

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

MINUTES – March 21, 2024

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Dr. Jennifer Hilderbrand, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, BOF member Cheryl Reedy, BOF Alternate member Peggy Katkocin

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 7, 2024 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:

- Thanked BOF members for attending this meeting.
- There will be a tour of the new high school for BOF and BOE members on Tuesday, March 26th at 9:30 a.m.
- Wished the Fine Arts Department good luck with the spring musical *Matilda*.
- Appreciated the letter that was sent today regarding athletic field safety.
- Encouraged everyone to attend the next BOF meeting that will be held on Wednesday, March 27th at 7:30 p.m.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow

- Acknowledged that March is BOE member appreciation month and thanked the BOE members that weren't present at the March 7th meeting for their hard work to the Board.
- May 6th to 10th is Educator Appreciation week.
- Thanked the School Resource Officers for all their hard work.
- Thanked the administrators for stepping up where needed.

C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- Friday, March 22nd will be an early dismissal day.

- SATs will be held the high school from March 25th to March 27th.
- Yearbooks will be on sale at the high school until April 1st.

Junior Representative Emilia Sedlak noted that:

- The spring musical *Matilda* will be held from March 21st to March 24th.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on March 21st and reviewed budget vs. actual. They are aligned with previous years expenditures. Deficits are running in business machines and copy paper and in Special Education. Year-end projections are expecting an approximate \$200,000 deficit for this fiscal year. A spending freeze has been instituted at this point.

A motion regarding Sherman tuition was approved by the subcommittee and will be brought to the full board at the next meeting.

2. Field Fees - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on March 11th and discussed Field Fees and the status of the turf field and track. It was noted that the turf field and track are in need of replacement. No specific amount was discussed but it was decided that there will be an increase in Field Fees. The subcommittee discussed a possible flat fee per team for Field Fees.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met several times since the last BOE meeting.

March 13 - Discussed both the BOE and BOS budgets. No votes were taken at this meeting.

March 19 - Medical Subcommittee Meeting - Consultant Tom Kowalchik from USI noted that medical claims are trending lower than last year. The subcommittee discussed wellness initiatives. Ed Sbordone asked that the Wellness Initiative Program be discussed at a future BOE meeting.

March 20 - The following was discussed at the March 20th meeting:

- Public comment in support of both the operating and capital budgets for the BOE.
- Tom Kowalchik presented medical claims to the full board. He noted that since there was a reduction of claims for this year, it's possible to have a 4% reduction in contributions for next year's budget. The BOF discussed medical contributions, but no decision has yet to be made.
- The audit was approved at this meeting.
- Elected officials' salaries were discussed but no decision has been made yet.
- Cheryl Reedy presented a proposal for the 2024-2025 budget that will bring the increase from 9.52% to 5.67%. She spoke of other funding sources for the budget.
- BOF members were asked to bring proposals for the budget to the March 27th meeting.

The next meeting of the BOF will be held on Wednesday, March 27th at 7:30 p.m. at the Community Room at the Senior Center. The budget mark-up will be on Wednesday, April 3rd.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Kim LaTourette noted that this committee met on March 11th and discussed Field Fees, upkeep of pavilion at Rebel Turf and the waiting list for the boat slips. They also discussed repairs needed for fences around town. Three people are needed for the Outdoor Cinema crew this summer and Waterfront directors are needed for this summer.

Summer Camp will be held this year from Monday, June 24th to Wednesday, July 31st.

The Sip and Stroll will be held on Saturday, May 4th from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Update

Dr. Craw gave a brief update regarding the budget:

- The expenditure surplus for 2022-2023 was only \$13,360 which represents 0.04% of the total budget. Dr. Craw thanked everyone for their hard work in staying within this budget.
- He noted that enrollment has not changed in the last few years. He spoke of the reduction of 5.6 FTE in the district for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
- He spoke of changes in staff and meeting the needs of the students.

Dr. Woleck spoke of the curriculum and specifically Advanced Placement Courses and Early College Experience classes.

Carrie DePuy spoke of grants and funding. She spoke of how the loss of ARPA and ESSER funds and loss of entitlement grants affects the 2024-2025 budget.

B. Temporary Bus Parking Lot Update

Dr. Craw noted this committee will meet again on March 22nd, and he will give an update at the next regular BOE meeting.

C. Board of Education Policies (*Second Reading*)

1. Policy 4115 - Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support
2. Bylaw 9323 - Construction of the Agenda
3. Bylaw 9324 - Advance delivery of Meeting Materials

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Personnel Report for March 14, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policies

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policies listed below as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN**

FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

1. Policy 4121 - Substitute Teachers
2. Policy 5118 - Nonresident students

C. Acceptance of Donation

1. New Fairfield Rebels Booster Club

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield Rebels Booster Club donation of \$3,000 for the purchase of Lacrosse walls and goal dolly. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone,

Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

2. New Fairfield Thrift Shop

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield Thrift Shop donation of \$2,435.46 for the purchase of a new riser for Meeting House Hill School chorus performances. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

D. Retirement Settlement

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval to award the retirement settlement bonus per Article 48 for those eligible teachers who, by Friday, April 12, 2024, tender their resignation to be effective at the end of the school year. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BOF Alternate member Peggy Katkocin spoke of the need to maintain a balance between what is needed and what the taxpayers can afford. She spoke of the items that serve the most number of residents, including the police, firefighters, public works and education. She encouraged everyone to support the schools and to let the BOF know opinions on the budget.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Review of Wellness Program.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sue Huwer asked about the time frame for other BOE members to make comments on policies. Members of the BOE thanked Dr. Craw, Dr. Woleck and Carrie DePuy for their expertise. Greg Flanagan thanked Cheryl Reedy for her BOF proposal at the BOF meeting.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos