



South Fayette Township School District

Committee Meeting of the Whole

Tuesday, October 15, 2024

7:30 PM

MINUTES

The Committee Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:34 p.m. in the Studio in the High School by President Tom Iagnemma with the Pledge of Allegiance. President Iagnemma 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, William Gray, Len Fornella, Joe Welch, Tom Iagnemma, Teresa Burroughs

Virtual: Jen Iriti

Absent: Prajakta Pantankar

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, Student Representative Nandana Menon, Director of Technology Rob Warfield, Superintendent's Assistant/Board Secretary Susan Vasalani, Angela Hoffman, Jessica Kent, Marie Piccirilli, Geoff Childs

Informational - 2025-2026 Index and Budget Timeline - Ryan Neely

- The Act 1 index is used to determine the maximum tax increase the school district can levy. The 2025-2026 Act 1 index act is 5.2%. This is a decrease from last year's 7% Act 1 index.
- The current millage rate is 26.7. If raised by the index, the millage could increase by 1.388 mills up to a total of 28.088 mills. The impact of raising the millage by this amount would be \$2,190,000.
- The recommendation is to not exceed the index. A request to pass the resolution may come in November or December 2024.
- The District will need to pass the proposed final budget in May 2025 in order to pass the final budget in June 2025.

Stadium Electrical Work - Steve Timmins

- Replacement of bollards in front of the stadium requires certified electricians to complete the work due to underground wiring, daisy chain wiring through each light, and the automatic lighting system. Project estimate is over budget due to the cost of the bollards and the time involved to complete the project.

Middle School VFD Pump Controller Replacement - Athan Tsourekis

- The Middle School VFD pump controllers operate the cooling and heating system by utilizing circulation pumps for chilled and hot water. The pumps were installed approximately 25 years ago and are failing. Parts are obsolete due to the age of the system.
- Several vendors were contacted to quote the replacement of this unbudgeted item.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Committee Meeting
Regular Meeting

Tuesday, September 17, 2024
Tuesday, September 24, 2024

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

Athletic Fund
High School Activity Fund
Middle School Activity Fund

Mark Keener
Ryan Neely
Ryan Neely

3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance Brian Tony, and Tax Collector Kevin Biber for Board approval of the provided list of Real Estate Refunds due to reduction in assessment and/or overpayment.
4. Expenditures were submitted for Board review to be approved at the Regular Board Meeting.

SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS

There were no comments received.

Old Business

There was no old business discussed.

New Business

There was new business discussed.

Superintendent's Monthly Report – Dr. Michelle Miller

1. The Future Focused Learning Summit was held yesterday, October 14, 2024, with 260 attendees. Special thanks to Cristine Wagner-Deitch and Dr. Matt Callison for creating, organizing, and leading this incredible opportunity for our region. Participants included Lion Learners, and educators and administrators from across the region with some joining from Canada. WTAE-TV captured highlights of the event.
2. Last week, grade level leaders from the elementary school began planning for the design of the Elementary School by meeting with DRAW Architects. Additional meetings will be held over the coming months.
3. On Friday, we hosted our 3rd annual "Dress like your Culture Day" with more than 500 students, faculty, and staff participating. In tandem with this day was an opportunity to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. We had approximately 1,000 learners join a virtual Tour of Latin America.
4. The annual Fun Fest was originally scheduled for October 15, 2024, but has been postponed to October 18, 2024, due to poor weather. The Fun Fest is held to raise funds for teacher grants provided by the South Fayette Foundation for Excellence. Special thanks to the Foundation, Elementary and Intermediate School administration, and Physical Education teachers for their efforts to have a successful event.

5. Last week, the first Student Advisory Council meeting for this year was held with more than 30 students from grades 9-12 in attendance who participated in dialogue to help guide decision making in our District. Discussion included how we welcomed and engaged our students during the first days of school, and summer work effectiveness and impact on grading.
6. Dr. Herring and South Fayette alumni Griffin Hurt were interviewed on KDKA-TV's Talk Pittsburgh program regarding the Junior Achievement 18 under 18 Award.

BUSINESS OFFICE

1. The Board considered the recommendation of Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval to authorize budget transfers as necessary beginning retroactive to October 1, 2024. If any transfers are necessary after the fiscal year end, appropriate detail will be supplied to the Board for ratification.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services Dr. Rachel Andler for Board approval to rent space in the Middle School to Allegheny Health Network to operate the AHN Summer Chill Project Summer Program from June 22, 2025, through July 24, 2025.
3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Facilities Steve Timmins, and Maintenance Manager Athan Tsourekis for Board approval to purchase replacement VFD pump controllers at the Middle School from V-systems for \$8,255.
4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Facilities Steve Timmins for Board approval for A1 Electric to install replacement bollards and perform all electric work along the front entrance of the stadium for \$15,165.

PERSONNEL

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

Nurse - High School Homecoming Dance, retroactive to September 28, 2024	Trina Howells
Extra Curricular Personal Care Paraeducator - High School Choir, retroactive to September 26, 2024	Leann Luck
Nurse - Middle School Halloween Dance	Misty Menarcheck
Extra Curricular Personal Care Paraeducator - Intermediate School Choir and Orff Ensemble, retroactive to September 17, 2024	Stacy Fleck
Extra Curricular Personal Care Paraeducators High School Best Buddies, retroactive to October 1, 2024	Chrissy Magdich Leann Luck
Extra Curricular Personal Care Paraeducators Middle School Best Buddies, retroactive to October 7, 2024	Kara Garubba Meghan Hartman

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services Dr. Rachel Andler for Board approval of the change of position of Austin March from Personal Care Paraeducator to Paraeducator, due to change in student need, at the probationary rate of \$16.09 per hour. After completion of a successful probationary period, the rate will be \$20.11 per hour.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services Dr. Rachel Andler for Board approval to hire the following at the probationary rate of \$16.09 per hour. After completion of a successful probationary period, the rate will be \$20.11 per hour, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.

- Ariel Morris, Classroom Paraeducator, Middle School, new position covered in the 2024-2025 budget
- Jean Bonavita, Classroom Paraeducator, Elementary School, replacement due to resignation

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Facilities Steve Timmins for Board approval to hire the following custodians at the probationary rate of \$14.57 per hour. After completion of a successful probationary period, the rate will be \$18.21 per hour, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.

- Patrick Thomas
- John Hucik
- Andrew Wilson

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators recommend for Board approval to hire the following substitute (call as needed) support staff, pending receipt of required documents.

- Sushree Jena, Paraeducator at the rate of \$12.50 per hour, Personal Care Paraeducator at the rate of \$13.50 per hour
- Gina Montani, Food Service Worker, at the rate of \$9.25 per hour
- Sophia McNavish, Custodian, at the rate of \$18.21

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the retirement and resignation of the following employees.

- Victoria Adams, Benefits Coordinator, retirement, effective date February/March 2025 (exact date to be determined)
- Ray Potts, Custodian, retirement, effective September 30, 2024
- Lisa Budzik, Bus Driver, retirement, effective January 3, 2025
- Linda Lynn, Food Services Worker, resignation, effective September 26, 2024
- Tanner Jones, Head 7th Grade Boys Basketball Coach, resignation, effective October 7, 2024
- Anna Slattery, Paraeducator, effective October 20, 2024

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Co-Directors of Aquatics Todd Clark and Gianna Boburka for Board approval to hire Hannah Finestone as Co-Head Lifeguard at the rate of \$12.00 per hour, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.

Voice Vote - All Yes

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Athletics Director Mark Keener for Board approval of the following volunteer positions for the 2024-2025 season, pending receipt of required documents.
 - Hannah Finestone, Volunteer Assistant Swim Coach
 - Kara Pappas, Volunteer Assistant Unified Bocce Coach
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Athletic Director Mark Keener for Board approval to hire the following coaches for the 2024-2025 school year.
 - Joe Silhanek, Head Coach, Unified Bocce
 - Jett Pattison, Assistant Wrestling Coach

3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Kristin Deichler for Board approval to hire the following After School Tutors for the 2024-2025 school year.
 - Breanna Snyder - Middle School PSSA Math Tutor
 - Jessica Kent-Middle School Math PSSA Tutor
4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Kristin Deichler for Board approval for Thiel University student Lauren Vuono to complete an externship with Intermediate School Speech Teacher Tanya Brehm from January 20, 2025 to April 25, 2025, pending receipt of required documents.
5. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Board approval of the following student teachers, pending receipt of required documents.
 - Maya Whalen, Duquesne University, with High School Teachers Michelle Lockette and Jeannie Scott from January 6, 2025, through April 25, 2025
 - Sophia Lee-Houser, Point Park University, with Middle School Teacher Renee Goedert from January 6, 2025, through April 18, 2025
6. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval of Director of Finance Ryan Neely as the School Board Treasurer effective November 1, 2024, at the annual stipend of \$1,500.00, prorated.

EDUCATION

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval to enter into a five year affiliation agreement with Pennsylvania Western (PennWest) to provide educational experiences to PennWest's students in the area of school psychology.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance Brian Tony, and Director of Student Support Services Dr. Rachel Andler for Board approval to enter into an Independent Contractor Agreement with the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD), to provide hearing itinerant services for South Fayette students attending the Western PA School for Blind Children (WPSBC), effective retroactively for the 2024-2025 school year.

TRANSPORTATION

There were no items discussed.

ATHLETICS

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletics Director Mark Keener, and Head Varsity Track and Field Coach Scott Litwinovich for Board approval for the Girls and Boys Track and Field teams to travel to Orlando, Florida, to compete in a track and field meet. The team would depart from South Fayette, tentatively on Thursday, March 20, 2025, and tentatively return on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. There will be no cost to the district.

CONSTRUCTION

Fornella seconded Welch on the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval for Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. to perform Geotechnical testing on the footprint of the Intermediate School addition at a cost of \$19,900.

Voice Vote - All Yes

Gray seconded Fornella on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval for land surveys and wetland and stream delineations for new elementary school project for a total cost of \$51,450.

Voice Vote - Yes - Bruce, Cardillo, Gray, Fornella, Iagnemma, Welch; No - Burroughs, Iriti

MISCELLANEOUS

There were no items discussed.

SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS

Geoff Childs, South Fayette Resident

Good evening. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak. My name is Geoff Childs. I'm a resident, and have children here at the school district. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about the important issue of political campaigning on the school campus. As I speak to you tonight, there is a candidate for State Office's campaign sign hung prominently in the stadium. Now my objection is not partisan in nature. I would no sooner see the opposition's sign in the stadium nor would I see a School Board candidate sign. As a community, we must prioritize the educational environment and well-being of our students above all else. And, secondly, we should be good stewards of our taxpayer property. I've previously brought this matter up to the School Board and the district leadership. I've been disappointed with the inaction on the matter. This body is setting a dangerous precedent allowing the politicization of the campus. This Board alone, I believe, has the authority to take action, and to that end, I urge this Board to take immediate action, to prohibit all political campaigning and signage on South Fayette's campus to protect the educational environment, the well-being of our students, and the integrity of the schools. Thank you.

Burroughs seconded Welch to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

Voice Vote - All Yes