

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, June 5, 2025, at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – June 5, 2025

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

ABSENT: Tim Blair and Amy Johnson

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, Selectman Tom Perkins, and BOF member 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. May 15, 2025 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.
- B. May 22, 2025 - Special meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Selectman Tom Perkins spoke of the recent study of the Finance Department by Clifton Larson Allen (CLA) and questioned whether it was a wise use of funds.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- Congratulated all graduates and thanked the students and staff for a very successful year. He wished everyone a happy summer.

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

- Spoke of the Year in Review and highlighted the many strides and accomplishments in the district, including fiscal responsibility and planning, academic success and curriculum development, and STEAM success. He spoke of enhancements to the literacy programs and performing arts. He thanked the BOE and teachers and staff for their support throughout the year.

C. Student Representatives' Reports

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The Class of 2027 is hosting a fundraiser at The Cave in Bethel on June 6th from 6-9 p.m.
- Final exams will be held from June 9th to June 12th with June 13th as a make-up day.
- The SEE Fair will be held on Tuesday, June 10th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the high school.
- High School Graduation will be held on June 13th.
- Summer reading and assignments are posted on the website.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Greg Flanagan noted that this committee met on May 27th and discussed the following:

- The State will not require the SEE (Senior Enrichment Experience) project for high school students beginning with the Class of 2027. The committee discussed alternatives.
- The committee discussed the possibility of putting 8th grade grades on the high school transcripts.
- The subcommittee voted to recommend to the full board a trip for World Language students to Quebec.

2. Policy - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Policy subcommittee met on May 20th and discussed the following:

- Discussed the policy for requirements for student residency. Information regarding this will be discussed later in the meeting.
- The subcommittee discussed changes to the cell phone policy at the high school.
- The subcommittee discussed Policy 7000 relating to Concepts and Roles in planning for Educational Facilities.

3. Special Education Ad Hoc - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Special Education Ad Hoc committee met on June 5th and discussed the following:

- There was an update on the STRIDES program.
- They discussed the possibility of aligning the STRIDES calendar with the New Fairfield calendar.
- There was an update on the staffing for next year.
- There was an update on the STAR program for the Elementary School.
- The subcommittee discussed the Extended School Year (ESY) program.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance

Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF Medical subcommittee met on May 20th and discussed the following:

- The Medical Reserve Fund has gone down every month this year. It is hopeful that they will end the year with a positive balance. The subcommittee discussed the possibility of devising a policy to set a minimum amount that must be in the Medical fund balance.
- Rates for the 2025-2026 Stop loss will be presented at the June 25th BOF regular meeting.
- The next meeting of the Medical subcommittee will be Tuesday, June 24th at 3:30 p.m.

Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF had a regular meeting on Wednesday, May 28th and discussed the following:

- Introduced Adam Lawrence as the new Finance Director.
- There will be an update regarding the audit at the next regular meeting. The audit subcommittee will meet on Monday, June 9th via Zoom. At 2:00 p.m.

VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. Finance Study Presentation

Dr. Craw introduced Jeff Ziplo and Lindsey Intrieri from Clifton Larsen Allen (CLA) who gave a presentation of the Finance Study. Jeff Ziplo spoke of the advantages of the shared model between the Town and the BOE for the Finance Department. The study included the strengths and weaknesses of the current shared model and the existing policies, procedures and job descriptions. Lindsey Intrieri spoke of the history of the shared services specifically in New Fairfield. Members of the BOE asked questions about how the models will affect the BOE budget. Future recommendation includes two models. The next steps for this Shared Services study would be for Dr. Craw to meet with First Selectman Melissa Lindsey, Finance Director Adam Lawrence, and BOE Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy to discuss the respective models and then to report back to both the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education.

B. Capital Improvement Update

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy gave a report on the Capital Improvement Plan and spoke of projects completed in 2023-2024 and projects completed in 2024-2025. She spoke of approved Capital projects for 2025-2026, primarily in the Middle School or district wide. Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross spoke of projects currently in progress, including the removal of the underground oil tank at the Middle School and the creation of space to add four classrooms to the Middle School.

C. Residency Update

Director of Technology Paul Gouveia spoke of the implementation of the policy to determine residency for students enrolled in the district. He spoke of the use of technology to check home sales and car registration. These data points are checked on a monthly basis to make sure that every student enrolled or attempting to enroll actually belongs in the district. Since the implementation of this policy, the number of students not allowed to enroll has doubled from last year. The number of students disenrolled since the start of the program is 31 throughout the district. A total of 12 students have not been allowed to enroll since the beginning of the policy.

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 May 29, 2025, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

B. Bus Parking Lot Update

Dr. Craw gave a brief update regarding the Bus Lot project. Phase I would be to design and gain approval from the Zoning Board. Phase II is State approval and bidding. Phase III is construction and oversight.

C. International Field Trip

1. NFHS World Language (French): Quebec Trip Proposal

MOTION: Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the international field trip to Quebec City, Canada as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

D. Board of Education Policy

1. Policy 6172 - Alternative Education Programs

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Policy 6172 - Alternative Education Programs. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

E. Board of Education Policies

Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policy 5131.81 and Policy 7000)

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board suspension of the rules referring to Policy 5131.81 and Policy 7000. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

1. Policy 5131.81 - Electronic Devices

2. Policy 7000 - Concepts and Roles in Planning for Educational Facilities

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Policy 5131.81 - Electronic Devices and Policy 7000 - Concepts and Roles in Planning for Educational Facilities. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone. **OPPOSED:** Sue Huwer

F. Non-Union Salaries and Benefits and Contracts - Executive Session

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jennifer Pappas spoke of the cell phone policy and suggested that enforcement begin at the earlier grades so it won't be as much of a problem in the higher grades. She also asked if it was possible to obtain the results of the self-study and asked for an update on the problems with the propane at the high school.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next regular meeting of the BOE will be held on Thursday, August 21st.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sue Huwer noted that the Summer Reading program looks great. She asked for a possible update on plans for the students of the Class of 2025 after graduation.

Samantha Mannion responded to Jennifer Pappas' public comment requesting a copy of the self-study. She noted that the self-study is mandated by CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) and a very specific format is required. Therefore, anyone looking to see a copy of the self-study must send an FOI request to CABE.

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

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING NON-UNION CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:28 p.m. to discuss School Safety and Security update, non-union contract negotiations, and the Superintendent evaluation and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw into the entire Executive Session and Carrie DePuy and Phil Ross for such time as it takes to discuss the School Safety and Security update. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the non-union salaries and benefits for the 2025-2026 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Assistant Superintendent's contract for the 2025-2026 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Director of Business and Operations' contract for the 2025-2026 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

XV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos