

**NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEW FAIRFIELD, CT**

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 7, 2021,
at 7:00 pm. via Zoom.

MINUTES – January 7, 2021

PRESENT: Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion (left at 9 p.m.), Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, and Athletic Director Mark Ottusch, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel and Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca.

Network Administrator Paul Gouveia explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. December 15, 2020 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
 - B. December 21, 2020 - Special meeting (6 p.m.) - approved by consensus
 - C. December 21, 2020 - Special meeting (6:30 p.m.) - approved by consensus
- IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - approved by consensus
- V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - 5th Grade MHHS student Logan Peterson spoke in support of more physical education in the schools.
- VI. **BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**
 - A. Chairman’s Report- Peggy Katkocin spoke of the following:
 - Thanked everyone that attends the meetings and noted that she is especially grateful for their positive and civil comments.
 - Spoke of the budget process and noted that last year’s overall budget increase was 1%.
 - Vice Chairman Dominic Cipollone thanked the Superintendent for her thoughtful letter regarding the riots at the Capital Building on January 6th. He also spoke of fixed costs in the budget and the best ways to set up a budget that make sense for everyone.

- Board member Kathy Baker spoke of the process for the budget approval and possible cuts that can be made in the future.
- B. Superintendent's Report -Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:
- Noted that she and her staff are saddened and horrified by the events at the Capital Building on January 6th. She noted that the district is committed to providing all students with a strong civic education. She thanked the staff for caring for each other and the students. She encouraged parents to talk to their children about the events. Counselors are available to help families if needed.
- C. Student Representatives' Report
Senior Representative Nicholas Thiel-Hudson congratulated the Math Team for their wins in the Fairfield County competition. He noted that the high school quarter ends on January 22nd. He also spoke of yesterday's riot on the Capital Building and how technology can be a great tool but warned that it can allow people to confirm bias.
- D. Committee Reports
1. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met in December and continued to review bylaws.
- E. Liaison Reports
1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that this Board met on December 16th:
 - Approved an additional appropriation for the Health Department for costs associated with the COVID vaccine distribution. Medical and non-medical volunteers are needed for the clinics.
 - The Town Water System was sold to Aquarian on December 8th.
 - The BOF discussed the audit that will be filed in January 2021.
 2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Kim LaTourette noted that this committee met on December 14th and are continuing to offer virtual positions. They are posting for summer positions in the hope that programs and the beach will proceed as normal this summer.
 3. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that they met on December 14th and spent most of the meeting in Executive Session discussing school security with the new school projects. Peggy Katkocin suggested that the BOE go into Executive Session in the near future to discuss this.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Transition Program - Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel spoke of the many aspects of the Transition Program and what skills will be addressed with this program.

B. Remote Learning Update - Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby spoke of remote learning and noted that currently 47% of the school population is on remote learning. The higher grades have a higher percentage of remote learners. She noted that remote learning is running smoothly.

C. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Bylaw 9200 - Number of Members and Terms of Office
2. Bylaw 9221 - Filling Vacancies
3. Bylaw 9222 - Resignation/Removal from Office/Censure
4. Bylaw 9230 - Orientation of New Board Members
5. Bylaw 9250 - Remuneration and Reimbursement
6. Bylaw 9270 - Conflict of Interest
7. Bylaw 9271 - Code of Ethics

D. Board of Education Policies (Second Reading)

1. Bylaw 9030.1 - Conflict in Public Education
2. Bylaw 9030.2 - Civility
3. Bylaw 9120 - Officers
4. Bylaw 9121 - Office of the Chairperson
5. Bylaw 9122 - Office of the Vice-Chairperson
6. Bylaw 9123 - Office of the Secretary
7. Bylaw 9124 - Recording Secretary/Clerk
8. Bylaw 9125 - Attorney
9. Bylaw 9130 - Committees
10. Bylaw 9132 - Standing Committees
11. Bylaw 9133 - Ad Hoc Committees
12. Bylaw 9140 - Board Representatives
13. Bylaw 9150 - Board Consultants
14. Bylaw 9273 - Civility Code

E. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

Dr. Rich Sanzo spoke of the building projects and noted that there was a meeting of the administrators from Consolidated and MHHS with a 3D model of the project. The projects will be brought before the Zoning Commission on February 3rd at 7:30 p.m. He invited BOE members to attend the PBC meeting on January 26th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. He further noted that he will go to the high school with Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross and Zoning Enforcement Officer Evan White to identify solutions in lieu of the trailers that are presently there.

F. 2021-2022 Budget

There was a lengthy discussion of potential items that could possibly be cut from the Superintendent's budget. The Board discussed cuts to administrators and secretaries. They spoke of the importance of physical education and the arts.

There will be a BOE budget workshop on Wednesday, January 13th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to approve the Personnel Report as of December 22, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request (Executive Session)

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - Many members of the public spoke against certain cuts to the budget and especially expressed support to include physical education and the arts.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - Kathy Baker asked for an update on the programs of study for the high school.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - Members of the Board thanked everyone who gave input regarding the budget and encouraged taxpayers to stay involved in the budget process.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:16 p.m. to discuss a leave of absence request and to invite Dr. Cosentino into the Executive Session. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Samantha Mannion left at 9 p.m. and did not participate in the Executive Session.

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to come back from Executive Session at 9:18 p.m. Greg seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Margaret Brady's request for an unpaid leave of absence of from approximately January 15, 2021, through the end of the 2020-21 school year. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos