

FAIRFIELD CITY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 7, 2008

25

The Board of Education of the Fairfield City School District in the County of Butler, State of Ohio, held a Regular Meeting on the 7th of February 2008 at the Fairfield High School Community Room.

The meeting was called to order by the President at 5:30 pm.

ROLL CALL – Present: Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Engel, Mr. Kearns, Dr. Morris, & Mr. Murray
Absent: None

Also present: Mrs. Milligan, Mr. Amodio, & Mrs. Lane
Mr. Clemmons arrived at 5:56 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ITEMS FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

A. Easement request – West Elementary

Ben Mann of the Public Works Department for the City of Fairfield presented a request to the Board to secure an easement from the Fairfield City School District at the intersection of River Road and Vinnedge Drive.

B. Permanent Improvement Funds Report

Mrs. Milligan, Mr. Amodio, Mrs. Fitzharris, Mrs. Thompson, & Mrs. Lane presented information to the Board regarding expenditures and revenues during the life of the current five year Permanent Improvement Levy and addressed questions from the Board.

08-20 MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND THE TREASURER TO EXECUTE A PERMANENT ROADWAY AND UTILITY EASEMENT TO THE CITY OF FAIRFIELD, OHIO FOR THE RIVER ROAD/VINNEDGE DRIVE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PLANS ON FILE AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE

MOTION - Moved by Mr. Kearns

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. Murray

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Engel, Mr. Kearns, Dr. Morris, & Mr. Murray

Nays: None

Motion Carried: 5-0

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 18	Presidents' Day	No School
February 21	Board Meeting	6:30 p.m. High school community room

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Engel

I would like to take a moment to share some of my concerns about our next Operating levy.

Here are the facts.

The latest 5 year forecast shows us spending \$4,000,000 more than we take in for the next school year. The year after that it's over \$7,000,000.

We currently have a \$12,000,000 surplus and that is projected to become a bottom line deficit of almost \$9,000,000 in 3 years.

Our school treasurer has told us if the forecast holds true the latest we can wait to place another Operating Levy on the ballot is 2009.

I believe it is going to be very hard for this board of education to pass an Operating Levy for the following reasons.

All indicators are pointing to a recession

Gas is at an all time high at \$3.00 a gallon

I recently read where our Governor claimed Ohio is facing crises with home foreclosures, unemployment and low wages.

I personally don't see this board taking our kids busing and sports to pass a levy. I know I will not support those tactics.

So, as I see it, if this board is going to act in a fiscally responsible manner, if we intend on representing the will of the people, then it is our duty to balance out next years \$4,000,000 deficit. If my fellow board members still feel we can pass another Operating Levy then I believe the responsible thing to do is to place an Operating Levy on the ballot, this summer, before we start deficit spending next year. We should tell the public that we will respect their will and balance the budget if they so choose to vote NO on the levy. I myself will vote NO on the issue because I am convinced the community will not support another levy and I am convinced that the budget can be balanced without hurting our children's education.

If we enter the next school year and start spending our \$12,000,000 surplus we will have headed down the path of no return for another multi-million dollar operating levy. In order to get us back on the balanced budget path it would then take catastrophic cuts. Cut that could very well harm our children's education. A few months ago I shared Ideas on how to cut as much as \$8,000,000 from the budget. Let me repeat that. They were ideas for the board to consider and there were plenty of good ideas to balance the \$4,000,000 deficit spending situation we are facing next year. These cuts and cost cutting measures could very well be enacted without increasing our children's class size, and in my opinion would not hurt our children's education. There was also no mention of taking our children's buses and sports programs to balance out the \$4,000,000.

Mr. Engel's comments (cont.)

If it is our intention to spend the \$12,000,000 surplus until it is gone and then demand more money from the community, we need to be honest with the community and tell them our plan up front. We need to tell the community our board will not take NO for an answer once we are in fiscal crisis. We need to tell the community that this board is willing to divide our community and will do everything in it's power to force the next operating levy on the community. Most importantly we must tell the community that our board is willing to place our children's education at risk by chancing the requirement for catastrophic cuts once the \$12,000,000 surplus is gone. Sticking our heads in the sand, ignoring the financial crisis we are headed for and assuming our community will support another operating levy, will be a reckless decision.

Know and understand this. If our community is divided over the next Operating Levy it will be because of a conscious decision to do so by this board. The community divide will be a direct result of our Board of Education's refusal to listen to the public.

In regard to the next Operating Levy, I believe it is in the best interest of the Board, our children and the community that we seriously discuss our financial situation and prepare and share a fiscal plan of future action. I would suggest we start this process at the boards next work session and have a plan in place by the end of the school year.

Mr. Kearns

No comments

Mrs. Bailey

She noted that the 12 million dollar surplus indicates that we have budgeted well.

She stated that the tangible personal property tax is being phased out and that the school districts will receive a lower percentage of monies.

She congratulated the Fairfield City Schools Show Choirs on their many awards in competitions over the past two weeks. The Rhythm Express for the first time was the Grand Champions last weekend at the Contest of Champions in the Junior High Division at Edgewood.

She reminded everyone of the first Athletic Boosters has a Fundraiser Breakfast Saturday, February 16th, from 8am until 11am. Winter sports coaches have tickets.

She wished The Middle School students good luck at the Science Fair to be held this Saturday at 9:00 am.

She congratulated the two soccer players that signed for college scholarships – Kelsey Meyer (Western Kentucky) and Derek Schardine (Union College).

She thanked the principals, staff, and students at Fairfield High School, Fairfield Freshman School, and Fairfield Middle School for welcoming Jerome Kearns and herself for visits.

Mr. Murray

We need to move forward with the community engagement process. He asked the viewers of the broadcast to provide ideas to allow the school district to move forward to excellence.

Dr. Morris

He congratulated all of the sports teams and Cory Stewart, GMC champion. He congratulated Pat Jeanneret, coach of the boy's swim team for being honored as the GMC coach of the year.

He stated that we need to address tough issues in tough times and that the answer to the facilities commission report lies somewhere in the middle – that the report covers two extremes.

08-21 EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION – Moved by Mr. Murray to recess to Executive Session at 7:08 pm to discuss the following:

Employment and Compensation of Employees ORC 121.22(G) (1)
Court Action 121.22 (G) (3) – Pending or Imminent Litigation

SECOND – Seconded by Mrs. Bailey

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Engel, Mr. Kearns, Dr. Morris, & Mr. Murray

Nays: None

Motion Carried: 5-0

The Board resumed the Regular Session at 8:05 pm.

08-22 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION - Moved by Mrs. Bailey to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. Kearns

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Engel, Mr. Kearns, Dr. Morris, & Mr. Murray

Nays: None

Motion Carried: 5-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm by the President, Dr. Morris.

President

Attest: _____
Treasurer