

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, December 3, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

MINUTES – December 3, 2020

PRESENT: Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Dominic Cipollone, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: Kathy Baker and Greg Flanagan

ALSO PRESENT: 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 Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel, High School Science Department Chair Jean Gephart and Consolidated School Teacher Meghan O'Rourke.

Network Administrator 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. November 19, 2020 - 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 - Peggy Katkocin noted that beginning Monday, December 7 Consolidated School and Meeting House Hill School will reopen to full in-person instruction and the Middle School and High School will be on a hybrid schedule. She thanked all staff members for their hard work and reminded everyone to remain vigilant with COVID guidelines.
 - B. Superintendent's Report - Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby spoke in Dr. Cosentino's absence.
 - Spoke of in-person learning and reminded families that it is always an option for students to switch to remote learning if the families are more comfortable with that situation.
 - Dr. Cosentino will present her budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year on Thursday, December 17 at 6:30 p.m.

- The first meeting of the newly formed Equity Action Team was very successful. Over a dozen people attended and there was a great discussion of the role of this team. It is hopeful that this group will be expanded at the next meeting on December 21.
- Many New Fairfield students have been selected by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association for All-State.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Representative Caden Walker spoke of the following:

- Noted that most of the extra-curricular clubs are up and running at this time.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that the Curriculum Subcommittee discussed options for electives for seniors for English. The subcommittee also discussed the importance of having Math every day. They further spoke of the gifted program. Professional Development for the new curriculum and assessments for all grade levels were also discussed.

2. Special Education Ad Hoc - Stephanie Strazza noted that this committee met on December 3rd. Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz and Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel explained the implementation plans for Special Education. A service grid will be developed for remote, hybrid and in-person learning. Evaluations and standardized tests were discussed. It was noted that some students will be defined as high needs students if it is deemed they cannot access their education remotely. These students will be eligible for five day a week in-person school. The committee discussed a "Transition Program" for New Fairfield. This would be for special need students ages 18-21 and would enable them to learn life skills.

E. Liaison Reports

1. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee will meet on December 14. Chairman Peggy Katkocin suggested that the BOE go into Executive Session during a meeting in January to get an update from the School Security and Safety Committee

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Technology Driven Instructional Shifts

Julie Luby spoke of many new tools and technology that have been used due to remote learning. It is anticipated that many of these tools will be used after the pandemic is over. Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca spoke of technology and how it best supports teaching and learning. Four elements that were looked at included student engagement, delivery of instruction, assessment and resources that enhanced curriculum. Dr. Karen Fildes spoke of the many uses of technology and noted that a lot of these tools were free at the beginning of COVID but will now have a cost. She spoke of a survey of staff to see which technology tools would be most beneficial for the district.

High School Science Department Chair Jean Gephart explained the features of Kami and how it is used for Middle School and High School students.

Consolidated School Teacher Meghan O'Rourke spoke of the See Saw program that is currently in use for K-3 grades.

B. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Bylaw 9030.1-Conflict in Public Education
2. Bylaw 9030.2- Civility
3. Bylaw 9120- Officers
4. Bylaw 9121- Office of the Chairperson
5. Bylaw 9122- Office of the Vice-Chairperson
6. Bylaw 9123- Office of the Secretary

7. Bylaw 9124- Recording Secretary/Clerk
8. Bylaw 9125- Attorney
7. Bylaw 9130- Committees
8. Bylaw 9132- Standing Committees
9. Bylaw 9133- Ad Hoc Committees
10. Bylaw 9140-Board Representatives
11. Bylaw 9150- Board Consultants
12. Bylaw 9273-Civility Code

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

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo gave an update on the building project and noted that he and Dr. Cosentino met with the State Office of School Construction Grants to review the design of the Consolidated School project. The design for Consolidated continues to move forward. The high school estimate has just been completed and will be presented to the PBC next week. It was noted that the estimate is back in the range of where it should be. O&G will present a site logistics plan for both buildings. The projects are on track to break ground in about six months.

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 November 24, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. New Fairfield Public School 2021-2022 District Calendar

MOTION: Stephanie Strazza made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2021-22 school calendar as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Board of Education 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. Rick Regan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

1. Policy 4118.231/4218.231-Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
2. Policy 5131.6- Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
3. Bylaw 9000-Rule of Board and Members (Powers, Purpose, Duties)
4. Bylaw 9010- Limits of Authority
5. Bylaw 9012- Legal Responsibilities of Board of Education
6. Bylaw 9020- Public Statements
7. Bylaw 9030- Commitment to Democratic Principles in relation to Community, Staff and students
8. Bylaw 9040-Board related responsibilities

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS -

- Samantha Mannion asked for a presentation of the Special Education Transition Program for New Fairfield.
- Stephanie Strazza asked for a regular COVID update for upcoming meetings.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Stephanie Strazza spoke of rising COVID levels but noted that guidance is showing that the rate of infection at schools is very low. She asked that the district look for mitigation strategies instead of closing schools.

Dominic Cipollone spoke of the low infection rate at schools and encouraged in-person instruction as much as possible. He spoke of the challenges for teachers and all staff this year and thanked everyone for their hard work.

Kimberly LaTourette thanked all the teachers, staff, and administrators for going above and beyond this year, and encouraged them to take care of themselves and encourage and support each other.

Rick Regan spoke of the advantages of in-person learning and encouraged opening schools as much as possible.

Peggy Katkocin spoke of her conversation with Town of New Fairfield Health Director Tim Simpkins and noted that the vaccines promise to be very successful and should be available in Connecticut by the end of January or early February. She spoke of the distribution of this vaccine and encouraged nurses that may be able to help to call the New Fairfield Health Director.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Rick Regan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos