

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**MINUTES – March 16, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, New Fairfield High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, Athletic Director Mark Ottusch, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Khris Hall, and Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh

Quintin Flower 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 Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. March 2, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

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

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- The BOF met on March 15<sup>th</sup> and discussed the 2023/2024 budget. He encouraged BOF members to keep the needs of the schools in mind when recommending a budget.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw

- March is “Board of Education Appreciation” month. He thanked all the members of the Board for their hard work and professionalism.

C. Student Representatives’ Report

Senior Representative Grace DeMarco spoke of the following:

- The Junior Class is currently on the Washington, DC trip.
- The High School play Urinetown will be held from March 24<sup>th</sup> to March 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Junior Prom tickets are on sale from now until April 6<sup>th</sup>.
- DECA will be having a fashion show on March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

#### D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on March 16<sup>th</sup>. They reviewed the current budget and noted that there is a slight deficit due to Special Education costs and utility costs. Excess Cost Revenue from the State was received to offset this. Another payment is expected in June. The subcommittee discussed the reimbursement rates for the new school and noted that the CELA Reimbursement rate is 38.22% and the current rate for the high school is 26.93%. They are working with State Representatives to attempt to increase the reimbursement rate for the high school project. Director of Building and Grounds Phil Ross gave the subcommittee a report on the capital projects plan.

#### E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on March 8<sup>th</sup> and discussed the Medical Fund and Debt Service. The Board voted not to change the debt service policy at this time. Bonding will be done for the school projects without any changes to the debt service policy. The BOF asked for information on long-term capital plans.

The BOF met again on March 15<sup>th</sup> and discussed Medical Plan for the 2023/2024. The Medical Consultant gave a presentation, and it was decided to ask him to come to the March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting to give more information. They reviewed long term capital plans for the BOS. The BOF will review the long-term capital plans for the BOE on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. They further discussed the 2023/2024 budget and specifically the debt premium usage and the town-wide organizational chart. No votes regarding the budget were taken at this meeting.

The BOF discussed subcommittee assignments at their March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mark Beninson will replace Michael Cammarota as the liaison to the New Fairfield Volunteer Fire Department. Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard will serve on the Medical subcommittee and Cheryl Reedy, Thora Perkins and Wes Marsh will serve on the Audit subcommittee.

The March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting will be held via Zoom. The BOF will decide at their March 22<sup>nd</sup> whether or not future meetings will be in-person or on Zoom. The final markup will be done on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Ed Sbordone thanked BOE members that attended the BOF meetings.

2. Parks and Recreation Commission - Greg Flanagan noted that Parks and Rec Commission met on March 13<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- Chairman Sean Loughran noted that passing of former Parks and Rec member Jim Ogden.
- The commission discussed the pavilion at Rebel Turf. They voted to ask the BOE to take over the responsibility of the upkeep of this pavilion.
- Summer camp will be held from June 19<sup>th</sup> - July 28<sup>th</sup>. Trips will be held every other week.
- Two Waterfront Directors are still needed for this summer.
- Two Outdoor Cinema Directors were hired for this summer.

### VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### A. New Fairfield High School Healthier Start Time Presentation

Dr. Craw gave a presentation on the possibility of a Healthier Start Time for the high school and noted that if approved, it would begin in the school year 2024/2025. There is a task force looking into this possibility and if appropriate, they will make a recommendation to the full Board of Education. It was noted that only the high school is being considered for a change in time.

Dr. Craw spoke of the benefits of the later start time and logistics that must be considered to incorporate a later start time. He spoke of the health benefits for students in favor of a later time. Key considerations for this change include transportation and buses, town programs, traffic flow, bargaining unit implications, athletics and instructional time and the timeline for implementation for this change.

#### B. Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget

Dr. Craw gave a brief update on the budget and discussed the questions that have been asked by the Board of Finance. They include field fee revenue, AP scores, extra-curricular activities, the design of the new high school, and schedules for Math teachers. The BOF asked how New Fairfield compares to other districts. Members of the BOF asked about total head count for the district.

Dominic Cipollone thanked Dr. Craw and his staff for all their hard work with putting the data together. There was a brief discussion of the request from the BOF for data from past years.

#### C. Ten-Year Capital Plan

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy spoke of a document created in past years regarding capital needs of the district. She noted that prices and needs may have changed since this document was created.

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross gave an update on the capital budget. He noted that a large piece of this budget includes replacement of the underground oil tank at the Middle School, which needs to be completed by 2024/2025. Cost estimates for this are between \$600,000 and \$700,000. He noted that if the capital budget is cut this year, it will have to be made up next fiscal year. There was a brief discussion of the importance of maintenance for the Middle School.

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

Carrie DePuy showed pictures of the gym at the new high school. The punch list at Consolidated school is going well. Abatement for the old Consolidated School will begin soon and is expected to be done by Easter. The abatement of the auditorium at the high school will be done over Spring Break. Everything is on schedule and on budget.

Carrie DePuy noted that the reimbursement rate for the high school is currently at 26.93% but the district is in the process of going back to State to see if they can get a 28.22% rate.

#### E. Board of Education Policy (*Second Reading*)

1. Policy 5118.11-Tuition for Students of Staff members

### **VIII. ACTION ITEMS**

#### A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for March 9, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

#### B. New Fairfield Public Schools 2023-2024 Revised Calendar

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2023-24 revised school calendar as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

### **IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

### **X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None**

## **XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Ed Sbordone encouraged everyone to attend Board of Finance meetings.

Amy Johnson spoke of the Medical Fund and noted that we shouldn't shame employees using the insurance.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos