

**Forestville Board of Education Regular Meeting  
September 3, 2020 5:30PM –Zoom Transcript**

Carol Woodward: Would like to welcome everyone and call the meeting the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Kristin will now begin to record in three, two, one.

Carol Woodward: We will ask everyone to please stay until the end of our presentations, at that time it will take a short break. For those who wish to leave. We have a new staff member this year, Mr. Grande, would you like to introduce our Health and Physical Education teacher.

Dan Grande: I sure would. So I don't see her. She disappeared. She was in front of me a second ago, but it's Gianna Marcantonio.

Dan Grande: She is the Health and Physical Education teacher so she teaches help to all the students and some of the physical education. I will say that, you know, over the past couple years. Sometimes when you sit down to interview the pools, not very deep. This year the pool was deep.

Dan Grande: For Gianna to rise to the top of that pool, fresh out of college with not a lot of in school experience. I think that speaks to her character. And I think it speaks to her abilities. So we are very pleased to offer her that position. Our newest faculty member at Forestville. And I think what she's heard most from me this week is, I'm sorry. Multiple times. And reason, you know, I need to explain this. The reason for that. There's the new teachers always get a lot more time with administration and we do the orientation and that. Given the pandemic and hybrid model and everything that we're doing. My time has been very limited and up until this week our face to face contact really hasn't been there. So we have a little bit of catching up to do with her orientation and today's faculty meeting.

Dan Grande: A couple times, I found myself, kind of going through some things and saying, Gee, I know we're going to cover this in more depth. Next week, we're going to do, you know. So she's going to roll with the punches. She has her classroom all set up, a brand new classroom.

Dan Grande: She was in about a week ago and shown around the building and was told that this is her classroom on the third floor and she probably got her head all wrapped around that and she came in on Tuesday, only to find out that that wasn't her classroom. And we moved her so she had a completely set up a brand new room as a classroom, but we're really excited.

Dan Grande: To have Gianna on the staff and feel that you know when you're hiring. You're looking for somebody that's a good fit for the program. She feels that she's a good fit for our program and we know that she's a good fit for our program. So I look forward to working with her for many years, hopefully.

Carol Woodward: Welcoming Gianna, we would give her a pin and hope we'll have to do that sometime.

Kristin Irwin: The pin and the lanyard are on the way up to the middle school and high school. So you should be getting them in our inner mail system.

Gianna Marcantonio: Thank you.

Carol Woodward: I am sure that you're going to love our school. We have a great school here and welcome to our community.

Gianna Marcantonio: Thank you. I am really excited.

Dave Caccamise: Welcome Gianna.

Gianna Marcantonio: Thank you.

Carol Woodward: OK, now we'll go on to Mike Gajewski's transportation report.

Mike Gajewski: So it's been pretty hectic month here. We have four buses DOT yesterday, they all passed. Jim gave me the cleaning supplies I need for the buses for all the drivers, we went over that today. Mike Murphy set up the temperature reader as you walk in the front door, explained to everybody, how to use it. We've been building the bus schedules around the kids the best we can. And we should only end up having one bus trip in the morning, one in the afternoon for bus. I'll show those changes to Tina and Melody, so they can make them for when they just submit us because when we pick up the kids on Tuesday. Sarah was helping rerouting today because we have three drivers that retired. So I was three drivers short. You know, I had three left to work with. Ashley was up here today to we did some, she helped me change some of the children. All in all, I, you know, after tomorrow I should be ready. I have to call a bunch of parents on their pickup times and other than that is look like it's going to be okay.

Mike Gajewski: Any questions.

Carol Woodward: No, I'm sure it's been hectic for you, Mike, you know, a great job.

Carol Woodward: Okay, well good luck on your first day.

Mike Gajewski: Yes, thank you. Okay.

Carol Woodward: Great.

Carol Woodward: Anybody else have any questions for Mike?

Carol Woodward: Okay, we welcome everyone to stay for the rest of the meeting, but if you wish to leave at this time. You may and we thank you for coming and we will now continue with the meeting. May I have a motion to approve the agenda.

Dave Caccamise: Move

Mervin Fry: Second

Carol Woodward: All in favor.

Michael LoManto: Aye.

Amy Drozdziel: Aye.

Mervin Fry: Aye.

Sylvester Cleary: Aye.

Dave Caccamise: Aye.

Carol Woodward: Aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried.

Carol Woodward: Is there any public comment.

Carol Woodward: Don't hear any so we'll go on to our supervisory reports, Mrs. Marcinelli.

Lindsay Marcinelli: Well, it's been a world one down here. So I am happy to say that really with Renee's help and assistance we have. And honestly, even Carol's assistance. This building is actually ready to go on the first day of school next week. So the construction project was really quite an uphill battle for us to deal with and getting these rooms ready and clean and Jim's crew did a really great job. So we have all the rooms setup and tomorrow we'll finish taping up the desks to make sure that they stay socially distance apart because you know little kids are great at not moving, throughout the day, so we're going to have tape on the floor to keep their desks, where they need to be. And, you know, our teachers were in the last three days.

Lindsay Marcinelli: And I think that everyone is very much on the same page and ready to have a very successful opening to the school year and then we really gone through as much detail and answer as many questions as we can.

Lindsay Marcinelli: And have had three days of parent drop off for our kindergarten and tomorrow we are doing a kindergarten or pre K drop off, a meet and greet of the teacher as well.

Lindsay Marcinelli: Which I know was quite important for our community. So I'm glad we were able to work that out for times when there wasn't staff in the building to do that except for those teachers. So really it's been quite

Lindsay Marcinelli: It's been quite a week, I would say the last couple weeks have been quite intense but I feel like we're really ready to go and have a really good plan for next week and I know that our teachers are excited to see the kids as much as they're excited to come back with had a lot of really positive feedback from families. Parents have been

reaching out just to ask some clarifying questions and saying, how excited their kids are to come back to school. So we are definitely ready for the first day on Tuesday.

Carol Woodward: Thank you. I think I'm just gonna say I attended two of those parent meetings that you had on zoom and I got really good feedback from some of the people I talked too. I thought it was excellent. And I really did learn a lot. So it was informative for me to be part of that meeting, but I think Mr. Grande and Renee and you did an awesome job. Good job.

Carol Woodward: Excellent. Let's move on to Mr. Grande

Dan Grande: Well, I think you're all going to be shocked to hear that. I am all talked out here today. I all day for four and a half hours of just meeting with people and talking

Dan Grande: I don't have much energy left. I will say ditto to everything that Lindsay said. There's been a ton of work that has been accomplished this summer. This is nothing like we've ever done before, honestly.

Dan Grande: I feel very confident that will be ready for Tuesday like Lindsay, I think that everyone's on the same page. You know that the big message that I've been pushing with the teachers and staff. This week is optimism.

Dan Grande: And being reasonable and I think that the message has been heard loud and clear. And I think everyone is ready, we know that it's not going to be perfect. On Tuesday, but it's going to be good and every single day will get a little bit better. And we'll learn from the previous day, and just like Lindsay said it's been a whirlwind. It's been a ton of work on but Renee will tell you that this is what we're cut out for. And it's true.

Dan Grande: This type of stuff you know when things are changed. And you got to rise to the occasion and do something different. And think out of the box that's I think our specialty so not saying that we'd ever want to replicate this but it, it hasn't been a horrible ride.

Dan Grande: It really hasn't been it's been kind of refreshing at times to just kind of do something out of the ordinary things that we've been doing for many years.

Dan Grande: But we're real excited about opening. We certainly want the opportunity to have the students come back. Nobody wants to teach remotely 100% so I'm the optimist here. I really think that this is going to work out really well. And I think we're going to be moving and enjoying every single day closer to getting these kids back full time and restoring some normalcy, so

Carol Woodward: Yeah, I agree with you. Dan, I, you know, you're going to have, it's going to be a few train days because people are going to be nervous but I just say, you know, just use common sense and I agree with you. I think we're going to get through, which is fine.

Dan Grande: And I will throw this out, I know Lindsey did it a couple months ago, little shout out to the Superintendent, you know, brown nose action there or whatever.

Dan Grande: But I will tell you this. I'm going to throw one out to both of the ladies are right. When I was at the elementary building for the 11 years I never sweat as much as I saw those two sweating this week.

Dan Grande: I never lifted as much as they lifted this week or rolled up my sleeves as much as they've rolled up their sleeves.

Dan Grande: So you know what I mean, honestly, the district, including myself, I really appreciate you know that the hard work ethic of our two administrators, and I think that they've done an incredible job setting the tone and modeling for other. The other day I only spent about 10 minutes down at the elementary and I got out of there before they put me to work.

Carol Woodward: That's what happened to me.

Dan Grande: I saw you coming in, Carol. I'm like, oh my God, she's coming back, you didn't learn from the first time.

Carol Woodward: I know two days, you know, that was fun. You had a good time. So, okay. Thanks, Dan. Okay, we'll go on to Mrs. Fitzgerald, our District Treasurer.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: Hi, everyone. Um, I wanted to actually speak to everyone tonight because I want everybody to, I want to keep you aware of things that we're hearing things that we're seeing.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: And I want to make sure that everybody has in the you know the front of their mind that we are in a fiscal, financial situation.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: Um, it's very important that we keep that in mind. So I'm going to start off with the New York State Department of Budget has said that we will experience a 20% hold back in school aid and cost driven aid.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: Now, when we heard that at first we thought it was going to be for this fiscal year right now 2021 but I want to make everybody aware that we're actually seeing it in which is the 2019-2020 year. We've already received our first series of payments for the school aid.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: That confirmed that we're already seeing a 20% hold back what that looks like. Currently, is we've already received at over \$85,000 worth of cuts.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: We're also hearing this evening, actually this afternoon. I heard that the Farm to School grant might also be cut. So that's another \$20,000.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: So I want everybody to be aware that it's not only happening in this year that we're currently in, but it's happening from last year as well.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: Um, so the estimated 20% holdbacks have not happened, but we should definitely anticipate them because it is, it's looking like it's definitely going to happen.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: If we see that anticipated hold back of 20% we're looking at \$1.7 million. Another rumor that I heard today is that we might actually see a 20% from our star reimbursement.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: That to us, is another \$150,000 on an estimate.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: So a few things on this even goes further than what the governor said about potential cuts to state aid and cost drive aid.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: At first, he said it's going to happen with state aid. We're also seeing it on the cost of an AIDS. So not just only foundation aid, but all of our aid.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: Also, the Department of Budget has said they are not finalizing things as cuts. They were referring to the 20% as a hold back for now there are two different things.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: On a decision has not been made about the 20% cuts for the time being, but that is a decision that may be reached by the end of September. So we need to be prepared.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: The longer we experience the hold backs the more permanent, they will become so I want everybody to be aware of that. I've been monitoring our cash flow since March.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: And it's crucial going forward. I will be using it to determine our needs on a monthly basis and we'll keep you posted on my analysis, my concerns are that these hold backs are going to start to affect our cash flow on the biggest part of the year which is Tax revenue and would that star reimbursement being cut by 20% that's a big hit.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: If we start to fall short, and the cash flow because of holdbacks. I'll definitely keep you informed.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: But will probably be two different of our reserves. So I just want you to be prepared. We might have to take out a ran, which is a revenue anticipation note to cover our expenses, which a lot of school districts are currently doing.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: We might have to make staff cuts and we might have to cut, make cuts to programs, not knowing makes it far difficult to plan for potential cuts, but I just want everybody to be Not shocked. I want us to be prepared. So does anybody have any questions.

Carol Woodward: Oh, it's kind of devastating.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: Totally agree. And that's why I don't want to wait till the end of September, or the beginning of, you know, October and say, oh, by the way.

Jennifer Fitzgerald: This is what's happening. And that's why, you know, I've been trying to say it all along. But I wanted you to know the beginning of September. So I wanted to really drive it home and be like, listen, this is something that we're not going to get around. We're not going to miss it; it's going to happen. So we're already seeing it in the 2019-2020 year and I really anticipated going forward.

Renee Garrett: So words matter, as you know, oh sorry, Carol. Can I speak.

Carol Woodward: Well, yeah, sure.

Renee Garrett: Words matter, as you know. And when we look at Jen saying a hold back that's different than a cut a hold back is the aid is flowing, but only at an 80% rate. They're withholding 20% not only on as Jen said cost driven AIDS, but other areas like grants are being withheld from the district.

Renee Garrett: We may be made whole. If federal funding comes through. There's federal stimulus money, they may bring in that 20% and make us whole.

Renee Garrett: The longer this goes on, the less likely that is we're really concerned because federal money is also used for things like hurricane relief and other areas so we'll just have to wait and see it what the federal government does to help restore funding to school systems.

Renee Garrett: And we will have to just wait and see how that gets distributed. Once the federal government makes that decision.

Renee Garrett: The governor will make that decision when the federal money comes in, he will decide how it will get distributed and what the actual cuts will look like.

Renee Garrett: So to be clear, we don't have an official cut and funding, what we have is less money that is supposed to be given to us. Less money that was supposed to be flowed into the school year.

Renee Garrett: So when we look at our both aid everybody on this zoom knows that you spend money at both in one fiscal year. And then you're reimbursed at a set rate and the next fiscal year.

Renee Garrett: That set rate that we were promised is not coming through as Jen said we are experiencing a 20% hold back.

Renee Garrett: So honestly, that's nothing that the district has done, that is something that the State is doing to monitor and control spending at this time.

Renee Garrett: We're also seeing a hold back in our state lunch and breakfast reimbursement program again that's wanting to spend last year and flows into this year. So that is not happening.

Renee Garrett: And we've been told that Farm to School and any other state grants that we have like Pre-K funding is going to see a minimum of 20% cut.

Renee Garrett: So that is something that we will need to have further conversation about. We also heard some speculation today that the star reimbursement program, that the state is in charge of funding will experience a 20% hold back which as Jen said translates into \$150,000 for our district.

Renee Garrett: We have not seen any foundation aid or figures; they're saying the end of September. What I am wondering if that's going to happen after the election cycle is over.

Renee Garrett: We'll just have to wait and see. It's caution right now. And I would say that my hand is hovering over the panic button.

Renee Garrett: We're not panicking, yet we're trying to be optimistic but at the same time, it is more important now more than ever to lobby. Our legislator for funding, so sending letters is going to be extremely critical and making phone calls as much as we can.

Renee Garrett: But we'll just wait and see what happens next.

Carol Woodward: It's really particularly hard for us because we are so conservative to begin with. There's not a fluff. Not a lot of fluff in our school system and that makes it even more disturbing so yea. Well, thank you.

Carol Woodward: Jen, you know, so I guess we'll just do what we can.

Carol Woodward: So does anybody have any questions.

Carol Woodward: Okay, the technology and athletic reports are in your board packet. We will go on to board reports.

Carol Woodward: I was surprised to hear this, but the Chautauqua County School Board meeting is September 16<sup>th</sup>. I didn't know if they were going to have any this year. If there's any interest, and remember we have talked previously about limiting it to two people. So if you do have an interest you have to let Kristin know.

Carol Woodward: I think there was one board member that have expressed an interest in going. So you have to let her know by September 8

Carol Woodward: Okay, and I think Kristin also sent out the Save the Dates for the rest of the meetings. We will be updating the guidebook. I had a look at it. I didn't see many changes that I thought should happen. But, um, if you have any suggestions, could you just please let me know.



Carol Woodward: And our board workshop dates will be January 23, March 6, and June 12 from 9am to noon.

Carol Woodward: So, and then now good topic here, I drafted a letter to our legislators. Dave and I worked on it and I rewrote it like three times as things were changing like I kept putting in more things that were potential costs. So, um, I had Kristin, send it to the board and wondered if everybody was okay with it to send it to our legislators.

Carol Woodward: Just would like to know what your comments are

Amy Drozdziel: It looks good.

Mervin Fry: It's fine with me.

Carol Woodward: And I think, you know, in this climate. Let's start working on another one. I think we just gotta keep after so um as after we send this one out. I'll start drafting another one. And if anybody has any thoughts on what we could talk about please let me know. Okay.

Carol Woodward: Okay um Committees. I don't believe there any reports. So go on to the Superintendent.

Renee Garrett: Just to echo what Dan and Lindsey have said, the amount of effort that we have put into an opening day is unmatched by this year.

Renee Garrett: Honestly, working side by side with Lindsay, sweating it out has been so much fun getting to know our bond with her and measuring desks and laying them out and just watching her thinking and how everything works together. Getting Things Done at the high school under construction with less and doing more has been an amazing thing to see. I can sit here today and guarantee you that this will be the best, the most amazing the like incredibly awesome opening day under a pandemic that you and any student will ever experience and any teacher will ever experience because I mean honestly when you look at all of the detail and all of the ideas and the way that every administrator and board member and teacher has just been open to the amount of change that has happened in our school system.

Renee Garrett: Lindsay and I took a walk this morning, through our building. And I'm just so inspired by our teachers and what they are doing with what is given to them.

Renee Garrett: We purchase desk shields and they are decorating them for the students. They are figuring out ways for students to safely carrying them in them into little briefcases and making sure that the desks have a way to hold those on them when they open their desk to get their supplies.

Renee Garrett: Their creativity and their thinking is really awesome. Watching Mike go through the bus runs and trying to figure out where to put students on which bus and knowing that he knows where Center Street is, where Cedar Street is, where Lodi is; versus Route 39. His thinking,

it's all in his head and he just pulls it out and puts it on paper and it works.

Renee Garrett: He knows the nuances of every student and every house. It's pretty cool to see that. And then to see Jim Knoop with this role where he's really just plugging along working harder than I've seen him work ever. It's just amazing. He's getting so much done with the staff, the limited staff that we have.

Renee Garrett: We have forced change in areas that we expected and didn't expect. We switched to custodians about two weeks ago, meaning I made that move.

Renee Garrett: And I'm already seeing a positive change in both of them. And in the building's response to that.

Renee Garrett: So much has happened this year and so much still needs to be done and it's really just we're in the final stages and it's coming together.

Renee Garrett: So I just appreciate everyone's work and understanding through this new normal. It's been incredible to watch the transition seeing the teachers, the last three days. Lindsay and I reflected on this today. Watching their thinking evolved from September first to the second to the third. They're really embracing all of the changes and they're just figuring it out. And we had full confidence that that would happen.

Renee Garrett: In both buildings, our teachers are figuring it out to make sure that we have the safest and most comfortable environment for our students.

Renee Garrett: Meeting with the school nurses to make sure they have everything they need. And sometimes what people need our answers to questions or to think aloud with someone else. And it's really because Forestville is so supportive and so informal that we are so successful in everything that we do. So I just want to thank the Board and the two principles that work hard. Every day. Yes, thanks to the Business Office for their support as well. But every department has really stepped up this year it's been incredible.

Mervin Fry: Renee. Yeah, I want to thank you for your leadership and for everybody who's worked so hard and to say that. We're really fortunate to have this ability to open in Forestville. Our grandchildren in North Carolina and in California are not having this opportunity. They are going to continue going to school on zoom and I can only imagine how boring that's going to be for them and how disappointing that they aren't going to be able to go back to school, the way kids and for Stella. So thank you so much for all your work.

Renee Garrett: You know, I really feel that from the whole community, Merv, I know your representation of the Community.

Renee Garrett: But when the car started filtering back into the parking lot and it started to full you could feel the surge of support from our

community and almost like students on bikes circling around in the parking lot and see what was going on, waiting to come in. And I have to tell you our clerical staff has done a phenomenal job. Shout out to Tina. and Mel. Tina came up with an idea, let's do an all call for I think we had over 60 backpacks with supplies donated to our school system.

Renee Garrett: Tina came up with the idea of doing an all call setting them outside and letting parents common to pick up and they were all claimed in more families needed book bags and supplies. We took their numbers so that we can call them if we get more so thanks to the community and their support to we feel it. Thanks Merv.

Carol Woodward: Yeah, you guys have done an amazing job. And you're right. And I think the kids are just also anxious to get back to school.

Carol Woodward: I mean, a lot of them would be even probably, especially the older kids hate to admit it, but I'll bet they're happy, you know, it's been a long time since March.

Carol Woodward: Are there any discussion items at this time.

Carol Woodward: Okay. Is there any old business?

Carol Woodward: Okay, for new business now looking at number 10 on your agenda. May I have a motion upon the recommendation of the superintendent to approve items 10 A through D.

Michael LoManto: Move.

Carol Woodward: Mike, thank you. Second,

Sylvester Cleary: Okay, second.

Carol Woodward: Thank you. All in favor.

Michael LoManto: Aye.

Amy Drozdziel: Aye.

Mervin Fry: Aye.

Sylvester Cleary: Aye.

Dave Caccamise: Aye.

Carol Woodward: Aye. Any opposed? Or abstained? The motion is carried.

Carol Woodward: May I have a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of particular persons or matters, leading to the appointment assignment promotion demotion discipline suspension dismissal or removal of a particular person's

Mervin Fry: move.

Carol Woodward: That's Merv. Thank you. Second?

David Caccamise: Dave, second.

Carol Woodward: All in favor?

Michael LoManto: Aye.

Amy Drozdziel: Aye.

Mervin Fry: Aye.

Sylvester Cleary: Aye.

Dave Caccamise: Aye.

Carol Woodward: Aye. Any opposed or abstained? The motion is carried.

Carol Woodward: Okay, the motion is carried at 6:02 PM.

Carol Woodward: May I have a motion to return to regular session?

Amy Drozdziel: Move.

Carol Woodward: Second?

Sylvester Cleary: Second.

Carol Woodward: All in favor?

Michael LoManto: Aye.

Amy Drozdziel: Aye.

Mervin Fry: Aye.

Sylvester Cleary: Aye.

Dave Caccamise: Aye.

Carol Woodward: Aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried at 6:33 PM.

Carol Woodward: May I have a motion to adjourn the meeting?

Michael LoManto: Move.

Mervin Fry: Second.

Carol Woodward: All in favor?

Michael LoManto: Aye.

Amy Drozdziel: Aye.

Mervin Fry: Aye.

Sylvester Cleary: Aye.

Dave Caccamise: Aye.

Carol Woodward: Aye. Any opposed? The motion is carried at 6:34 PM.