

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – April 25, 2023

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

ABSENT: None

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, High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary School Assistant Principal Steve Groccia, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Supervisor of Special Education Melissa Busnel, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Khris Hall, and Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh

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. April 6, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to add Action Item VIII B “Discussion and Vote to Censure a BOE Member for Violation of Bylaw 9327.1 (Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks).” Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Approximately ten members of the public spoke in support of the education budget and against cuts to the 2023-2024 budget. They urged fellow residents to attend the April 26th BOF meeting and to speak in support of no cuts to the BOE budget.

Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh noted that despite the fact that the BOF had received over 90 emails requesting an in-person meeting for the April 26th budget mark up, the meeting will be held via Zoom. Mr. Marsh encouraged public participation at this meeting and noted that he is available after tonight’s meeting for any questions from residents.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for their comments supporting the BOE budget.

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

- Welcomed everyone back to school after Spring Break.
- Dr. Crow spoke of good news regarding the Performance Index. Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby explained the Performance Index and noted that it includes several standardized test scores and gives one numerical score. She noted that scores are very close to scores from before the pandemic and that post pandemic growth in the district has exceeded the norm.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Senior Representative Grace DeMarco spoke of the following:

- AP Tests begin this week.
- Some students recently returned from a trip to Belize over Spring Break.
- Senior Prom tickets go on sale this week.
- The Junior Prom will be held this Saturday, April 29th.

Junior Representative Brennan Hearty spoke of the following:

- Junior SAT scores are available on the College Board website.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on April 25th and discussed the following.

- Discussed budget vs. actual and noted that they are in line with last year.
- There is projected to be a slight deficit in the operating budget but this projection is less than what was projected a few months ago.
- The subcommittee discussed the high school project and noted that it is on time and on budget.
- The roof leak at Consolidated School has been fixed.
- The subcommittee discussed the debt service and the possibility of using the bond premium for the budget.

2. Curriculum - Stephanie Strazza noted that this subcommittee met on April 24th and discussed the following:

- Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby presented the Philosophy statement and the Performance Index and noted that the district website has been updated with the Performance Index and current curriculum.
- There was a textbook adoption for EdGems curriculum for Math.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on April 12th and discussed the following:

- Over 60 residents spoke during Public Comment. Of the comments, 58 were in favor of the budget as is without additional cuts and two residents spoke in favor of cutting the budget.
- A BOF member presented a proposal which would bring the increase from 13.15% to 6.94% but this proposal was voted down.
- There was a motion to ask the BOS and BOE to show the effect of cuts of \$300,000 and \$1,775,000 respectively. This motion passed by a vote of 4-2-0.
- The final markup of the budget will be held on Wednesday, April 26th at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget

Dr. Crow gave a presentation of the effect of \$1,775,000 worth of cuts. He noted that the reductions were compiled in collaboration with administrators. He noted that these cuts affect all areas of education but assured everyone that all health and safety measures and state mandates will be funded. There was a discussion among the BOE members regarding this scenario. It was decided that Dr. Crow will present this to the BOF on April 26th but it was made clear that the BOE does not support this level of cuts.

B. Board of Education Policy (Second Reading)

1. Policy 3517.1 - Identification Badges

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 April 24, 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, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. Vote to Censure a BOE Member

Dominic Cipollone spoke of a post on social media by BOE member Amy Johnson that contained misinformation. This post did not make clear that these comments were made by Ms. Johnson individually and not on behalf of the Board of Education as a whole.

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to censure Amy Johnson for violation of Bylaw 9327.1 Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks subsection 1 and 8. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to call the question regarding the above motion. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR OF CALLING THE QUESTION:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza. **IN FAVOR OF MOTION:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Amy Johnson

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Many members of the public spoke in support of the education budget and thanked the BOE and BOS for their hard work. They encouraged members of the public to attend the BOF meeting April 26th and give opinions regarding the proposed cuts.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ed Sbordone encouraged everyone to look towards the future and to make sure their votes count at the municipal election in November.

Samantha Mannion encouraged resident that spoke at tonight's meeting to speak again at the BOF meeting on April 26th.

Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for their support and participation.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos