

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, November 2, 2023, at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – November 2, 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, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Director of Guidance Kim Laughlin, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Athletic Director Mark Ottusch, and Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross

- 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. October 19, 2023 - Regular 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 reported on the following:
 - Spoke of intellectual atrophy and gave suggestions for ways to stimulate the mind and enhance mental cognitive ability. He thanked the teachers and staff in New Fairfield for helping the students stay mentally active.
 - B. Superintendent’s Report
 - Dr. Kenneth Craw congratulated members of the Class Act Council. Athletic Director Mark Ottusch introduced representatives from the Class Act Council. He noted that New Fairfield received the Michael’s Cup Award for sportsmanship. He gave a brief overview of what has been done in New Fairfield to improve the level of sportsmanship.
 - C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

 - Beta Club will hold a “Fall Festival” on Saturday, November 4th.
 - The first quarter ends on Friday, November 3rd.
 - Financial Aid Night will be held at the high school in the near future.
 - The National Honor Society held their induction ceremony.
 - College visits are available for Juniors and Seniors.
 - DECA will hold a tailgate before the football game on November 3rd.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Stephanie Strazza noted that this committee met on October 23rd. They received a report from Dr. Judith Wilson with some feedback on how the district is doing with curriculum and alignment. The Middle School will return to traditional grading. The committee discussed how a later start will affect curriculum.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee met on October 25th. They discussed three policies that are coming up for action. One will be voted on at tonight's meeting, one will be going through the three-reading process and the third policy was tabled pending further information. The committee discussed how the new Kindergarten age requirement will affect policies.

3. Special Education Ad Hoc - Stephanie Strazza noted that this committee met on November 2nd. This was the first meeting with the new Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy. The transition with the new director has been smooth. The committee also discussed the reading curriculum and the STRIDES program.

E. Liaison Reports

1. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee met on October 25th with the entire meeting held in Executive Session.

VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. NFPS 2023 Student Outcomes Report

High School Director of Guidance Kim Laughlin gave an update on standardized testing and an overview of the Class of 2023. She further spoke of the Counseling Department including the makeup of the department and the duties of the counselors. There was an overview of the College and Career prep, including Junior Year and Senior Year events. There was a suggestion of encouraging "trade schools" for students and the possibility of having a "Trades Fair."

B. NESDEC Enrollment Projections

Dr. Craw spoke of NESDEC projections for enrollment. It was noted that enrollment has remained steady for the last four years. There was a discussion of historical numbers vs. projected enrollment. There was a brief discussion of how the new age requirement for Kindergarten will affect enrollment.

C. Middle School Space Utilization and Facilities Update

Dr. Craw spoke of the space at the Middle School and noted that extra space was inherited from the old high school. He spoke of potential uses for the extra space and of challenges with certain spaces and facilities in the school. He spoke of the relocation of specific departments into the Middle School including the Security Operations Center, Technology Department, PPS Department and Facilities Department. Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner spoke of how the relocation of certain departments have affected certain program. She noted that certain music programs are currently taught in the hallways and cafeteria. There was a discussion of how the relocation affects the Library and Media Center and storage areas.

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross spoke of potential uses for the old high school cafeteria and possible renovation. His recommended next steps include moving the Security Operations Center (SOC) to the Police Station and hiring professional services for a facilities study for the old high school cafeteria. It was suggested that this be brought to the Planning Commission at their November 27th Plan of Conservation and Development meeting.

D. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)

1. Policy 7230.2 - Extensions/Renovations or Replacements

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

1. Consolidated School Punch List Update - Phil Ross spoke of some issues at the Consolidated School, specifically a leak at the main entrance and an issue with the rubber surface on the playground. He noted that fixing of both these items is weather dependent and it is hopeful that it can be done this season.

2. High School Building Project - High School Principal James D'Amico spoke of the punch list for the high school project, specifically gas jets in the Science labs, temperature control throughout the building and AV systems in the theater.

Dr. Craw thanked James D'Amico, Phil Ross, Paul Gouveia, Allyson Story and their respective staff for their hard work with the construction projects.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for November 1, 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. Board of Education 2024 Regular Meeting Dates

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2024 Board of Education Regular and Board of Education Subcommittee meeting dates as presented. 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. Board of Education Policy - Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policy 6159)

1. Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Programs/Special Education Program

MOTION: Samantha Mannion motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 6159. 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: Samantha Mannion motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Board of Education Policy 6159 as presented. Stephanie Strazza 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. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - Building project update

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Greg Flanagan wished his fellow board members good luck in the election on Tuesday. Dominic Cipollone thanked all the Veterans for their service in honor of Veterans Day.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING PARAPROFESSIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. to discuss School Security and a Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request and to invite Dr. Ken Craw, James D'Amico and Phil Ross 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 9:06 p.m. Kathy Baker 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: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Pamela McNally's request for an extension of an unpaid leave of absence, with a return to work on December 19, 2023. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 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