



South Fayette Township School District

Committee Meeting of the Whole

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

7:30 PM

MINUTES

The Committee Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:31 p.m. in the Studio in the High School by President Joe Welch with the Pledge of Allegiance. President Welch apologized for the late start announcing the Board held an Executive Session prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel and/or legal issues.

Present: Esther Cardillo, Rebecca Bruce, Teresa Burroughs, William Gray, Len Fornella, Joe Welch, Tom Iagnemma, Jen Iriti, Prajakta Patankar

Others: Chris Voltz, Tucker Arensberg, P.C., Superintendent Dr. Michelle Miller, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler, Director of Finance Brian Tony, Director of Finance Ryan Neely, Director of Human Resources Mike Radage, Director of Technology Rob Warfield, Superintendent's Assistant/Board Secretary Susan Vasalani, Angela Johnson, Leslie Willetts, Jordan Kavinsky, Brittney Lunn, Carolyn Potts, Emily Potts

CONSENT AGENDA

1. The Board considered the approval of the Minutes from the following Board Meetings:

Committee Meeting	Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Regular Meeting	Tuesday, November 26, 2024
Reorganization and Regular Meeting	December 2, 2024
Special Meeting	December 11, 2024

2. The Board considered the approval of the following Financial Reports which have been reviewed by the Superintendent and Secondary Administration:

Athletic Fund	Mark Keener
High School Activity Fund	Ryan Neely
Middle School Activity Fund	Ryan Neely
Tax Collector Report (July-October 2024)	Kevin Biber

3. Expenditures were submitted for Board review to be approved at the Regular Board Meeting.
4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for Board approval of the decision on the Application for LERTA Tax Abatement submitted by Piazza Properties, LLC, for construction or reconstruction of the improvements at Block/Lot 256-R-3, subject to the parties executing the tax appeal stipulation attached to the decision and resulting in a reduction in the assessed value of the improvements as follows:

<u>Tax Year</u>	<u>Percent Exemption</u>	<u>Amount of Exemption</u>
1st Tax Year (2024-2025)	80%	\$ 5,856,000.00
2nd Tax Year (2025-2026)	60%	\$ 4,392,000.00
3rd Tax Year (2026-2027)	40%	\$ 2,928,000.00
4th Tax Year (2027-2028)	20%	\$ 1,464,000.00
5th Tax Year (2028-2029)	10%	\$ 732,000.00

SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS

No comments

Old Business

There was no new business discussed.

New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Superintendent's Monthly Report – Dr. Michelle Miller

Facility Project Update for the additions and alterations for the Intermediate School

- Prior to tonight's board meeting, the district held an Act 34 hearing which is a public meeting that applies to school districts that are preparing to complete a new building project and/or a building project with substantial additions or alterations. The Act 34 meeting reviews maximum building construction costs, goal building capacity, and aggregate building expenditures. The Act 34 information is available in our district office.
- The Intermediate Schools additions and alterations project is currently out for competitive bidding. Today, a pre-bid meeting was held with construction companies interested in bidding for the projects. Competitive bids are scheduled to be opened on February 6, 2025, although that could be pushed back to the following week. During the week of February 21, 2025, site preparations are expected to begin with potentially starting construction on March 31, 2025. The project is expected to last approximately 16 to 18 months.

BUSINESS OFFICE

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for approval of a three-year contract extension with UGI for Natural Gas on the Peoples Gas System with a start date of September 1, 2025. The Contract will have a Basis price of (-\$0.50) per Dth. The extension will run from September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2028, and was recommended by the The Western Pennsylvania Natural Gas Consortium Committee. The renewal Basis Price will show a savings of \$0.06/Dth compared to our current contract rate of (-\$0.44)/Dth.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance Ryan Neely, and Solicitor Chris Voltz for approval of Resolution 25-01 Real Estate Tax Collector Compensation for the elected Tax Collector for the fiscal years 2025-2026 through and including 2028-2029, pending Board discussion.
3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for Board approval to enter into a 3-year renewal agreement with Hosack, Specht, Muetzel & Wood, LLP to audit the financial statements of the South Fayette Township School District as follows:

- Year end June 2025, \$22,430
 - Year end June 2026, \$23,330
 - Year end June 2027, \$24,250
4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval of an affiliation agreement for internship/practicum pre-clinical, principal internship, and student teaching with Robert Morris University effective for a five-year period beginning January 2025.
 5. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval of an affiliation agreement for an academic experience site with Pennsylvania Western (PennWest) effective for a five-year period beginning January 2025.
 6. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for board approval to hire Jordan Tax Service to complete the Act 80 EIT Reporting Process to the PA Department of Revenue by the required deadlines for the 2024 reporting year, at a cost not to exceed \$1,400. This is a full service price, including sending and recording the corrected reporting errors and finalizing the reporting to the PA Department of Revenue.
 7. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for Board approval of the Parkway West General Operating and Jointure Budget for 2025-2026 as follows:

Total Budget	2024-25	2025-26
Parkway West - Operating Budget	\$8,865,766	\$9,603,622
Parkway West - Jointure Budget	\$ 800,017	\$1,076,716

South Fayette Estimated Share	2024-25	2025-26
Parkway West - Operating Budget	\$559,938	\$553,515
Parkway West - Jointure Budget	\$ 80,438	\$ 76,344
Total	\$640,376	\$629,859

This budget is based on 88.44 ADM's (year 5 of 5 year rolling average).

PERSONNEL

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the retirement of a Middle School Teacher, effective at the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval for a Western Governors University student to be a Student Teacher with a Middle School Teacher from January 28, 2025, to May 15, 2025, pending receipt of required documents.
3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the intermittent FMLA request of a Middle School Teacher.

4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the intermittent FMLA request of a Middle School Paraeducator.
5. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval for a Middle School Teacher to serve as a Teacher of Record, English as a Second Language, for a student in Educere. The Teacher will be paid at the current EPR rate for 1.5 hours per week, retroactive to January 21, 2025.
6. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Dr. Natasha Dirda for Board approval of the leave of absence request of a High School Teacher on or about April 4, 2025.
7. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval for a West Virginia University Student to complete a Community Health Clinical Rotation with the High School Nurse from January 28, 2025, through April 30, 2025.
8. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Transportation Brandon Soubie for Board approval to hire a Bus Driver at the probationary rate of \$24.47 per hour, effective date to be determined. After successful completion of the probationary period, the rate will be \$30.59 per hour.
9. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Transportation Brandon Soubie for Board approval of the resignation of a Bus Driver, effective January 24, 2025.
10. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Transportation Brandon Soubie for Board approval to hire two Substitute Bus Drivers at the rate of \$20 per hour, effective date to be determined.
11. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Facilities Steve Timmins for Board approval of the FMLA request of a Building Custodian, effective date to be determined.
12. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Facilities Steve Timmins for Board approval of the resignation of a Custodian, effective December 13, 2024.
13. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Food Service Nicolle Pleil for Board approval of the resignation of a Food Service Worker, effective December 17, 2024.
14. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener, High School Principal Dr. Natasha Dirda and the fall season Head Coaches for Board approval of the following coaches for the 2025-2026 season.

Football

Head Coach	Marty Spieler	\$12,335.00
Assistant Coach	Ryan Faraci	
Assistant Coach	TJ Matrascia	
Assistant Coach	Garrett Sekanik	
Assistant Coach	Tom Stilley	
Assistant Coach	Bruce Fronk	
Assistant Coach	Joe Franjione	
Assistant Coach	Alex Dennison	

Assistant Coach	Vincent Ziccardi
Assistant Coach	Chris Saluga
7/8th Grade Head Coach	Rick Chaussard
7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Wes Chappel
7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Josh Patterson
7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Trevor McIntyre
Volunteer 7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Paul Hartz
Volunteer 7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Ishan Rayka
Volunteer 7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Tom Patterson
Volunteer 7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Terry Stites

Girls Golf

Head Coach	Rocky Violi	\$6,015.00
Assistant Coach	Matt Bacco	

Boys Golf

Head Coach	Bob Ruffolo	\$6,015.00
Assistant Coach	Shane Coyne	

Boys Soccer

Head Coach	Rob Eldridge	\$8,905.00
Assistant Coach	Joe Luxbacher	
Assistant Coach	James Kita	
Assistant Coach	Nolan Levine	
7/8 th Grade Head Coach	William Finnerty	

Girls Soccer

Head Coach	Nick Rosser	\$8,905.00
Assistant Coach	Jayna Fittipaldo	
Assistant Coach	Sabrina Bryan	
Assistant Coach	Camille Holzschuh	
Assistant Coach	Alexandria Rosser	
7/8th Grade Head Coach	Nicole Bianco	
7/8 th Grade Assistant Coach	Sarah Pruss	

Girls Volleyball

Head Coach	Scott Sundgren	\$8,905.00
Assistant Coach	Riley Pawlosky	
Assistant Coach	Micki Cerchiaro	
Assistant Coach	Casey Holp	
Assistant Coach	Justine Yanosik	
Assistant Coach	Morgan Ziolkowski	
Assistant Coach	Danielle Rudolph	

Boys & Girls Cross Country

Head Coach	Joe Winans	\$7,440.00
Assistant Coach	Julia Denison Kuczynski	
Volunteer Assistant Coach	Tesse Datte	
7/8 th Grade Head Coach	Matt Timcheck	

Girls Tennis

Head Coach	Victoria Chagnon	\$5,120.00
Assistant Coach	Alexis Podgorski	

15. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener and Head Varsity Track & Field Coach, Scott Litwinovich for Board approval of the following Assistant Track & Field Coaches for the Spring 2024-2025 season
 - Victoria Chagnon
 - Josh Patterson
 - Anthony Mannarino
16. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Athletic Director, Mark Keener, for Board approval of the resignation of an Assistant Boys Tennis Coach, effective date to be determined.

Iagnemma seconded Fornella on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Human Resources Michael Radage for Board approval to hire Julie Kulbago as a Human Resources Coordinator, at the salary of \$59,000, effective date January 27, 2025, pending receipt of required documents.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval to accept the sabbatical leave of absence request of Elementary School Counselor Molly Kuczinski, effective for the second semester of the 2024-2025 school year.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the following EPRs for the 2024-2025 school year.

Extracurricular Personal Care Paraeducator SFIS Strings Concert	Carolyn Kenawell
Extracurricular Personal Care Paraeducator SFIS Band Concert	Molly Mehok
Extracurricular Personal Care Paraeducator SFHS Band Concert	Myriam Fowler
High School Teacher Teaching More Than 6 Classes	Kara Pappas
Elementary School Girls Who Code	Lydia Sopp
Intermediate School Girls Who Code	Lydia Sopp
Nurse - Middle School Mardi Gras Event	Misty Menarcheck
Mentor for Intermediate School Special Education Teacher Andrea Dawson, retroactive to December 3, 2024	Katie Munnell
Mentor Teacher for Long-Term Special Education Substitute Teacher Camryn Whipple, retroactive to January 9, 2025	Haylee Ali

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Human Resources Michael Radage for approval of the revision to the retirement date of Benefits Coordinator Victoria Adams to January 21, 2025.

EDUCATION

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Director of Student Support Services Gretchen Tucci for Board approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit to utilize TransPerfect AI to provide access to written translation through an AI portal to support non-English speaking parents and families.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Dr. Matt Callison for Board approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with Inspirit AI to host a two-week AI camp in the summer of 2025 for middle school and high school students at no cost to the district.

3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval for Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler, Director of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Dr. Matt Callison, one High School administrator, and up to three High School educators to attend the AASA 2024-2025 Innovation for Transformation spring meeting in Mountain View, California, to be held April 27-29 2025. Expenses are covered by grant funding.
4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval for Elementary School Assistant Principal Pharlan Ives to attend the Inclusive Innovation Action Summit, Transforming Student Economic Mobility and Well Being, presented by Digital Promise on February 4-5, 2025, in Oakland California. Expenses are covered by the 2024-2025 budget.
5. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval for Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Chuck Herring to attend the SXSW Edu Conference from March 2-5, 2025, in Austin, Texas. Dr. Herring will present with Yu-Ling Behr of Kidsburgh and Parents As Allies regarding parent and school engagement. There is no cost to the district. The trip is funded through Kidsburgh.
6. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval for Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler to attend Deloitte Leadership Experience Training from February 21-23, 2025, in Dallas, Texas. This will provide nearly \$20,000 in training with only the airfare and registration (\$750) being covered by the 2024-2025 budget.
7. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval for Director of Curriculum Cristine Wagner-Deitch to attend the Northeast Innovation Forum from March 2-5, 2025, in Boston, Massachusetts. Attendance at this forum is by invitation only. The cost of conference fees, hotel, and meals is covered by the Forum. Travel expenses are covered by the 2024-2025 budget.
8. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler, Interim Director of Student Support Services Dr. Arleen Wheat, and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and Special Olympics Pennsylvania Unified Champion Schools to add a Middle School Unified Indoor Bocce team as a club, effective March 2025. There will be no cost to the district, and the Special Olympics will be providing a \$750 stipend for the coach(es) in this first season. They will also be providing bocce equipment, tshirts and polo shirts for the team members and coach(es), and training for coaches. A stipend for the coach(es) in subsequent years will be at the expense of the District.
9. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Dr. Natasha Dirda for Board approval of the proposed changes to the 2025-2026 High School Program of Studies.
10. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the proposed changes to the 2025-2026 Middle School Program of Studies

TRANSPORTATION

There were no items discussed.

ATHLETICS

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Athletic Director, Mark Keener for Board approval for freshman Natalie Turosak to receive permission to participate in Individual Gymnastics in the WPIAL and PIAA under South Fayette's name. Her mother Bonnie Turosak, would be her coach and there will be no cost to the district. Her parents are responsible for all transportation and documentation. This would be in effect for the 2024-2025, 2025-2026, 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener, and Head Varsity Boys Basketball Coach Dave Mislan for Board approval, retroactively, for the Boys Basketball team to travel to Cleveland, Ohio, to attend an NBA basketball game on January 20, 2025, with a departure time of 10:30 a.m. and a return time of approximately 8:00 p.m. Appropriate adult to student ratios for supervision will be assured by the administration. The team will be traveling by coach bus. There will be no cost to the district.

CONSTRUCTION

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for Board approval of a Change Order Process for construction projects including the Intermediate School Additions and Renovations, Elementary School, and Bus Depot.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were no items discussed.

SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS

Leslie Willetts, President of the South Fayette Support Staff, Good evening, respected board members, administrators, faculty staff, and community. I'm a resident and taxpayer. We have been negotiating with the district for a fair and equitable contract for over a year. It has been our top priority to provide competitive wages with neighboring districts, enabling us to retain and recruit the best of the best. The current custodial step system put in place in 1996 aids to the difficulty in hiring custodians. We have unfilled positions from the beginning of this school year, and no amount of money spent on a job fair, snacks and treats, or student substitutes is going to make this problem go away. Please take a look at the one custodian whose wages were not affected by the step system in 1996 and help bring the other custodians up to competitive wages. Another priority is health care. School employees all pay into the Allegheny County Health Consortium. It's kind of like a big pot of money, and employees who need health care pay into it. The money is there who forever needs it. If ever you are ill, health care costs the same for everyone who participates in this consortium. The individual districts get to decide how much money their employees pay into this pot. In most districts throughout the county, the support staff pays significantly less. Here at South Fayette, our district deems the support staff must put more money into that pot than faculty and administrators. The current proposal has not changed this debacle. To make it worse, classifications within the support staff, working the same amount of hours, are forced to pay even more. For example, if you are a cafeteria employee or a bus driver, and you work the same hours as a paraprofessional, you will be forced to pay more for the exact same coverage. There's not one faculty administrator, school board, or community member that I have shared this information with who do not agree that this is wrong, and it should be made right. But we've made this our top priority in the past 10 years. We've negotiated in good faith that this wrong will be made right, and we are now being told, even after another 5 years, the support staff employees who make the least will continue to pay more in health care costs. This is my third time navigating the negotiation process. It is not a game to win or lose. It's not about who has the power, or even what can we live

with. It's just business, or it's just negotiations, does not give you a free pass to not do the right thing. Negotiations give us the opportunity to listen, to learn to do what will make our school. Yes, our school, not just these beautiful buildings, the programs of study, our amazing teachers. Our school includes the custodians, bus drivers, mechanic techs, food service monitors, maintenance and paraprofessionals. Thank you. Sorry if I went over, but we want all of them to receive competitive wages, and we want them to have the same affordable health care as everyone else in the district. The School Board, staff, and community members, please stand and help us achieve this soon. Thank you for your time.

Email, Tara Mey, 420 Meeting House Road, I am sorry I am unable to be there in person, but this will be the third time since September that I am making a statement regarding the ongoing negotiations with the support staff. The season of hope has come and gone, and boy, would a signed contract have been nice. But here we are two months later, and still no contract. Our negotiation team has shown up to the meetings, ready and willing to work with the School Board's negotiation team. We have shown up to school board meetings to show we are united. We have support from the community. We just need you, the School Board, to present a fair and equitable contract. I am begging you to take this seriously. We are frustrated, and the morale is at an all time low, yet we keep showing up to work for the kids. Please take us seriously and work diligently to present us with a fair and equitable contract. Thank you.

Mr. Fornella stated the following: The Board may recall that several months ago, I said publicly that the Board would not negotiate a contract in public with the Union because that was not appropriate, and we still don't believe it to be appropriate at that time. Ms. Willett's, however, appears to want to take issues from the negotiating table and bring them to the public, so I'm only going to say this to the Board. The district has made fair, reasonable offers that are competitive, and more than competitive with other surrounding districts. We are trying our best to achieve a resolution, but it takes two to tango, as they say. We cannot continue to negotiate against ourselves so to speak. So all I want to say to the Board is that we are proceeding in good faith, as we always have. The offers we have made are more than fair and more than competitive with other districts, and more than fair and more than equitable to our employees.

Iagnemma seconded Fornella to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Voice Vote - All Yes