perugini

**ABSTAINED:** Donovan, Devlin, Mackenzie, Cafferelli

Ms. Iacono noted that the Redistricting Committee will meet on December 17, 2014 at 5 PM.

**ITEM 10 ON CALL:** REFERRAL OF AMENDMENT TO TAX RELIEF ORDINANCE

This item will be referred to the full Body next month.

**ITEM 11 ON CALL:** REFERRAL OF ALTERNATE SIDE OF THE STREET ORDINANCE

The L&A Committee tabled this item.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business and upon motion made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, CMC, MCTC  
Town Clerk