

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2020,  
at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

**MINUTES – January 21, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Stephanie Strazza and Ed Sbordone

**ABSENT:** Greg Flanagan and Samantha Mannion

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, New Fairfield High School Math Department Chair Cathy Hall and Selectman Khris Hall

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

- A. January 2, 2020 - Regular Meeting - The minutes were approved by consensus.
- B. January 7, 2020 - Special Meeting - The minutes were approved by consensus.

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** - approved by consensus

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Chairman’s Report - Peggy Katkocin reminded everyone that there will be a budget workshop between the BOE and BOF on Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.
- B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:
  - On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, the administrative staff will be having a presentation from Talented and Gifted teacher Sherry Earle from Newtown.
  - Thanked the Board members and Town representatives that will be participating in the Leadership Cadre.
  - There was an article in the *News-Times* about the need for substitute teachers in all districts. She encouraged everyone interested to apply.
  - She noted that Easter Sunday was erroneously listed on the district calendar for April 19<sup>th</sup> when it should have been Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>.

- High School Graduation has been set for Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at the O'Neill Center.
- C. Student Representatives' Report  
 Junior Representative Nicholas Thiel-Hudson noted that
- Mr. Rebel will be held on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. at the high school.
  - Eighth grade students will come to the high school next week to hear about elective classes.
  - The Relay for Life Kick Off will be held on January 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.
  - The Tri M Talent show will be held on Tuesday, February 4 at 7 p.m.
  - CMA Allstate auditions will be held on February 8<sup>th</sup>.
- D. Liaison Report
1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on January 21 and discussed the monthly summary of budget vs. actual, expenditures/encumbrances report as of December 31<sup>st</sup> and quarterly summary of budget vs. projected year end expenditures for the current fiscal year. The budget was discussed, specifically Special Education needs and its effect on the overall budget. The subcommittee also discussed Google Vault Reconciliation. All access to the Google Vault was determined to be appropriate.
  2. Magnet School - Rick Regan noted that he and Julie Luby attended a meeting of the Magnet School on January 15<sup>th</sup>. There are approximately 40 empty seats at the Magnet School. The Danbury BOE will meet in the near future to discuss this. There was a brief discussion of how this will affect New Fairfield students. Julie Luby noted that the Magnet School is looking for ways to generate more students. There was also a brief discussion of the Spanish curriculum and placement of Magnet School students once they return to New Fairfield.
  3. Parks and Recreation Commission - Kim LaTourette noted that this commission met on January 13<sup>th</sup> and discussed their proposed budget, specifically regarding the beach house and the fields. The commission discussed the possibility of getting a STEAP grant for the beach house. There was a discussion of cash flow for Parks and Rec programs and wages for summer employees due to the increase in minimum wage. The price of the boat slip was raised by \$200 per year.
  4. Permanent Building Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that the PBC met last Tuesday and discussed the building projects. An update of this will be given by Dr. Sanzo under Information Items.
  5. School Security and Safety Committee - Dr. Cosentino noted that this committee met recently and discussed the job description for the proposed Director of School Security. They also discussed programs that are used in house and discussed whether or not they should be upgraded.

## **VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. New Fairfield High School Math Update: Plan for 2020-2021**

High School Principal James D'Amico and High School Math Department Chair Cathy Hall gave a presentation regarding a plan to increase Math understanding and scores at the high school. They noted that the current plan is optional and irregularly scheduled. The proposed plan called Math Workshop would be required for students that do not currently meet Connecticut State benchmarks. This program would increase instruction time from 200 minutes to 300 minutes per week. The goals of this program would be for the instruction to be more personalized and would concentrate on reinforcement and problem solving practice. Students would receive elective credits for the Math Workshop, but it would not replace the Math requirement.

There was a brief discussion of the logistics of this program, the requirements of the program and whether or not students should be allowed to opt out of the program.

Dr. Cosentino thanked the entire Math Department for all their work with this program.

### **B. Superintendent's Mid-Year Evaluation (Executive Session)**

Dr. Cosentino gave a brief description of her goals relating to the mid-year evaluation. She noted that student achievement and high quality instruction were her main focus. She also spoke of a communications and marketing plan, school safety and security, the building of two new schools and the budget. This was discussed further in Executive Session.

### **C. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update**

Dr. Sanzo gave an update of the school building projects and noted that he will visit Sandy Hook School and Barack Obama Magnet School as examples of newly built schools. He also spoke of upcoming focus groups with staff for suggestions for the buildings. He noted that the Permanent Building Committee meets twice a month and encouraged everyone to attend the meetings.

## **VIII. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM**

### **A. 2020-2021 Budget**

The Board discussed the Superintendent's budget for fiscal year 2020-2021. Main topics of discussion included the rebuilding of the district's website and the possibility of being able to read it on a mobile device. There was a lengthy discussion of the cutting of positions, specifically a physical education section at Consolidated School. The Board discussed not knowing about the plan for this position ahead of time and organizational changes to the curriculum. Dr. Cosentino spoke of the budget process and noted the challenge of putting a budget together due to many unforeseen changes. Dr. Sanzo spoke of the budget process and asked Board members to send questions regarding the budget to him before the budget workshop scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **IX. ACTION ITEM**

### **A. Personnel Report**

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report dated January 14, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

There was a brief discussion of an ILS teacher that was supposed to start in January. Katherine Matz noted that there is a currently a certified teacher in the position.

### **B. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Requests**

1. Request #1 - Executive Session
2. Request #2 - Executive Session

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - Amanda Lombard addressed the Board with a suggestion of having a second recess for students at Consolidated School. She suggested it could be done as part of the lunch periods.

**XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** - Members of the Board discussed the following:

- Stephanie Strazza thanked High School Principal James D’Amico for all his hard work with the Math Department. She also noted that she is looking forward to the MHHS concert next week. She spoke of the budget process and noted that the percentage increase does not necessarily mean that taxes will increase by the same amount.
- Kathy Baker thanked James D’Amico for his honesty and transparency with the Math Department.
- Dominic Cipollone thanked James D’Amico for his hard work and stressed the importance of having Math instruction every day. He spoke of the role of parents regarding school work.
- Rick Regan thanked the Math Department as well as the BOE for giving a vision for the Math Department. He asked for a copy of NEASC report.
- Kimberly LaTourette noted that the high school concert last week was awesome. She is looking forward to concerts at MHHS and the middle school.
- Ed Sbordone spoke of the budget process.
- Peggy Katkocin spoke of the budget process and reassured everyone that budget increases don’t necessarily mean that taxes will increase by the same amount.

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE SUPERINTENDENT’S MID-YEAR EVALUATION**

## **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS**

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SCHOOL SECURITY**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. for the purpose of discussing School Security and to invite to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo, and Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes into the Executive Session solely for the purpose of School Security. The Board and the Superintendent will remain in Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation and leave of absence requests. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:34 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, 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 Dua Haddad's request for an unpaid leave of absence of from May 28, 2020 through the end of the 2019-20 school year, returning to work for the 2020-21 school year. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, 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 Marianne Donovan's request for an unpaid leave of absence of eight days - October 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 26, returning to work on October 27, 2020. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

## **XV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos