

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 7:00 pm. via Zoom.

MINUTES – April 27, 2022

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. Pat Cosentino, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, 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, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel and Athletic Director Mark Ottusch

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 Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. April 7, 2022 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus
 - B. April 12, 2022 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - approve by consensus
- V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None
- VI. **BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**
 - A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:
 - Noted that the budget process was long and difficult. He encouraged everyone to vote at the referendum in May.
 - Spoke of the difference between sharing an opinion and speaking inappropriately and asked everyone to show respect and support for one another.
 - Spoke of upcoming standardized tests and encouraged parents to make sure that their children are well rested and have a good breakfast before the tests.
 - Congratulated Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli on her retirement.
 - B. Superintendent’s Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:
 - Congratulated Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli on her retirement effective June 30th.

- Spoke of the wonderful High School Band and Choir trip to Disney World. She thanked the chaperones and noted that the students represented their town with pride and respect.
- The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new STRIDES location will be on May 31st at 1 p.m.

C. Student Representative Report

Junior Representative Grace DeMarco spoke of the following:

- Seniors will be starting their SEE projects in a few weeks.
- AP Exams will begin next week.
- SAT results for Juniors have been released. There are other dates available for students who want to take the SATs again.
- The Junior Prom will be held on May 7th. The Senior Prom will be a few weeks later.
- The spring sports teams are doing well. The spring Pep Rally was a success.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on April 27th and reviewed the current budget. The deficit that was projected last month, is not as high as originally thought. The Google Access reconciliation showed no deficiencies. The committee discussed the food service contract as the district is required to go out to bid every five years. Bids for this contract are due by May 19th. The contract for the copiers is also being reviewed. Budget transfers will be brought to the full board.

2. Curriculum - Stephanie Strazza noted that this committee met on April 25th and discussed instructional materials. There was an update on the Strings program and an update on Math resources. Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of information that she received noting that DRG comparisons are not used much lately and spoke of the district making comparisons with their own growth year after year.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met seven times since the budget was presented to them on March 5th. At their April 20th meeting, the BOF voted in favor of both the BOE and BOS respective operational budgets as presented and to use \$1,350,000 from the bond premium and to increase the interest income revenue by \$150,000 yielding a Mil Rate increase of 3.11%. The BOF further voted to recommend to a town meeting a Board of Finance recommended budget consisting of education expenditures totaling \$48,236,562 from the general fund and \$93,885 from the capital & nonrecurring fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023 and to recommend to a town meeting a Board of Finance recommended budget consisting of town governmental expenditures totaling \$13,265,589 from the general fund and \$788,239 from the capital & nonrecurring fund and \$799,502 from other governmental funds for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. The Board of Selectmen met on April 25th and approved the date of May 3, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. the Annual Town meeting that will adjourn the vote to a referendum vote between 7 and 14 days from May 3rd.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Kim LaTourette noted that this commission met on April 11th and discussed the boat slips, beach passes, softball and baseball fields and the proposed pavilion at the Town Beach. There is a possibility that part of the Town Beach will be closed this year due to a lack of lifeguards. Applications are available on the town's website for anyone interested in becoming a lifeguard. The Parks and Rec Commission will host the Sip and Stroll on May 21st from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

3. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that the next meeting for the School Security and Safety Committee will be on June 6th.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Athletic Code of Conduct

Athletic Director Mark Ottusch spoke of the Athletic Code of Conduct and how it aligns with the overall Code of Conduct of the district. He spoke of a script that is read regarding conduct before home events and spoke of how he works with the athletes and the captains of teams to guide them on sportsmanship. There was a brief discussion of younger students attending sporting events and the need for them to be supervised.

B. Board of Education Policies (Second Reading)

1. Policy 4118.11/4218.11 - Nondiscrimination
2. Policy 6146.11 - Grade Weighting and Class Rank
3. Bylaw 9327 - Electronic Communications among Board Members

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

Dr. Sanzo noted that the construction project was able to make great strides last week due to Spring Break. The Consolidated project is starting to take shape and adjustments have been made to the drop off and pick up for parking. It was noted that this project is on time and on budget. The opening for the CELA project is scheduled for September 2022. The framing for the high school project has begun. Demolition and renovation of the pool and locker room area have begun.

Dr. Sanzo noted that the Zoning Commission meeting regarding the bus lot will be held via Zoom on Monday, May 2nd at 7:30 p.m.

D. 2022-2023 Budget

Dr. Cosentino spoke of areas of the budget that will be considered to adjust the budget. It is hopeful that the reductions can be made without impacting the students. This will be discussed further at the May 5th BOE meeting.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Appointment of Principal of New Fairfield Middle School

Dr. Cosentino announced the appointment of Karen Gruetzner as the new Middle School Principal and gave a brief description of her background.

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the appointment of Karen Gruetzner as Principal of New Fairfield Middle School effective July 1, 2022. 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

B. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for April 14, 2022, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Quarterly Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Transfers

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the requested quarterly FY 2021-22 budget transfers as presented. 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

D. Reduction in Force (Executive Session)

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Discussion of District Reference Groups

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

All members of the Board of Education wished Christine Baldelli congratulations on her retirement. Everyone congratulated Karen Gruetzner on her appointment as the new Principal for the Middle School.

Everyone thanked the members of the public that spoke in support of the budget and encouraged the public to vote at referendum.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING REDUCTION IN FORCE

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:58 p.m. to discuss a reduction in force and to invite Dr. Pat Cosentino and Julie Luby into the Executive Session. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:16 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

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the New Fairfield Board of Education nonrenew the teacher contract of Janna Stratman at the end of the 2021-22 school year as recommended by the Superintendent. I further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to Janna Stratman and that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests for other data which may be forthcoming from the teacher and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions on Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151. 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

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. Kimberly LaTourette 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