

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #477

Farmington River Elementary School Library

MINUTES

Monday, March 2nd, 2026

7:00 PM

Members Present: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner (late), Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Also Present: Superintendent Timothy Lee, Carol Sauerhoefer, Caroline Stamm

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Denise Hardie.
 - a. Roll Call: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze
 - b. Douglas Miner was not yet present at the meeting, but joined later.
2. **Public Comment:**
 - a. There was no public comment at this time.
3. **Review of Minutes:**
 - *Regular Meeting of February 2025 (#476)*
 - *Executive Meeting of January 2025*
 - a. **MOTION:** Carl Nett made a motion to approve minutes from Meeting #476 (2/2/26).
 - i. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - ii. **VOTE to accept:** Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. Douglas Miner was not yet present for the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed 4-0 to accept the minutes from Meeting #476 (2/2/26).
 - b. **MOTION:** Stacey Schultze made a motion to approve minutes from the Executive Session Meeting #476 (1/5/26).
 - i. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 - ii. **VOTE to accept:** Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. Douglas Miner was not yet present for the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed 4-0 to approve minutes from the Executive Session Meeting #476 (1/5/26).
4. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - a. **Preliminary Expenditure Budget for FY27 with Preliminary Revenues, Offsets and Proposed Assessments**
 - i. Carol Sauerhoefer presented an update of the Preliminary Expenditure Budget for FY27 and highlighted changes including areas where they were able to find savings, an update to the School Choice revolving fund, and an overview of the revised expenditure budget
 - ii. Carol then walked through the FY27 Assessment Calculation, including reviewing each step of the calculation and the resulting total annual assessment to each town.
 - b. **SC Discussion**
 - i. Carol and Superintendent Lee fielded questions from the School Committee regarding the presented budget worksheets and the comparison to previous

- years, including a new van purchase, transportation funds, and the impact of changes to grant funding.
- ii. While there are still outstanding questions to be answered and potential changes to still be made, the School Committee felt comfortable proceeding with this documentation for the Public Hearing.
- c. School Committee vote to move preliminary budget to Public Hearing
 - i. MOTION: Stacey Schultze made a motion to accept this budget for presentation in the Public Hearing on 3/11/26.
 - 1. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 - 2. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously to accept this budget for presentation in the Public Hearing on 3/11/26.

5. School Committee New Business

- a. Parent Letter Requesting Exception to Policy JEB and its 2012 Addendum (Kindergarten Early Entrance Option)
 - i. Superintendent Lee presented the current policy and addendum for the Kindergarten Early Entrance Option and the context on how this policy was previously passed. This has been brought forward to the School Committee along with letters from a parent who is requesting early entrance to Kindergarten for their child.
 - ii. The School Committee discussed potential highlights and challenges of approving parents' requests for an exception to the policy. There was a discussion on whether they should consider changing the enrollment date (either for the policy or the exception policy). They agreed that this specific exception should be a separate discussion from revisiting and amending the policy to extend the date of consideration.
 - iii. There was also discussion on the assessment process to help determine the student's readiness for Kindergarten.
 - iv. The School Committee fielded public comment from Alexa Bunnell, the student's parent, regarding their request for an exception.
 - v. MOTION: Douglas Miner made a motion to change the exception date for this policy to October 15th.
 - 1. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was a discussion to only amend this policy from October 1st to October 15th and no other language, and possibly suspend the policy rules to pass this as policy for tonight. There was hesitation from some members on acting before seeing more research or knowing the rationale of shifting the date.
 - 3. There was also discussion on wanting to see more research and confer with teachers before making a formal decision.
 - 4. VOTE to accept: Douglas Miner and Carl Nett were in favor. Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, and Stacey Schultze were opposed. The motion did not pass 2-3 to change the exception date for this policy October 15th.
 - vi. Superintendent Lee discussed the next steps, where they will screen the student earlier than the regular PK/EK/K screenings, and revisit this discussion in the

April School Committee meeting. In the meantime, they will gather more research on early entrance to Kindergarten and consider discussing with the early education teachers on their input to make a more informed decision on amending this policy.

- vii. Mrs. Rebecca Hamill (our current PK/EK) provided public comment regarding her current class and her perspective on the screening processes she's completed.
- viii. Susan Ebitz (Otis resident) gave public comment on perspective, having given kindergarten entrance screenings years ago, and asked if there are any new screening tools that can screen for social-emotional development that haven't yet been considered.

6. Rotating Committee Focus:

- a. Vacancy Notice for the position of District Treasurer
 - i. Superintendent Lee shared that Jane Gleason, our current District Treasurer, has given notice that she would like to retire at the end of this fiscal year. He shared background about Jane, who was here when the regional district was founded and she served as the first School Business Administrator of the district, and has continued working for the district for the past 30 years. He thanked her for her decades of service to the district and all of her wonderful work.
 - ii. They will be posting a vacancy later in the school year, and Superintendent Lee will be seeking a subcommittee to aid him in her replacement.

7. Ongoing Agenda Items:

- a. Strategic Planning: Update on 2026-2027 LYA Afterschool Programming
 - i. Superintendent Lee checked in with the administrators of the LYA Afterschool Programming on the application process and anticipates she will conclude the application in April, and a site-visit over the summer.
 - ii. They will be putting together staffing information for those who are interested.
- b. Annual School Committee Vote to Receive Enrollment via School Choice
 - i. Superintendent Lee put forth a suggested motion for the annual school committee school-choice vote, and would formally close school-choice for grades 7-12 per previous decisions. He noted that this is an annual decision.
 - ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to open the district school choice enrollment in grades K-6 for the 2025-2026 school year and to close the district to school choice enrollment in grades 7-12 for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - 1. Douglas Miner seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was no discussion.
 - 3. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze_were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed 5-0 to open the district school choice enrollment in grades K-6 for the 2025-2026 school year and to close the district to school choice enrollment in grades 7-12 for the 2025-2026 school year.
- c. PreK Modification/Clarification of Enrollment Practices
 - i. Superintendent Lee wanted to recognize the hard work of Mrs. Hamill and her team in the combined PK/EK classroom this year.

- ii. He noted that our PK program is an integrated PK, where the primary goal is a special education program where students with disabilities and delays can be integrated with non-special education students.
- iii. We are looking at practices continuing to be the same heading into next year, with the enrollment projected to be about the same or perhaps lower.
- iv. There has been a request that when LYA comes to assess the space, they will also be considering it for after-school for 4-year-olds (not currently for 3-year-olds).

8. Warrants for Review:

- a. Warrants are available in the front office if anyone would like to review them.

9. Executive Session:

To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an opening meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body if the chair so declares.

- a. Carl Nett made the motion to exit into executive session at 9:06 PM with the intent to return to the public meeting following executive session.
- b. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
- c. Vote - Roll Call: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze.
- d. The School Committee returned from Executive Session at 9:45 PM.

10. School Committee Action/New Business:

- a. Memorandum of Agreement, Grievance Resolution of February 2026
 - i. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to accept the MOA between the Farmington River School Committee and Farmington River Regional Educators Association dated March 2nd.
 - ii. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - iii. There was no discussion.
 - iv. VOTE: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze_were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed 5-0 to accept the MOA between the Farmington River School Committee and Farmington River Regional Educators Association dated March 2nd.

11. Adjournment:

- a. Stacey Schultze made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 PM.
- b. Carl Nett seconded the motion.
- c. Roll Call: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm