

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Thursday, June 22, 2023, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

MINUTES – June 22, 2023

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

ABSENT: Stephanie Strazza

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, and Director of Technology Paul Gouveia

Broadcast Coordinator Erik Muhlenberg explained the procedures 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 pm.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. June 1, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. June 8, 2023 - Special meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Paraprofessional Union President Cynthia Ross-Zweig noted that legislation was passed in the State that will provide stipends to help pay for health care for paraprofessionals. The district will also receive money from the State to provide professional development for paraprofessionals.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:

- Congratulated all the high school graduates and thanked Superintendent Dr. Craw and High School Principal James D'Amico and their staff for putting together a wonderful ceremony.
- He spoke of learning loss due to the pandemic but noted that the NAEP report showed that New Fairfield students did well compared to the national average. He spoke of resources needed to continue to give students the necessary skills.

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

- Thanked the maintenance and custodial crew for getting Rebel Turf ready for graduation despite the rain earlier in the day.
- He introduced Monika Krepsztul and Alex Lambert who will serve as Secondary Special Education Supervisor and Elementary Special Education Supervisor, respectively.

- He noted that Katherine Matz will be leaving the district to go to another district. He gave a brief description of her tenure in New Fairfield and wished her well in her new position.

C. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this committee met on June 22nd. He noted that as of May 31st, there is a deficit of \$110,000 primarily due to Special Education contracted services and transportation. An Excess Cost Grant of \$80,000 will mitigate some of this deficit. There are some other grants available to cover these costs if necessary.

The subcommittee discussed the Sherman tuition contract and proposed a 3% increase per student which will yield a per student cost to \$15,700. There is also a proposed increase of 3% for the Special Education stipend for Sherman students.

There was a building project update at the subcommittee. There is a punch list for the Consolidated/MHHS school that will be completed over the summer. This includes a roof leak and some playground issues. The East Lake crosswalk project for the high school has been put on hold.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that Policy 4118.51 - Social Media will be voted on at tonight's meeting.

3. Special Education Ad Hoc - Samantha Mannion noted that the Special Education Department will be restructured.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone gave a summary of the BOF meeting of June 21st. They approved a Medical Stop Loss of \$200,000 with an ASL of 120%. The projected fund balance for the Medical Fund is approximately \$580,000. The BOF voted to accept the audit report prepared by O'Connor Davies LLC. They further voted to adopt a Public Comment policy that would limit Public Comment to 30 minutes at the beginning of the meeting and 15 minutes at the end of the meeting with a maximum of 3 minutes per speaker. The policy can be modified at the discretion of the Chairman.

2. Parks and Rec Commission - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this commission met on June 12th and discussed the following:

- The Parks and Rec Commission decided to ask the BOE to share in the upkeep and cost of the pavilion at Rebel Turf.
- The Commission discussed the rebuilding of the Beach House.
- The Boat Parade is scheduled for Friday, July 14th with a rain date of Saturday, July 15th.
- New Fairfield Day will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9th with a rain date of Sunday, Sept. 10th.
- There is a need for lifeguards at the Town Beach.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Special Education Leadership Structure

Dr. Craw spoke of the need to change the structure for the Special Education Department due to the increased number of students with IEPs. He noted that these changes would be cost neutral. He noted that instead of a department chairman there will be special education supervisors. This will allow for the better support of students.

VIII. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Reduction Scenario

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the FY 24 Budget Reduction Scenario as presented, pending the outcome of the budget referendum. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Dr. Craw gave an updated scenario of the budget reductions for the 2023-2024 budget. He noted that the BOF added back \$100,000 to the budget after the failed budget referendum on May 20th. It was decided to use these fund for a Special Education teacher and Pre K teacher.

B. Excess Cost Grant Request

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that an additional \$80,295 will be received by the State for an Excess Cost Grant. The Board will need to request this from the State.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to authorize the BOE to request the Excess Cost Grant in the amount of \$80,295.00. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

C. International Field Trip

1. Paris and Orleans Exchange Trip

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby gave a brief description of this program. High School teacher Heidi Edel gave a presentation and spoke of the itinerary. Members of the BOE spoke of questions and concerns regarding this program. It was decided to table this agenda item until a future meeting so that more information can be obtained. A special meeting will be held if necessary.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for June 22, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policy

Suspension of the Rules - referring to Policy 4118.51

1. Policy 4118.51 - Social Media

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 4118.51. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Director of Technology Paul Gouveia gave a brief overview of the changes to his policy.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Board of Education Policy 4118.51 as presented. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

C. Sherman Contract - July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

Greg Flanagan noted that this agreement with Sherman is a one-year contract as opposed to the usual three-year contract.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the contract between the Town of Sherman and the Town of New Fairfield for the period beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024, and to authorize the Board secretary to sign the contract. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

D. Custodian Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

E. Teacher Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

F. Non-Union Salaries and Benefits - Executive Session

G. Superintendent's Contract

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to accept the Superintendent's contract as agreed upon. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The International Trip will be discussed at the next meeting.

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kathy Baker thanked Katherine Matz for all she has done for the district and wished her well in the future. She welcomed the new Special Education Supervisors. She thanked all staff members for their hard work during this challenging year.

Kimberly LaTourette congratulated the graduates. She encouraged everyone to relax over the summer and reminded everyone to vote this Saturday.

Greg Flanagan thanked everyone who was instrumental in putting the high school graduation together. He reminded everyone to vote this Saturday. He congratulated Dr. Craw on the renewal of his contract.

Dominic Cipollone thanked the Superintendent for all his hard work during his first year. He thanked all the district staff for all their hard work throughout the school year. He reminded everyone to vote on Saturday.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:07 p.m. to discuss a custodian leave of absence request, a teacher leave of absence request and non-union contract negotiations and to invite Superintendent of School Dr. Craw and Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy into the Executive Session. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:27 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Richard Clark's unpaid leave of absence request, commencing July 13, 2023, with a return-to-work date of approximately August 25, 2023. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the unpaid medical leave of absence request for Kristen Olyha, with an anticipated return to work on the first day of the 2024-25 school year. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the non-union salaries and benefits for the 2023-2024 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos