

**Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Parent Engagement Committee Notes
November 17, 2021**

Call to Order

Erin Morotti called the committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present

Erin Morotti, Chair
Yumi McCulloch, Administrator Support
Lori Mertes, FEA
Theresa Vick, FEA
Linda Kang, Secondary Principal
Becky Zaverl, Elementary Principal
Katy Hardman, Parent
Tami Murphy, Parent
Amanda Foley, Parent

Absent

Meagen Sassman, Parent, excused
Bea Huck, Parent, excused
Annette McCotter, Parent, expected

COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION [2:36-9:45]

Ms. Morotti acknowledged many on the committee, including herself, are new. She went around the room offering those who are comfortable to introduce themselves.

AGENDA [9:55]

ZAVERL MOVED, HARDMAN SECONDED, TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. NO OBJECTIONS, MOTION CARRIED.

MEETING NOTES [10:21]

MERTES MOVED, HARDMAN SECONDED, TO APPROVE MEETING NOTES FROM APRIL 14, 2021. NO OBJECTIONS, MOTION CARRIED.

FACILITY UTILIZATION WORK AND BUDGET

Chief School Administrator Karen Melin gave a brief snapshot of the work done by the School Facility Task Force [12:00-19:30]

- District is faced with a financial crisis. Facility utilization discussion has been ongoing for about 5 years.
- What kind of services we can best provide students and families?
- School Facility Task Force was formed from several different groups: Fairbanks Native Association, parents, community members, clergy, principals, FEA, ESSA etc.
- TIMELINE:
 - Task force finishes up their work at the end of this week
 - December 6th: Board Work Session/ report from the task force
 - Task Force Purpose: provide options to better utilize our facilities

- Time for feedback/input via website, survey, emails etc. These will be forwarded to the board to help with their decision
- January 10th: Work Session
- Big work ahead. Emotional; it represents change and we don't take these decisions lightly.
- We've had a steady decrease in enrollment yet our "foot-print" hasn't changed; it's become larger with Charter Schools.
- We've been funding building not students...
- We want to make sure we are funding the important things; and that's our students.

Chief Operations Officer Andy DeGraw [video presentation](#) (**this takes some time to download)
[21:15-46:40]

- Review of FY23 budget, including budget timeline, funding sources, explanation of fund balance, expenditures.
- Enrollment decline since 2020- approximately 1,000 students which equates to approximately \$12.3 million deficit (covered currently by CARES funds).
- The district is in its third year of the state's hold harmless (only allowed for 25%- which added approximately \$3 million in losses for FY23).
- Borough assessment values increased by \$700 million causing a decrease in state funding.
- Minimum required local contribution (which increased) is deducted from state funding (approximate loss of \$2 million in state funding).
- District deficit approximately \$17.3 million for FY23.

FUTURE MEETING DISCUSSION [58:10-1:10]

- How often would the committee like to meet? Former years the committee would meet quarterly; would the committee like to meet more frequently?
 - Zoom is a preferred option moving forward.
 - MOTION TO HOLD MEETING MONTHLY: HARDMAN, SECONDED MERTES
 - UNANIMOUSLY PASSED- MONTHLY MEETINGS MOVING FORWARD

COVID-19 FEEDBACK [1:10-1:20]

Committee discussion ensued on:

- Mask mandate on agenda: December 7, 2021
 - Amanda Foley: came from NC and prefers in-person over remote or homeschooling. When she enrolled her students it was due to; in-person learning and no mask policy.
 - Amanda stated her students struggle with masks.
 - Lori Mertes: teaches per-k and masks are difficult but the students do comply. She makes allowances as needed.
- Becky Zaverl: During parent/teacher conferences there was worry from the parents who felt like they were being judged because the parents were the primary teachers last year causing students to fall behind. Ms. Zaverl understood this feeling due to attending her own children's conferences and experiencing some setbacks.
- Tami Murphy: Paper packets for those families who don't have access to WiFi.

COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Morotti shared her screen to show the book Stronger Together which six other districts across the state have taken framework on. The book showcases how district staff can partner with families/parents. It's an expert guidance for Alaskan specific families/educators to work hand in hand together for the success of our students.

Ms. Morotti ordered enough books for the group and would like to suggest having a book study with the committee over the remainder of the year. 10 minute check in to gain perspective.

ADJOURNMENT [1:25:47]

ZAVERL MOVED, MERTES SECONDED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. NO OBJECTIONS, MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Submitted by Erin Poland, executive assistant to the chief school administrator