

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 7:00 pm via zoom.

**MINUTES – June 19, 2024**

**PRESENT:** Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Samantha Mannion

**ABSENT:** Kathy Baker, Amy Johnson and Ed Sbordone

**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, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, and Selectman Pat Del Monaco

Video Production Coordinator Quintin Flower 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. June 6, 2024 - Regular meeting**

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to approve the minutes of June 6, 2024, with the addition of Kim LaTourette’s comments under Board member comments. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Samantha Mannion

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA -** Approved by consensus.

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Terra Volpe spoke of concerns regarding comments made by a BOE member at the Multi Board meeting of June 13<sup>th</sup> regarding the bus lot. She thanked the Board of Education for being such a great Board.

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. Chairman’s Report -** Dominic Cipollone congratulated all students moving up to a new school and especially the high school graduates.

**B. Superintendent’s Report -** Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the following:

- Thanked the BOE for taking time to come to a special meeting to discuss the budget.
- Spoke of the Celebration of Excellence and congratulated the following employees who were recognized: Billie Jo Watson who received the Sarah Gelish Spirit of New Fairfield Award, Laurie Gonzalez who was named “Paraprofessional of the Year” and Sarah Sanborn who was named “Teacher of the Year.”

- Congratulated Human Resources Director Kara Mehler on her retirement and introduced Rebecca Lloyd as her replacement.

- Congratulated Guidance Counselor Mary Ann Smyth on her retirement.

C. Committee Reports

1. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that the Policy subcommittee met on June 12<sup>th</sup> and discussed Policy 1330, Policy 3453 and Policy 5112. All three policies will be voted on later in the meeting.

2. Field Fees - Dr. Craw noted that the Field Fees Committee met on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Sprinturf gave an overview on the possible replacement of the turf field. The Field Fees Committee voted to increase user fees from \$40 per person to \$50 per person effective September 2024. The discussion of the pavilion was tabled.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Dr. Craw will give an update on this during Information Items.

**VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. Fiscal year 2024-2025 Budget Update - Impact of \$750,000 Reduction

Dr. Craw gave a presentation to convey to the community the impact of the \$750,000 operating budget as recommended by the Board of Finance. He noted that the BOF has further cut the BOE operating budget despite the fact that the majority of the voters indicated that the budget was “too low” at the last two budget referendums. Dr. Craw spoke of how the cuts will affect staffing, class size, programs and services. He spoke of fixed costs in non-payroll, including Special Education, transportation, energy costs and facilities. It was noted that a reduction of \$750,000 would result in the elimination of nine certified positions and four non-certified positions. He spoke of the cumulative effects of the cuts.

Dr. Craw clarified the BOE requested a budget of \$48,000,000 instead of \$55,000,000 as noted by the Board of Finance. He noted that the difference is the debt service which should not be mitigated at the expense of the operating budget.

There was a brief discussion among members of the Board of Education regarding the budget.

B. New Fairfield Elementary School Signage

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that she has been working with Director of Building and Grounds Phil Ross regarding the change of the sign due to the change of name of Meeting House Hill School/Consolidated School to New Fairfield Elementary School. She noted that it was decided to keep the existing sign and look into options for changing the lettering as a way to save money.

C. STRIDES Visit

Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy spoke of a visit to the new location for the STRIDES program with a few BOE members.

D. Bus Contract Update

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that she is working with First Student about the bus contract and expects to have a contract signed by next week.

E. Bus Trailer

Carrie DePuy noted that she has been working with some vendors to get some bus trailers, but noted that whatever is decided will be a temporary solution.

F. Summer Facilities Projects

Carrie DePuy noted that work has been started on the STEAM room at the Middle School. The intercom system is being replaced and work is being done in the Middle School library. This work should be done by the end of July.

## **VIII. ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Personnel Report**

**MOTION:** Sue Huwer made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Personnel Report for June 18, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Samantha Mannion

Members of the Board wished Guidance Counselor Mary Ann Smyth best wishes on her retirement.

### **B. Board of Education Policies**

Suspension of Rules referring to Policy 1330, Policy 3453 and Policy 5112

1. Policy 1330 - Use of School Facilities
2. Policy 3453 - Student Activity Account
3. Policy 5112 - Age of Attendance

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 1330, Policy 3453, and Policy 5112. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Samantha Mannion

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policies listed below as presented: Policy 1330 - Use of School Facilities, Policy 3453 - Student Activity Account and Policy 5112 - Age of Attendance. Kim LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Samantha Mannion

## **IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

John McCartney spoke of advice for graduates and how it can apply to BOE members and administrators. Kathy Woolven thanked the BOE for all their hard work. She encouraged everyone to vote “No” on the upcoming budget.

## **X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The next regular BOE meeting will be held on August 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Samantha Mannion thanked Maria Kennedy for her tour of the STRIDES facilities. She spoke of her excitement for the new location for the STRIDES program.

Greg Flanagan congratulated the Class of 2024 and reminded everyone to vote on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Dominic Cipollone thanked fellow board members and noted that it is the last meeting of the school year. He spoke of his excitement for graduation on June 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Samantha Mannion

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos