

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting via Zoom

MINUTES – April 21, 2020

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby and Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli and Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel

I. CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Rich Sanzo explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public who will get a chance to speak during Public Participation.

Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. April 2, 2020 – Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. April 8, 2020 – Special meeting - 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 thanked the members of the PBC, BOF and BOS who voted to support option C for the building of the high school along with the purchase of 78 Gillotti Road. She noted that the BOS and BOF voted at a joint meeting last night. The BOS voted 2-1 to purchase the property and the BOF voted unanimously to appropriate the money for this property out of the unappropriated capital and nonrecurring account.

In response to some of the comments made at the BOS/BOF meeting last night, Peggy Katkocin clarified that the vote last fall was for a bonding project and not an exact design or site. She spoke of some complications with the original site

and noted that the architect firm plans to meet with the residents on Gillotti Road.

It was decided that First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, BOF Chairman Wes Marsh and BOE Chairman Peggy Katkocin will compile a fact sheet for the *Town Tribune* to answer questions and concerns regarding the project.

B. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:

- Spoke of the school building project and reminded everyone that doing nothing was never an option and rebuilding was what was decided by the taxpayers.
- Tomorrow, April 22, is Earth Day. She encouraged students to do something to take care of the earth.
- Thanked all the Administrative Assistants in honor of Administrative Assistants Day on April 23.
- Thanked Dr. Rich Sanzo and Paul Gouveia for all their help with the Zoom virtual meetings.
- Thanked all the parents of students for all their hard work with distance learning. She encouraged everyone to reach out to teachers or administrators if they are in need of help.
- The administrators and the high school staff are working on ideas to celebrate the Class of 2020. Advisors are in contact with the students and there will be some sort of graduation ceremony.

C. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - This subcommittee met on April 21st and discussed a summary of the budget vs. actual as of March 31st and everything is on track. He spoke of the ways that COVID 19 has affected the budget. Updates on this will be given in the near future. Google Vault was reviewed that there were no issues.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met virtually on April 15 and discussed the medical plan, potential purchase of 78 Gillotti Road, the 2020-2021 budget and the school building project. The purchase of 78 Gillotti Road was passed at a joint meeting of the BOS-BOF on April 20th. The next meeting of the BOF will be on Wednesday, April 22nd. There will be an update on the medical plan, and a discussion of the budget.

2. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee met on April 6th and spoke of the school building project. They received an update on the Speak Up anonymous reporting system and reviewed a progress report on the consultant's recommendation for security measures.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. STEM - PEGPETIA Grant

Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes spoke of the Computer Science Robotics Engineering pathway. As part of this, the district received a State Grant from PEGPETIA in the amount of \$24,179.12. This would be used to purchase

equipment for Consolidated, MHHS and Middle School as well as on site training for teachers.

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

Dr. Sanzo spoke of the purchase of the property at 78 Gillotti Road and the design of the building project. There will be a PBC meeting next Tuesday, April 28th to discuss the schedule for both the high school and Consolidated School projects. The administrators from Consolidated and MHHS have been meeting to discuss the floor plans. He spoke of the grant application from the State and noted that there is no indication that the State grant will not come through. The district is on the priority list for this, and there is a meeting set for late June. It was noted that the homeowners on Gillotti Road will have an opportunity to meet with the architect concerning this project.

VIII. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM

A. 2020-2021 Budget Reduction Discussion

Dr. Cosentino spoke of three scenarios regarding the proposed cuts of \$337,600 from the 2020-2021 budget. She spoke of some positions that will be affected by Reduction in Force. There was a discussion of the possible cuts to the education budget. It was noted that the BOF will meet on April 22nd to discuss this further. Currently, the proposed increase of the budget is 2.94% over last year's budget, but the BOF has discussed the possibility of a zero percent increase over last year's budget. There was a brief discussion of how budget cuts will affect students, especially with the potential need for students to "catch up" when they return to the classroom.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to table the Information/Action decision regarding the budget reduction for the 2020-2021 budget. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

IX. ACTION ITEM

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report dated April 15, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Kim LaTourette 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. Healthy Food Certification

Dr. Sanzo spoke of the Healthy Food Certification program and noted that there are many restrictions to this program and that it has not served the district well in the past. This program places restrictions on fundraisers, and thus, he suggested that the financial incentive for this program is not worth it and recommended that the Board not vote in favor of this.

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board that pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **OPPOSED:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Dr. Sanzo explained that the motion involving the sale of beverages at fundraisers and other extracurricular activities.

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board that the Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Reduction in Force (Executive Session)

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Amanda Lombard thanked the district staff and especially the classroom teachers for their teaching and support through distance learning.

Middle School PE teacher Alex Swift noted that she was one of the teachers that was affected by the Reduction in Force, and thanked everyone for all their support and the opportunity to work at New Fairfield.

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

- Rick Regan thanked teachers and administrators for all their hard work.
- Kimberly LaTourette thanked the teachers and administrators for their help with distance learning. She further thanked everyone involved in the building project.
- Ed Sbordone thanked everyone for their role in the distance learning and encouraged the BOE members to attend the virtual BOF meetings and give their opinions regarding the budget.

- Samantha Mannion thanked everyone for their work with distance learning.
- Stephanie Strazza thanked everyone and noted that there is an enhancement in communication between staff members and families during the quarantine.
- Kathy Baker thanked the teachers and also the coaches for connecting with students. She further thanked Alex Swift for her work as a physical education teacher at the Middle School.
- Greg Flanagan thanked teachers and noted that the board should be aware of possible lapses that may occur with distance learning. He further noted that he is pleased that the homeowners on Gillotti Road are able to get a chance to be heard regarding the building project.
- Dominic Cipollone thanked Dr. Cosentino and her staff for all their hard work. He noted that distance learning is especially difficult for special needs students and the district should make sure to reach out to these families.
- Peggy Katkocin thanked all the teachers and especially the staff members that have attended the virtual meetings.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING REDUCTION IN FORCE

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:17 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a reduction in force and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby and Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo into the Executive Session. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:55 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the New Fairfield Board of Education nonrenew the teacher contract of Sandy Amenta at the end of the 2019-20 school year as recommended by the Superintendent. I further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to Sandy Amenta and that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests for other data which may be forthcoming from the teacher and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions on Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151. 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

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the New Fairfield Board of Education nonrenew the teacher contract of Treva King at the end of the 2019-20 school year as recommended by the Superintendent. I further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to Treva King and that the

Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests for other data which may be forthcoming from the teacher and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions on Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151. 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

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the New Fairfield Board of Education nonrenew the teacher contract of Alexandra Swift at the end of the 2019-20 school year as recommended by the Superintendent. I further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to Alexandra Swift and that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests for other data which may be forthcoming from the teacher and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions on Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151. 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

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Stephanie Strazza seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos