

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, September 19, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield.

**MINUTES – September 19, 2024**

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

**ABSENT:** None

**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, and Elementary School Principal Allyson Story.

**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. August 15, 2024 - 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 noted that he attended the High School Open House and was very impressed. He thanked High School Principal James D’Amico and the PTO for hosting a successful event. He spoke of his wishes for a successful school year.

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

1. Opening of School - Welcomed everyone back to school.
2. Strategic Plan - Agenda items for the BOE meetings will be connected to the Strategic Plan which includes Curriculum, Instruction and Wellness.
3. STEAM Room - The Robotics Curriculum has started in the Middle School. Dr. Craw encouraged visitors to the STEAM Room at the Middle School.

C. Student Representatives’ Reports

High School Principal James D’Amico welcomed back Emilia Sedlak as the Senior Representative and introduced Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom.

Senior Representative Emilia Sedlak spoke of the following:

- Unified Theater is selling T-shirts to support their May 2025 production.
- The 2025 Yearbooks are currently on sale.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on October 24<sup>th</sup> and October 25<sup>th</sup>. Conferences are held via Zoom.
- “Food for All” is hosting a meal packaging event on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The College and Career Fair is offering an opportunity for students to attend the Southern Connecticut College and Career Fair on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The bus will leave at 4:00 p.m. and return at 8:30 pm.
- DECA is hosting a Club Fair on October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- PSAT's will be given to Sophomores and Juniors on October 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The BETA Club will hold a Fall Vendor Festival on November 9<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. They discussed the following:

- Monthly budget vs. actual expenses.
- Potential fiscal year 2024-2025 unanticipated expenses.
- Intercom system at the Middle School was completed.
- The playground at the Elementary School is in need of some repairs.
- A new trailer was needed for the bus lot.
- Working with PBC for the process of the underground oil tank removal.
- Starting to schedule meetings for the 2025-2026 budget.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance

Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on the following dates:

- August 28<sup>th</sup> - Regular meeting - The main topic was the Track and Turf replacement. They discussed the Medical Fund and noted that July claims were extremely high. The BOF set up a Capital Subcommittee to review potential projects.
- September 3<sup>rd</sup> - Medical subcommittee met and discussed the June and July claims. August claims were lower than June and July. The next medical subcommittee is October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- September 4<sup>th</sup> - Joint meeting between the BOF and BOS- The BOF approved an appropriation in the amount of \$600,000 specifically for the Track and Field replacement. The BOS approved Turf and Field replacement be funded with \$329,593 of ARPA funds and \$600,000 of 2023-2024 surplus. The \$600,000 was approved by the taxpayers at a Town Meeting. The approval \$329,593 will go to a referendum on September 28<sup>th</sup>.
- September 16<sup>th</sup> - Capital projects subcommittee met and discussed town projects. The next meeting will be held on October 7<sup>th</sup> with the focus on BOE projects.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee

Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec Committee met on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- The Parks and Rec Chairman announced that there will be a Town Meeting about the Turf Field.
- First Selectman Melissa Lindsey is looking into the possibility of allowing "Swim at your Own Risk" at the Town Beach when lifeguards are not available.
- New Fairfield Fair Day was cancelled due to rain.
- Trick or Treat will be held on October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The Turkey Run will be held on November 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The Holiday Light Parade will be held on November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Marina will close on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. Educator Evaluation Plan**

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of a requirement by the State of Connecticut for all districts to update their Educator Evaluation plan. She spoke of new guidelines that emphasize educator growth. She further spoke of guiding principles for PDEC (Professional Development and Evaluation Committee.)

### **B. Cell Phone Guideline (Wellness Goal)**

Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner and High School Principal James D'Amico explained the cell phone policy for their respective schools. The policy for the Elementary School and the Middle School is that cell phones must be kept in lockers at all times during the day. Parents can contact the office in the event of an emergency. The policy for the High School is that cell phones are allowed during lunch and study hall and can be used in the classroom at the discretion of the teacher. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of how technology, cell phones and social media affect wellness.

### **C. Stadium Turf, Track and Lighting Update**

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that the lights at Rebel Field will be installed starting Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The track and field replacement will begin in June 2025 if the referendum for the ARPA funds passes at the September 28<sup>th</sup> referendum.

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

Carrie DePuy noted that there is proposal for fixing the propane issue at the high school. This is pending PBC approval. The fence around Consolidated School has been installed and abatement will begin on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The expected time frame for abatement is about five months. The Consolidated Sign and Rock will be moved to New Fairfield Elementary School. There are some necessary repairs needed at the Elementary School playground which must go through the warranty.

### **E. STRIDES Update**

Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy spoke of the new STRIDES location and the combining of programs with Newtown. A lease should be signed soon. A "Meet and Greet" will be held on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> and Opening Day will be Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>.

## **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 September 13, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - Millie Kellogg thanked Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner and her staff for how well they handled a situation at the Middle School.

## **X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The first BOE meeting in October will be held on Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> instead of Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> due to the observance of Rosh Hashanah. The annual standardized testing will be discussed on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The second meeting in October will give a Student Outcome Report for the Class of 2024.

## **XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Kathy Baker spoke of the success of Convocation.

Kim LaTourette spoke of the possibility of offering a “Trades Fair” for high school students interested in pursuing these fields and offered to help in any way possible.

Samantha Mannion spoke of the new cell phone policies and how they may be difficult for some families. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos