

Farmington River Regional School District

School Committee

Meeting #484

Farmington River Elementary School Library

MINUTES

Monday, September 14th, 2026

6:00 PM

Members Present: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Also Present: Superintendent Timothy Lee, Caroline Stamm

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Denise Hardie.
 - a. **Roll Call:** Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett Stacey Schultze.
2. **Special Agenda Item: Recognition of Ms. Jane Gleason**
 - a. Denise introduced Ms. Jane Gleason, who has served as the District Treasurer for the duration of the Regional School District for the past 34 years. Denise acknowledged all of Jane's wonderful contributions, guidance, and stability in her tenure, and wishes her well with her future plans with her family and her time.
 - b. Many members of the district community shared their appreciation for her and warm wishes, including Denise Hardie, Carl Nett, Carol Sauerhoefer, Laurie Flower, Heidi Utenis, among others.
3. **Public Comment:**
 - a. Denise handed out a Back to School Ballot about the top 5 things we like about Farmington River. There was a question about what Dragon Cards/Eggs are, which Laurie Flower was able to explain.
4. **Review of Minutes:**
 - *Regular Meeting of August 10th, 2026*
 - a. **MOTION:** Carl Nett made a motion to approve minutes from Meeting #483 (8/10/26).
 - i. Kate Meierdicks seconded the motion.
 - ii. There was no discussion.
 - iii. **VOTE to accept:** Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, and Carl Nett were in favor. Stacey Schultze abstained from the vote. There were no objections, and the motion passed to approve minutes from Meeting #483 (8/10/26).
 - b. The minutes from the July Meeting were postponed to the next meeting.
5. **Superintendent's Report:**
 - a. **Opening of School Report (LF)**
 - i. Principal Laurie Flower began by thanking Stacey Schultze, who appeared as a representative from the School Committee on the first day PD, and for leading the staff on the "Give, Get, Grateful" exercise
 - ii. Laurie spoke about the strong start to the school year, and how staff has put a great deal of work into establishing routines and expectations with students.
 - iii. The school held a Welcome Assembly last Friday and discussed what makes a great school. Students had great input on how to improve our school community!

- iv. We are welcoming 16 new students - 8 of whom are school choice, with 2 more expected to begin in October.
- v. We are continuing to build on the implementations from last year (new reading curriculum, assessment system, SIS, etc) and added new phones and PA system as we continue to focus on improving and training safety systems and protocols.
- vi. We are still working on the PRISM grant, and received praise from the state on the successes of that implementation goals - noting outstanding work with critical thinking, student self-expression, etc.
- vii. We received recognition from the state for our attendance as well.
- b. Transportation Update (MS)
 - i. Mike Sporito, who oversees transportation as part of his role as Director of Student Services, shared updates on our transportation this year - noting that we are operating a 5-van fleet following last year's purchase. He recognized Heidi Utenis' contributions to aid with coverage - specifically her contributions to cover the morning high school & elementary runs.
 - ii. We are working with Dufour for their 3-bus fleet.
 - 1. There have been some issues that are still being ironed out. He noted that we are closing the gap daily towards improving routes to get closer to the times that parents were originally scheduled.
 - iii. Superintendent Lee recognized the hard work of Mike Saporito for coordinating the transportation, as well driving a van himself.
- c. 2026-2027 Enrollment as of 9/14
 - i. With the additions of the new family coming in October that Laurie mentioned, we are nearing the same number of students that we ended last year with.
 - ii. K-6th grade class sizes are between 11 and 16, with the smallest classes in K, 2, 3 and largest 4th and 6th.
 - iii. PK/EK has somewhere between 17-18 in the AM and 10 in the PM with 2 teachers in the room.
- d. Afterschool Program Update
 - i. Superintendent Lee shared the unfortunate news that the LYA was not able to provide the after-school program as planned due to staffing shortages.
 - ii. The Admin Team decided to bring back the After-School "Dragons Den" program that has been run in the past few years. He shared the flyer about the program and anticipates that this will be shared with families soon. The program would begin on Sept. 29th.

6. New Business:

- a. MOU Afterschool (Dragon's Den) Program Hourly Stipends
 - i. Superintendent Lee noted that in his review of the FRREA contract, he noticed that there was no language for the general Afterschool Program outside of activity-based programs (such as Intramurals, Chess Club, Snowshoeing, etc). In the past, they have run the program without a school-committee-approved MOU.
 - ii. He brought forth a proposed MOU for the 2026-2027 Stipend for Afterschool Program (Dragon's Den) Staff. He noted that this applies to Unit A & C members since the position applies to members from both units.

- iii. There was discussion on comparing the Dragon Den's program to the proposed LYA afterschool program - noting the LYA was more comprehensive, but required the families to pay, but and due to the certification of LYA, parents could use vouchers. Part of this comparison was viewing after school program as more of an enrichment program compared to regular childcare option for working parents.
 - iv. There was a discussion that the MOU presented has up to 3 positions, which gives the admin team flexibility for increasing enrollment.
 - v. There was clarification regarding that the MOU requires that the positions hired must be part of the FRREA Bargaining Unit since this is an MOU for the union contract.
 - vi. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to approve the Afterschool Care MOU as presented.
 - 1. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was no discussion.
 - 3. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 4-0 to approve the Afterschool Staff MOU as presented.
- b. Staff Opening Day Activity: Responses
- i. Superintendent Lee thanked Stacey for coming to the PD day and welcoming the staff back on behalf of the school committee, and for leading the staff through the "Give, Get, Grateful" activity.
 - ii. Stacey explained the activity was and the background on what this activity was seeking. She asked staff 1 thing they can give to FRES, 1 thing they'd like to get, and 1 thing that they are grateful for.
 - 1. She noted that there was overwhelming need for support but was not exactly clear on what that support looks like, so they would need to dive in further on what that means.
 - 2. She also noted that everyone was grateful for the community that was built.
 - 3. There was discussion on perhaps repeating the activity with the parents to see their perspective.
 - iii. Superintendent Lee responded that his 'ah-ha' moment is seeing that staff wants to feel appreciated for their work, and noted on how he and the admin team can better share this appreciation with staff directly.
- c. Monthly Agenda Placeholder for Staff News & Program Highlights
- i. They discussed that adding this agenda item placeholder as a response to the "Give, Get, Grateful" activity.
 - ii. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to add an agenda item placeholder for Staff News & Program Highlights on future agendas moving forward.
 - 1. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - 2. The discussion was to aim to add this beginning in October.
 - 3. VOTE to accept: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 4-0 to add an agenda item placeholder for Staff News & Program Highlights on future agendas moving forward.

- iii. The Committee shared as part of Staff News that Caroline Stamm is getting married at the end of this week!

7. Old Business:

a. Resignation of School Committee Member, Update on Replacement

- i. Carl Nett shared the background on what happens when a School Committee member resigns as defined by the RDA. He noted that the seat has to be filled 3 meetings from the resignation.
- ii. He explained an idea that he shared with the Sandisfield Select Board to both fill the seat that Douglas Miner left when he resigned, as well as planning ahead for when his term concludes.
 - 1. He shared that there is interest from someone from Sandisfield to fill the vacancy, but the Sandisfield Select Board plans to vote on this plan and vacancy at the next meeting. .

b. Options for Superintendent Search Services

- i. Superintendent Lee reviewed the various Superintendent Search Service options, highlighting the benefits of each.
- ii. The School Committee discussed the process of moving forward with filling the Superintendent role and discussed further what their leadership structure options they may prefer.
- iii. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of using MASC compared to NESDEC or a combination of both.
- iv. The Committee discussed what type of position they would be advertising for (such as Interim Superintendent for one year, or look for a 3-year contract that is renegotiated each year.
- v. MOTION: Carl Nett made a motion to proceed with the search to fill Superintendent Lee's current, part-time position, renewable annually by mutual agreement.
 - 1. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion.
 - 2. There was discussion on if these term limits who might apply for the position.
 - 3. Superintendent Lee shared his perspective, noting that they would likely be searching for an Interim position based on their discussion, and the pros of seeking this type of position based on other potential upcoming leadership changes. He also shared his experience through a similar transition from Interim to 3-year contract.
 - 4. MOTION TO AMEND: Carl Nett made a motion to amend the motion to read as follows: "to proceed with the search to fill Superintendent Lee's current role with an interim position."
 - a. Stacey Schultze seconded the motion to amend.
 - b. There was discussion on whether a 1-year contract would disrupt stability in the school.
 - c. VOTE TO AMEND: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 4-0 to amend the motion to read

as follows: “to proceed with the search to fill Superintendent Lee’s current role with an interim position.”

5. VOTE TO ACCEPT: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, and Stacey Schultze were in favor. There were no objections, and the motion passed unanimously 4-0 to to proceed with the search to fill Superintendent Lee’s current role with an interim position
- vi. The Committee discussed how to proceed with MASC and/or NESDEC.
- vii. There was discussion on leadership structure changes, specifically the Director of Student Services position, and the pros and cons of having SPED teachers help with this work load.
- viii. NEXT STEPS:
 1. Denise & Tim will get together for a to-do list for MASC
 2. Timeline: there was consensus to proceed with the timeline as outlined by the MASC
 3. They discussed what might happen if there are leadership changes in retirement in the next few months as this is happening. The consensus is to proceed as we currently are, and if something changes, to address it at that time.

8. Warrants for Review:

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

9. Other Items not anticipated if the Chair approves

- a. Nothing at this time

10. Future Agenda Items

- a. Nothing at this time

11. Adjournment:

- a. Carl Nett made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM.
 - i. Kate Meierdiecks seconded the motion.
 - ii. VOTE - Roll Call: Denise Hardie, Kate Meierdiercks, Carl Nett, Stacey Schultze

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Stamm