

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, August 15, 2024, at 7:00 pm via zoom.

MINUTES – August 15, 2024

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, High School Principal James D’Amico, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy, Special Education Supervisor Alex Lambert, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, Selectman Tom Perkins, and Scott Pellman from Colliers Project Leaders

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He asked everyone to observe a moment of silence in memory of Aiden Batista and Avery Lewis.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 13, 2024

MOTION: Kim LaTourette made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2024, special meeting with revisions to the attendance list. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

- B. June 18, 2024 - Special meeting - approved by consensus.
- C. June 19, 2024 - Special meeting - approved by consensus.
- D. July 11, 2024 - Special meeting - approved by consensus.
- E. July 31, 2024 - Special meeting - approved by consensus.
- F. August 5, 2024 - Special meeting - approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

High School student Ronnie Gibson asked about the possibility of lowering the volume of the Fire Alarm and switch the alarm to Code 3 at the Middle School. He noted that this would greatly help students with sensory issues that may find the alarm overstimulating.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone noted that Mental Health professionals and therapy dogs will be available at the Middle School on August 16th to help students and staff with the loss of two students. He thanked Dr Craw and his staff for setting this up.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow spoke of the following:

- Noted that Mental Health professionals will be at the Middle School on Friday, August 16th in the wake of the loss of two young students.
- Compared NESDEC enrollment projections with the current enrollment for Grades K-5 and noted that the current enrollment is in line with the budget and in the guidelines. He noted that 20 new staff members have joined the district. The only position not filled at this point is for a school psychologist.
- The PowerSchool portal will open on Friday, August 23rd. The first day back for staff is August 26th and the first day for students is August 29th.

C. Committee Reports

1. Field Fees - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on July 29th to discuss the turf track and field replacement. They discussed the possibility of revising the Field Fees agreement between the BOE and Parks and Rec. The committee approved the vendors for the replacement of the turf field and lights. These approvals were forwarded to the Board of Education. Lastly, the committee voted to use the Field Fees Fund 211 for the replacement of the lighting. The BOE held a special meeting on July 31st and approved the expenditure of \$425,000 from the Field Fees 211 and they approved moving a motion forward to the BOS and the BOF for \$950,000 for the replacement of the turf field and track. The BOS discussed this at their August 8th meeting and decided to table the approval until their August 22nd meeting.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on July 24th and discussed the Medical Fund balance and the Wellness Programs associated with the medical plan. They discussed year-end updates for revenue. The BOF discussed guidance for next year's BOE budget.
2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec Committee meeting for August 12th was cancelled.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Summer Curriculum Work

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of working groups for curriculum work and professional development. Over the course of the summer, there were 11 different projects with 60 staff members participating. These projects focused on the Curriculum, Instructional and Wellness aspects of the strategic plan. One of the groups developed a resource that gives back-to-school tips for families.

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

- Propane - Scott Pellman from Colliers Project Leaders gave an update on the propane issue at the high school. Specialists were hired and it was determined that the tanks were not the issue. The tanks were drained and filled with new propane that had a double shot of mercaptan. The recommendation of the fire marshal was to continue to burn the propane in the science lab and to test again before school begins. Protocol will be put in place for regular testing of the propane.

- Temporary Bus Lot Trailer - Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that a new trailer has been installed at the high school in the same location as the old one. She spoke of the need to find a permanent location for the bus lot and noted that the trailer at the current location will cost approximately \$22,000 from the BOE Operating budget.

- Consolidated School Demolition - Carrie DePuy noted that the transfer of funds for demolition for the old Consolidated School was approved on Monday, August 12th. The fencing is scheduled to be installed by September 16th. The building will need to be abated before it can be demolished. It is anticipated that the whole process will take approximately five months. Once the building is demolished, the grading of the site can begin.

- New Fairfield Elementary School Playground - Scott Pellman noted that Colliers sent a letter of non-conformance to Kompan Industries regarding issues at the playground. There is a five-year warranty for

the material. Colliers has requested that the materials be replaced in its entirety. The letter gives Kompan a deadline of Monday, August 19th for them to give a schedule of the replacement.

- New Fairfield Elementary School Signage - Carrie DePuy noted that the new sign is scheduled to be installed by the beginning of school.

C. Turf, Track and Lighting Replacement - Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross explained the results of the of the G-max testing that was done on the turf and the track. He compared the results from last year and noted that the field is getting a little harder every year. He spoke of the possibility of adding more infill to two areas in order to make the field as safe as possible. Carrie DePuy spoke of the problems and expenses of having a natural grass field.

D. STRIDES - Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy spoke of the new STRIDES location and the combining of programs with Newtown. The attorney that is representing New Fairfield has reviewed the rental agreement. The Zoning Officer has approved the location, and it is currently up for review by the fire marshal and then it will go for approval before the Building Committee. A Certificate of Occupancy will be received after all the approvals. She spoke of the improvements made to the space and it was noted that the cost of supplies will be split between New Fairfield and Newtown. A welcome letter will go out to STRIDES families on August 19th and an Open House is tentatively scheduled for September 10th.

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 August 13, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

There was a brief discussion of the decision to transfer the Computer Technician solely to the Town. This will allow the Computer Technician and the Director of Technology to concentrate on their respective roles.

B. Transportation Contract

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board to approve the Transportation Contract between the New Fairfield Board of Education and First Student, Inc., from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2029, and to authorize the Superintendent to sign the contract. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Selectman Tom Perkins asked about the typical life expectancy of a turf field and if diesel fuel and Special Education transportation was included in the bus contract. Dr. Craw noted that someone from his staff will email him with answers to his questions.

John McCartney thanked everyone that fought on behalf of getting the budget passed.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Sue Huwer asked for a review of the safety protocol program. She spoke of concerns regarding conditions of the lights at the high school track.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kathy Baker spoke of her excitement about curriculum and wished everyone a great school year.

Kim LaTourette thanked everybody for getting the budget passed and admins for hiring new personnel.

Greg Flanagan extended condolences to the Batista and Lewis families. He spoke about the lighting at the turf field and the need to keep up with and invest in capital projects.

Dominic Cipollone spoke in support of keeping up with capital projects and his excitement for the new school year.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos