

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, September 2, 2021,  
at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

**MINUTES – September 2, 2021**

**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, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, 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 and Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner

**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. August 19, 2021 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to add agenda Action Item G “Expenditure Surplus Request.” 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

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Linda Pasquariello, Marilyn Radder and Jolie Sherman spoke in support of higher wages and better health insurance for the paraprofessionals.

High School student Mason Cipriani spoke of the issue of Juniors and Sophomores not being able to secure parking spots due to the construction project at the high school. He asked the Board and Administration to try to come up with an alternative solution that can benefit all students who wish to drive to school.

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report - Peggy Katkocin spoke of the following:

- Thanked everyone involved in making the first week of school successful.

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

- Thanked everyone for all the hard work during the summer and everyone involved in the start of the school year. She thanked everyone for their patience regarding any issues that may come up for the beginning of the year.
- She encouraged everyone that has not yet done so, to get vaccinated.
- There will be a 9/11 ceremony at the high school on Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup>. There is an essay contest regarding September 11<sup>th</sup>. The winner of this contest will have their essay read at the ceremony and will receive a \$50 gift card.
- New Fairfield Day will be held on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. The BOE will have a booth there where residents can express opinions or ask questions of the Board members.
- Assistant Superintendent of School Julie Luby introduced Joan Spector as the new Engagement Coordinator. She noted that the primary role of Ms. Spector is to coordinate with and meet with quarantined students and make them feel that they are part of the school.
- Ms. Spector thanked the Board for the opportunity and gave a brief description of her background.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Cayden Walker spoke of the following:

- The Senior Parade for the Class of 2022 was successful.
- Full in-person learning has started.
- Many students have concerns over the limited parking for Juniors and Sophomores.
- The Fall sports season has begun.

D. Student Representative Report

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that this committee met on August 23<sup>rd</sup> and discussed the specifics of professional development that was held for teachers on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on September 1<sup>st</sup> and reviewed the policy regarding Public Participation at BOE meetings. Anyone with comments regarding this are encouraged to attend the Policy subcommittee on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Open Choice

Dr. Chip Dumais from CES (Cooperative Educational Services) gave a description of the Open Choice Program and noted that it is designed to reduce racial, ethnic and economic disparity. He noted that 50 seats have opened in the Norwalk area and 50 seats have opened in the Danbury area in order to expand the Open Choice program. He spoke of the procedures for both the sending and receiving district. Members of the BOE asked questions of Dr. Dumais about how this program would affect New Fairfield. This will be discussed further at BOE meetings in the near future.

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

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo spoke of the progress of the building projects for both the CELA project and the new high school and noted the following:

- Currently focusing on the exterior of the CELA project. There may be some potential delays due to material shortages.
- Construction is starting to begin at the high school. Construction of the temporary bus lot has begun.
- Limitations on the parking lot at the high school will begin in early October.
- Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross has relocated his office to the Middle School.

- There was a brief discussion of the possible parking concerns for students at the high school. It was noted that every senior that applied for a spot was able to get a spot for the first semester. Dr. Sanzo spoke of a possible temporary lot and shuttle for the juniors.

## 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 August 26, 2021, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly 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. Superintendent's Goals

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Superintendent/District Goals 2021-22. 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

### C. Evaluation Flexibilities 2021-2022

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board to approve adoption the Evaluation Flexibilities offered by the Connecticut State Department of Education, as outlined, for the 2021-2022 school year. Kimberly 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

### D. Ratification of the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and UE Local 222, CILU/CIPU, CILU #9 Custodians, Maintenance and Groundskeepers- July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2025 - Executive Session.

### E. Resumption of Communications/Community Outreach Subcommittee

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to resume the Communications/Community Outreach subcommittee. 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

The first meeting of this subcommittee will be held on October 4, 2021, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

### F. Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

### G. Expenditure Surplus Request

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to approve a request to the BOF to transfer 100% of the BOE fiscal year 2020-2021 and prior year close out expenditure surplus into the BOE non-lapsing account. Peggy Katkocin seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Ed Sbordone noted that 100% of this total is approximately \$117,000. He spoke of money that was transferred in the past. There was a brief discussion of the best uses for the surplus and it was noted that the Board of Finance will be meet to vote on this on Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Terra Volpe spoke in support of New Fairfield accepting Open Choice students and spoke of the positive experience that her children received from attending the Magnet School.

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - Updates on the Transition program and “Q” (Quarantine) School will be given at meetings in the near future.

## **XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Kimberly LaTourette thanked everyone for their hard work with getting the school year started. She reminded everyone to have patience during drop off and pick up times.

Ed Sbordone noted that he is glad to have all students back to school in person and encouraged everyone to keep their masks on while in the school buildings.

Stephanie Strazza noted that she appreciates students going to school in person and is glad to have a sense of normalcy.

Kathy Baker encouraged everyone to review the policy regarding public participation and noted that most of the business of the board is done at the subcommittee level and encouraged public participation at subcommittee meetings.

Greg Flanagan welcomed everyone back to school and encouraged future dialogue and further investigation of Open Choice.

Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for making sure that school is in person this year. He encouraged parents to consistently ask students about their school day.

Peggy Katkocin encouraged everyone to stay safe.

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO CUSTODIAN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

## **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

## **XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:39 p.m. to discuss documents related to custodian contract negotiations, contract negotiations and a leave of absence request and to invite Dr. Pat Cosentino, Dr. Richard Sanzo and Kathryn Matz 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 9:17 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 to ratify the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and UE Local 222, CILU/CIPU, CILU #9 Custodians, Maintenance and Groundskeepers from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2025. 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:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to approve the Leave of Absence request from Katherine Burns as per the NFEA contract. 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

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m. Kimberly 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

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos