

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield.

MINUTES – October 1, 2024

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

ABSENT: Kathy Baker

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, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, Selectman Tom Perkins, and BOF Chairman Thora Perkins

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. September 19, 2024 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tom Perkins spoke as a citizen and encouraged the BOE to take into account the need for capital projects in town when developing their operating budget.

Jennifer Pappas agreed with Mr. Perkins about the need for capital projects. She asked about an issue at the Elementary School playground, and it was noted that the issue would be discussed later in the meeting.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the importance of good attendance for both students and staff.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the following:

- The lights have been installed at the turf field. Dr. Craw thanked everyone who supported that project.
- Dr. Craw thanked the district custodians, maintenance works and grounds men in honor of National Custodian Appreciation Day on October 2nd.

C. Student Representatives’ Reports

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- Over 70 colleges will be visiting the high school this school year either in-person or via Zoom. Students are encouraged to sign up for these visits.
- Seniors can receive support with the College Common Applications during lunch periods.

- The DECA Club Fair will be held on October 1st and 2nd.
- The College and Career Fair at Southern Connecticut University will be held on Oct. 1st.
- The Fine Arts Booster meeting will be held on Oct. 1st at 7:30pm via Zoom.
- The deadline for the National Honor Society application is October 2nd.
- There is no school for students on Thursday, Oct. 3rd and Friday, Oct. 4th.
- Make-ups for School photos will be held on October 7th.
- The Sophomores and Juniors will take the PSATs on October 24th.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on October 24th and 25th.
- The World Language Honor Society Induction ceremony will be held on October 29th.
- The deposit for the Junior Class Trip to Washington, DC is due on October 31st.
- The BETA Club will hold the Fall Vendor Festival on November 9th at the high school.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Tim Blair noted that this subcommittee met on September 23rd via Zoom. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck presented an overview and guiding principles of the curriculum design process. Jean Gephart gave a summary of the Grades 6-12 STEM program. The subcommittee also discussed changes to the Gifted and Talented program.

2. Policy- Samantha Mannion noted that the Policy subcommittee met on September 25th. The majority of the meeting included a discussion with principals and building administrators about the use of electronic devices in the schools. The subcommittee revised a policy on homeschooling and discussed the process for Superintendent evaluation.

3. Special Education Ad Hoc - Kimberly LaTourette spoke of the following:

- Unified Sports will host Volleyball from Oct. 7th to November 11th.
- There will be an End-of-Season event with four other districts.
- Unified Sports will have Basketball in the Winter and track in the Spring.
- The Meet and Greet for the STRIDES Program will be on November 5th with the program beginning on November 6th. A job coach was hired for this program.
- There will be two nurses at the Elementary School and one nurse for the Middle School and one nurse for the High School. A lead nurse will be hired separate from the building nurses.
- There was a discussion of staffing needs at the respective schools.
- Possible events for the SPED families include ELC Acclimation Night, a Transition Night and an Ice Cream social.
- A grant of \$5,000 was received from the State for professional development for paraprofessionals.
- The Extended School Year will be held Monday thru Thursdays from July 7th to July 31st.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance

Ed Sbordone gave an update on the BOF.

- The regular BOE monthly meeting was held on September 25th and they discussed goals for the 2025-2026 budget, including spending at least \$750,000 on capital, increasing non-tax revenue, protecting the AAA bond rating and recommending a budget that will pass on the first referendum.
- The Capital Subcommittee met on September 16th and discussed the Plan of Conservation and Development. This subcommittee will meet again on October 7th with the main focus being on BOE capital projects specifically the Middle School.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that the lights at the turf field have been installed. She will keep us posted on the schedule for the track and field replacement. She thanked everyone involved in getting it done. There will be a meeting on Thursday, Oct. 3rd with the PBC for approval for a temporary fix for the propane for the culinary section at the high school. It is hopeful that work can begin early next week.

Carrie DePuy noted that the issue at the Elementary School playground is under warranty and the schedule to fix will depend on the weather.

B. 2024 Standardized Testing Results

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of standardized test scores for multiple grades, which include AP tests, SATs, Smarter Balance Assessment and Next Generation Science Standards. It was noted that the participation rate for New Fairfield students was close to 100%. Dr. Woleck spoke of strategies for moving forward including adjustment of testing dates and curriculum application. There was a brief discussion of data protocols and ways to monitor growth. There were some questions about scoring of AP exams.

C. 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Calendar

Carrie DePuy spoke of the timeline for the budget meetings for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and noted that the schedule is very similar to last year's schedule.

D. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)

1. Policy 6172.3 - Educational Instruction under Parental Direction (Home Schooling)

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for September 26, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policy

Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policy 5131.81)

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 5131.8.1. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone **OPPOSED:** Sue Huwer

There was a brief discussion of the need to expedite the approval of this policy and whether or not suspending the rules was necessary.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policy 5131.81- Electronic Devices as presented with changes as discussed at the October 1, 2024 BOE meeting with an effective date of implementation of Monday, October 28, 2024, with the change of title to "Bring Your Own Device **and** Acceptable Use Policy." Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone **OPPOSED:** Sue Huwer

There was a discussion of the changes to this policy, including ways to enforce the policy and how it differs between schools. Director of Technology Paul Gouveia spoke of the wording of the policy and what exactly is considered a device.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sue Huwer spoke of the reasons that she was opposed to the policy for Electronic Devices. There was a discussion of the ability to enforce the cell phone policy at the high school and consequences for students not obeying the policy. It was decided that this will be reviewed again later in the school year.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO NFEA CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. for the purpose of discussing documents related to NFEA contract negotiations and to invite Superintendent of School Dr. Ken Craw and Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy into the Executive Session. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone to come out of Executive Session at 8:41 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval to ratify the agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the New Fairfield Education Association from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2028, with the following correction: “Under Article 40. Section 5.1 to change the number (2) in the first sentence to the number (1) and to authorize Dominic Cipollone to sign the agreement. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos