

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, August 5, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**MINUTES – August 5, 2021**

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

**ABSENT:** 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 Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel

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. June 17, 2021 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. July 8, 2021 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- C. July 14, 2021 - Special meeting - approved by consensus

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

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Amy Johnson spoke in support of not requiring masks in schools for students for this upcoming school year.

Many members of the public spoke in support of the mask mandate, especially in light of the Delta variant of COVID-19. Many noted that Governor Lamont has issued an Executive Order requiring masks in schools until at least September 30<sup>th</sup>.

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

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

- Thanked everyone for addressing their opinions during Public Comment.
- Noted that there is an Executive Order from Governor Lamont that masks must be worn in all schools at least until September 30, 2021. She reminded everyone that the district is also an employer and has an obligation to keep not only the children but also all the employees of the school system safe.

- Many members of the BOE spoke in support of the mask mandate and encouraged everyone to take the Delta variant seriously.
- B. Superintendent's Report - Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke in Dr. Cosentino's absence.
- Thanked everyone involved in putting together the video showing how vaccines work. This video was sent to all parents via email and is also available on the district website and Facebook.
  - There was a mobile vaccine clinic in New Fairfield at the high school parking lot on Wednesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> and there will be another this Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. She encouraged everyone that is able to get vaccinated.
  - Thanked everyone involved with running Summer School. The first session of the Enrichment Summer School finished, and the second session just started.
  - There has been a lot of hiring of staff. There are still many positions available for cafeteria aides and paraprofessionals.
  - The DECA club at the high school received an award for the outstanding service project of putting together Birthday Boxes for children with HIV/AIDS.
  - The district calendar received an award from CAFE for Excellence in Communications.

C. Committee Reports

1. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on July 27<sup>th</sup> and is requesting the implementation of a temporary policy and some policies will be suspended until December 31, 2023.

2. Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee - Stephanie Strazza noted that this committee met on August 5<sup>th</sup>. The location for the transition program has changed and will be held in Danbury. The ESY program went very well. A special education coach was hired with ESSER funds.

D. Liaison Reports

1. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee met on July 26<sup>th</sup> and discussed the "Speak Up" initiative and the pending school security grants. Safety and Security protocol during the construction period was discussed in Executive Session.

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. School Reopening Update

Julie Luby announced that the first day of school for new teachers is August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Convocation will be held on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Professional Development days will be held the rest of the week. The first day of school for students will be Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup>.

B. ESY Summer School Update

Katherine Matz noted that the Extended School Year Summer School ended today. It was held fully in person this year and went very well.

C. Math Update

Alyce Misuraca noted that there will be three Math Coaches with coverage in all four schools. She spoke of the goals for all grade levels. She further spoke of empathy workshops and focus groups to get a better idea of the culture of the school especially for Grades 6-12.

Dominic Cipollone thanked Alyce Misuraca for all her hard work.

#### D. Overview of Administrative Retreat

Julie Luby spoke of a four-day retreat for Administrators which discussed professional growth and how to design professional development to best help teachers and students.

#### E. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Policy C-19-1250 - Visitors, Volunteers and Access to campus.
2. Policy 1250 - Visits to the Schools
3. Policy 1250.1- Classroom Observations
4. Policy 3517.3 - Site Access/Closed Campus
5. Policy 6162.4 - School Volunteers

Samantha Mannion noted that there will be a motion at the August 19<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting to suspend the rules to skip the second reading for these policies in order to have them approved before the start of the school year. She spoke of a temporary policy that will limit access to the school building until December 31, 2023, or until the completion of the construction projects. Three reasons for this policy include COVID-19, the construction project, and the need for continuity in all four schools.

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

Dr. Rich Sanzo noted the Zoning Commission will meet on Monday, August 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom in order to discuss the location of the proposed bus lot. The Permanent Building Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom to discuss an update on the Consolidated Early Learning Academy and an update on the bidding of the high school project. There will be changes to the parking patterns at both the high school and the middle school. He noted that there will be limited visitor parking and restrictions for underclassmen parking.

#### G. Website Update

Rick Regan noted that the district has received money to get a new website. He spoke of the specific updates needed and specifically, making it mobile accessible. It is hopeful that a basic site will be up by the first day of school.

Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes spoke of the new website and noted that Aptegy was chosen as the vendor for this new website. She spoke of the current website and improvements that will be made with the new site.

### 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 July 29, 2021, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

### IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Many members of the public spoke regarding the mask mandate for the schools. Some spoke in favor of mask mandates and others spoke in support of making masks optional. It was noted that the district is bound by the Governor's Executive Order that requires masks at least until September 30<sup>th</sup>. Members of the public are encouraged to watch the informational video regarding vaccine safety available on the district website and Facebook.

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - The next regular BOE meeting will be held on Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.

**XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Rick Regan encouraged everyone to watch the video regarding the vaccine.

Kimberly LaTourette noted that the district is required to follow the rules regarding the mask mandates. She noted that she fully supports any mitigation strategies for COVID in order to keep student in school as long as possible.

Ed Sbordone noted that he agreed with the mask mandate.

Samantha Mannion spoke of the rules and policies regarding public comments and noted that anyone wishing to speak needs to identify themselves and adhere to the three-minute time limit. She encouraged her fellow board members to enforce these rules in the future.

Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for the public comments and encouraged everyone to be open to other's opinions while doing what is best for the students. He thanked all the educators for all their hard work.

Kathy Baker encouraged everyone that hasn't already to get vaccinated.

Stephanie Strazza reminded everyone that the job of the BOE is to adopt policies and procedures and is bound to the rules and Executive Orders.

Peggy Katkocin encouraged everyone to get vaccinated and wear masks.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos