

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

**MINUTES – January 16, 2025**

**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 Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Assistant Principal Steven Groccia, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Rob Spino, Elementary School Assistant Principal Alyce Misuraca, Athletic Director Mark Ottusch, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, and Elementary Special Education Supervisor Alex Lambert

**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. December 19, 2024 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - Approved by consensus.

**V. PRESENTATION OF SUPERINTENDENT’S FY 2025-2026 RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the upcoming budget for 2025-2026. He noted that the district is dedicated to continuous improvement and thanked the administration and staff for all their hard work with the preparation of the budget.

Dr. Craw spoke of the Vision of a Learner and how it affects the operating budget. He spoke of important needs for the capital budget, including more classroom space and the need to remove the underground oil tank at the Middle School. He spoke of the strategic plan for the district and highlighted notable accomplishments. The presentation included ideas for enhancement to the Arts, including Strings and Theater especially in the Middle School.

Key Budget Assumptions include:

- A. Enrollment and Class size for next year is comparable to this year.
- B. Contractual obligations for employees.
- C. Federal and State mandates.
- D. Budget Efficiencies.
- E. Non-tax revenue.

The Superintendent's recommended operating budget for 2025-2026 is \$50,083,039, which is a percent increase of 3.81% (\$1,838,949) over the 2024-2025 voter approved budget. The proposed Capital budget equals \$735,000 and includes the replacement of the New Fairfield Middle School underground oil tank, NFMS Lower-level Academic Classroom (Phase I), NFMS conversion of the cafeteria into three Middle School classrooms (Phase 2), NFMS Pool HVAC and dehumidification unit, contributions to the turf replacement, replacement of the Buildings and Ground Rack Truck, and Safety and Security improvements.

Budget workshops will be held on Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, Wednesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. The budget presentation and documents can be found on the district website.

## **VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

## **VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone thanked Dr. Craw and the entire administrative staff for a very comprehensive budget presentation. He noted that he is looking forward to a rigorous budget season and hoping that it will pass at the first referendum.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw noted that the attendance rate for the staff has improved and is now trending at 97%.

### C. Student Representatives' Reports

Senior Representative Emilia Sedlak spoke of the following:

- Unified Spirit Week will be held from January 27<sup>th</sup> to January 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The BETA Club will host a "Festival of Cultures" on Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- There will be no school on Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

- Yearbooks are currently on sale on the school's website.
- Grades for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter will close on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- Mid-term exams are currently being held.
- There will be an early dismissal on January 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Two full length SAT practice tests will be given to Juniors on January 29<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>.
- The Italian Honor Society Induction will be held on January 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Fourteen high school students will be going to Western Regionals Honor program for Music.

### D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on January 9<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the monthly budget summaries. They are keeping an eye on Special Education services and Business services. There was a discussion of the update for the Middle School oil tank replacement and the space utilization plan for the Middle School. The subcommittee also discussed shared services with the Town.

### E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone gave a summary of recent BOF meetings:

- BOF Capital Subcommittee meeting was held on January 13<sup>th</sup>. They discussed capital plans for the BOE, including needed projects for the Middle School. The BOF will hold their next regular meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 p.m. via zoom.

## VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

### A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that the propane issue has been fixed at the high school. They are still waiting to hear from the vendor about the playground issue at the elementary school.

### B. Bus Lot Multi-Board Joint Special Meeting

There will be a joint meeting of the BOS, BOE, BOF and PBC to discuss the Bus Lot on Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

## IX. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for January 9, 2025, as recommended by the administration. 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

### B. New Fairfield Middle School Oil Tank Replacement Proposal

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross gave a brief update on this proposal.

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the proposal for the NF Middle School oil tank replacement as presented. 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

### C. Course Proposal NFHS Orchestra

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of the course proposal for the Orchestra program.

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Orchestra course to be offered at New Fairfield High School as presented. 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

### D. Board of Education Policies

1. Policy 2400 - Evaluation of the Superintendent
2. Policy 6146 - Graduation Requirements

Samantha Mannion gave a brief explanation of these 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: Policy 2400 - Evaluation of the Superintendent and Policy 6146 - Graduation Requirements. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion.

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

### E. Acceptance of Donation - New Fairfield Community Thrift Shop, Inc.

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield Community Thrift Shop donation of \$1,800 to be put towards the field trip to France for

French students, including \$207 per family for required insurance reimbursement, \$760 for transportation, \$67 per student towards tips for tour guides. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

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

F. NFEA Retirement Settlement

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan 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, February 21, 2025, tender their resignation to be effective at the end of the school year. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

G. School Security and Safety - Executive Session

H. Paraeducator Collective Bargaining Negotiations - Executive Session

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - None

**XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** - None

**XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SAFETY AND SECURITY MATTERS**

**XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO PARAPROFESSIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:53 p.m. to discuss safety and security, and documents related to Paraprofessional Collective Bargaining negotiations and to invite Dr. Craw and Carrie DePuy into the Executive Session. 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

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:31 p.m. 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

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Paraeducator MOA as presented. 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

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 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