

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 7:00 pm.  
Via Zoom

**MINUTES – October 1, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan (arrived 7:15 p.m.), 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, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel and Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca,

Network Administrator for the BOE Paul Gouveia explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public.

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. September 17, 2020 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. September 23, 2020 - Special meeting - approved by consensus

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - Peggy Katkocin noted that Action Item D “Ratification of Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the New Fairfield Administrators’ Association” has been added to the agenda.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Chairman’s Report - Peggy Katkocin thanked everyone for their hard work so far this year. Both in-person and remote learners are doing very well. She spoke of challenges with pick up at MHHS and suggested that this could possibly be reviewed.
- B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:
  - The Legislators approved the School Construction Bill and funds for the two school building projects for New Fairfield were passed. She thanked Dr. Rich Sanzo and State Representative Ken Gucker for all their hard work.
  - The two-year report for NEASC was submitted today.

- Thanked everyone involved in the smooth transition of the ELC classes. This will officially start on October 5<sup>th</sup>. She noted that Audrey Hill will be the Wilson Reading teacher and Rebecca Pendergast will replace her as the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.
- Fall Sports have started this week with strict regulations.
- Reminded everyone that we are still in a pandemic and encouraged everyone to remain vigilant.

#### C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Student Representative Cayden Walker reported on the following:

- Underclassmen awards were announced today.
- The Fall Play *Clue* will be held virtually in the coming weeks.
- High School parent-teacher conferences will be held via Zoom on October 20-22.
- Noted that COVID procedures are working well.

Senior Student Representative Nicholas Thiel-Hudson reported on the following:

- The first home Girls' Volleyball game will be held on October 1<sup>st</sup> and it will be Senior Night.
- The SATs will be held on October 14<sup>th</sup> during school.
- Grades 9-11 students will take the PSATs on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

#### D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that this subcommittee met on September 21<sup>st</sup> and discussed how curriculum is affected by the pandemic. A remote learners liaison has been assigned to help with students at home. The subcommittee discussed "Achieve the Core" and the status of students before the pandemic and compared to now. They also discussed assessments for this school year and specifically assessments for Math and for gifted and talented students. He noted that CORE 21 will be discussed in the near future.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met last week and discussed four policies that on tonight's agenda for first reading.

3. Special Education - Stephanie Strazza noted that this subcommittee met on October 1<sup>st</sup> and noted that PPTs that were missed during the pandemic are currently being rescheduled and should be completed by the end of October. They spoke of not pulling out students for assessments unless absolutely needed. They discussed remote learning and noted that most students are receiving services synchronously. She also spoke of compensatory services versus recovery services.

#### E. Liaison Reports

1. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that the next meeting of the School Security and Safety Committee will be held on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Remote Learning - Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of the following regarding remote learning:

- Currently about 16% of students throughout the district are remote learners which is down from the beginning of the school year.
- Spoke of the role of Remote Learning Liaison Sandy Potts. This position was created to be a primary contact for Remote Learning families and to make sure these learners are engaged. Ms. Potts also answers questions and listens to suggestions from families.
- Spoke of the policy for Remote Learners if the teacher is absent. If it is for a short period of time, all students will be given assignments to complete. The students in the classroom will be supervised by the substitute and the students at home will be supervised by their parents. If the

absent teacher is out for a longer period of time, every effort will be made to get a building substitute into the classroom for Zoom lessons.

- Remote testing will be done by iReady and Room and Zoom active. Reading Inventories and Dyslexia screening will be done remotely.
- SATs need to be done only in person. Arrangements have been made for remote learning students to come into the building and take the test in a secure location.
- Improvements that have been put in place regarding Remote Learning are the addition of a Remote Learning Liaison, teacher sharing skills, document cameras, microphones and increased Zoom security at the high school.
- Synchronized specials at MHHS will start soon.

Ms. Luby noted that the overall feedback from families is that Remote Learning is going really well. A survey will be sent out to families soon to get more information. There was a brief discussion of the absentee policy.

B. SAT Update - High School Principal James D'Amico explained the new process for SATs. He noted that all the spring tests were cancelled and will be taken by seniors as an in-school test on Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. Accommodations will be made for Remote Learners. The essay section will be given on this day for any student interested. The 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade students will have asynchronous instruction on that day. The PSAT will be given to underclassmen on October 29<sup>th</sup> in school. The seniors will have college workshops virtually with the Guidance Department on that day.

C. ELC Update - Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino noted that the ELC classroom transition has been going very well. The students have been spending an increasing amount of time in their new classroom each day and will be completely transitioned on October 5<sup>th</sup>. New teachers will contact families of new students directly.

D. Fall Sports Update - High School Principal James D'Amico gave an update on Fall Sports in lieu of Athletic Director Mark Ottusch who was not able to attend tonight's meeting due to a sporting event. He thanked Mr. Ottusch for doing a fabulous job despite the difficult circumstances especially in his first year in the district. He noted that except for 11 on 11 Football, all Fall Sports are up and running with certain restrictions. He spoke of the policy for spectators for all athletic events. There is a possibility that SWC Athletic Directors will allow 7 by 7 flag football. More information will be available about this soon.

E. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update - Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo gave an update on the building projects for both the High School and Consolidated School. The Permanent Building Committee has been meeting on a regular basis. Last week they discussed the building site layout for both schools. Traffic patterns are also being reviewed. There will be special meeting of the PBC on Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> to interview Environmental Consulting Firms. Dr. Sanzo and Dr. Cosentino will meet next week with OSCGR regarding the high school project. There have also been meetings with staff at the high school to discuss designs for food service and the school theater. Dr. Sanzo further noted that both the State House of Representatives and State Senate passed the School Construction Bill. The Governor is expected to sign this bill as well.

Dr. Cosentino spoke of the budget for the projects and noted that the district will not spend any more money on these projects than what was approved by the referendum.

- F. BOE Policies (*First Reading*)
  1. Policy 5112- Ages of Attendance
  2. Policy 6141.3272- Electronic Resources
  3. Policy 6145.1- Extra Class Activities- closed forum
  4. Policy 6145.2- Interscholastic Competition

## VIII. ACTION ITEMS

### A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for September 24, 2020, as recommended by the administration. 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

### B. Change in School Hours

There was a brief discussion of the need to have early dismissals on Wednesdays and it was noted that teachers need the time to prepare for classes during the pandemic. It was noted that students can use this time to catch up on work.

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full board approval of early dismissal of all K-12 students on Wednesdays during the 2020-2021 school year, commencing October 14, 2020, and to recommend to the full board approval of Oct. 14, 2020 and all grade 9, 10, 11 students and HS seniors not taking the SAT have a remote learning day and SAT Day for grade 12 and to recommend to the full board approval of Oct. 29, 2020, all grade 12 students work on remote learning participating in College and Career Day. Grades 9, 10 and 11 take the PSATs. Dominic Cipollone 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. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

### D. Ratification of Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the New Fairfield Administrators' Association - Executive Session

## IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

## X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Rick Regan asked for an update on Remote Learning to be a standard item on the agenda. It was decided that this will be given on the first meeting of the month.

## XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Kimberly LaTourette thanked Sandy Potts and Julie Luby for all their hard work with Remote Learning. She further thanked all the nurses in the district and noted that she was glad to hear that specials will be returning at MHHS.
- Ed Sbordone thanked everyone in the district for all their hard work and noted that things seem to be running smoothly.
- Samantha Mannion thanked all the staff members and especially everyone in the high school that was instrumental in setting up the SATs for students.

- Stephanie Strazza thanked the administrators for being very responsive. She noted that she was glad that teachers are able to have some planning time on Wednesdays.
- Greg Flanagan noted that he attended Senior Night for Girls Volleyball and was glad that it was able to happen.

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:34 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a Paraprofessional Leave of Absence request and to discuss documents relating to NFAA contract negotiations and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino and Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo into the Executive Session. **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 back from Executive Session at 9:35 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:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Theresa DeLeon's request for an unpaid leave of absence effective November 20, 2020 through January 27, 2021. 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:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Dua Haddad's request for an unpaid leave of absence effective October 9, 2020 through the first day of the 2021-2022 school year. 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

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to ratify the agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the New Fairfield Administrators' Association from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024. 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

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 p.m. 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

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos