

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 7:00 pm.
Virtual meeting via Zoom

MINUTES – August 13, 2020

PRESENT: Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel, Athletic Director Mark Ottusch.

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo 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 Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. June 18, 2020 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. July 2, 2020 - Special meeting - tabled until next meeting
- C. July 13, 2020 - Special meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Chris Creter thanked the board and administrators for all their work with putting together the policy for students with special health needs.
- Stefanie Marlow thanked everyone for all the work that has been done with putting together a plan for the upcoming school year. She asked if it were possible for parents to get more information regarding distance learning.
- Amanda Lombard thanked everyone for all the work for planning the school year. She especially thanked everyone involved with the policy for children with special health needs.
- Jordan Krohn spoke as a parent with two students in the district regarding in classroom vs. distance learning. He spoke of his concerns with having the distance learners sit at a computer for long periods of time.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report - Peggy Katkocin welcomed everyone back for the 2020-2021 school year. She thanked many members of the staff for all the help they have given throughout the summer to prepare for the opening of school. She noted that all input is appreciated. She noted that the Welcome Back meeting for staff will be held on Friday, August 28 via Zoom.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:

- Spoke of the possibility of having the next BOE meeting of August 20th to be in person.
- Thanked everyone involved in the reopening plans.
- Thanked Katherine Matz and Melissa Busnel for their hard work with the Special Education presentation.
- Thanked Karen Fildes and Paul Gouveia for all their work with getting technology back up that was lost due to the power outage.
- Thanked everyone in Central Office, especially Payroll Specialist Sandy Dorr, for making sure that pay checks went through during the power outage.
- Encouraged everyone to read the CT reopening plan that is on the New Fairfield Public School's website that gives guiding principles regarding reopening and distance learning.
- Encouraged everyone to read the information on temporary opting of voluntary remote learning due to COVID-19. This is also available on the website.

C. Committee Reports

1. Policy - Four policies are on the agenda tonight for votes

2. Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee - Stephanie Strazza thanked Katherine Matz and Melissa Busnel for getting documents together. She noted that they ran out of time and asked if questions from parents could be made available via Google docs. At this meeting, there was a discussion of guidance on how to implement IEPs for students, the structure of PPTs and the protocol for COVID for students.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on July 15 and approved the signing of the auditor's engagement letter for the next fiscal year. They have engaged the firm of O'Connor Davies for the next year. The next meeting of the BOF will be on Wednesday, August 19 and will discuss potential BOE expenses due to COVID 19.

2. School Security and Safety Committee - Rick Regan noted that this subcommittee met on August 3. One item was discussed in public and the rest in Executive Session. There was a discussion regarding a proposed bill by Senator Murphy that would divert federal funding for police in schools. It was suggested that the subcommittee write a petition letter to Senator Murphy. This will be discussed further at future meetings.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. NF High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update - Dr. Rich Sanzo noted that the PBC has approved the next phase for both the high school and Consolidated School building projects which is the Design Development Stage. This stage includes detailed designs and the actual construction materials. He spoke of a value engineering log that would include alternates and additions. The primary focus at this point is to work with O&G for the actual construction of the buildings. He further noted that there has been no formal word on the status of the grant from the State but there will be a special session of the State Legislature with school construction projects on the docket. There will be a meeting with OSCGR later this month to discuss the Consolidated project.

B. School Reopening Plan - Dr. Cosentino noted that a survey was sent to parents asking them to make a decision about either sending their students to school in-person or having them continue remotely. Alternatively, parents have a choice of withdrawing their children from the district and homeschooling. To date, about 80% of the 710 surveys that have been returned have decided to come to school for in-person classes and 20% will continue remotely. Only a few have chosen the homeschooling option. She noted that the priorities were based on health and safety, social emotional wellness, relationships and student learning. It was noted that the district will remain flexible and could change to hybrid or fully on-line if necessary. Dr. Sanzo spoke of the data that drives the decisions for adapting to different models. He noted that statistics and rate of transmission in Connecticut are very low.

Principals from all four schools gave an overview of plans for reopening for their respective schools. They spoke of transition time and a typical day for students. They spoke of rules and protocols for both students and staff. Dr. Sanzo spoke of the Health and Safety guidelines and the mitigation measures that are put in place for the reopening of schools.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of the rules and regulations for both the in-person and remote learners. She noted that families can change their minds once school starts if they desire. A spot in the classroom will be available for all students. It was noted that attendance will be taken for all students and everyone must be appropriately dressed.

Dr. Cosentino noted that a webinar will be held next week for remote learning. The decisions for in-person and remote are due by Tuesday, August 18th.

C. 2020-2021 Staffing - Dr. Cosentino noted that the district is staffed at about 95% for the upcoming year. She spoke of jobs being posted for cafeteria aids and bathroom and bus monitors. She encouraged young adults to go to the town's website for job descriptions.

D. Superintendent District Goals (Draft) - Dr. Cosentino read goals and priorities for the upcoming school years. They include:

- District will develop three reopening models.
- The district will provide all students will high quality instruction in a flexible learning environment.
- The district will provide professional development for staff.
- The district will support the development of social and emotional learning for all students and will ensure that equity and diversity is a priority.
- The district will provide support to families and care givers to assist with remote learning.
- The district will provide a safe environment and follow CDC guidelines and will continue to work on building two new schools.
- The district will present a budget for the 2021-2022 school year.
- The district will conduct business and use resources in an effective and responsible manner.
- The Superintendent will work with the BOE to continue to grow professionally.

E. Superintendent's Evaluation Timeline - Dr. Cosentino spoke of a calendar and timeline and noted that it must be flexible to account for changes.

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 July 30, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. New Fairfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Revised Calendar

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2020-21 revised school calendar as presented. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Board of Education Policies - Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policies 5131.911, 5141.25, 6172.3 & Bylaw 9325.2)

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 5131.911, Policy 5141.25, Policy 6172.3 and Bylaw 9325.2. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

1. Policy 5131.911- Hazing-Bullying
2. Policy 5141.25 - Students with Special Health Care needs- Samantha Mannion noted that this policy has been completely rewritten and thanked everyone that worked on the writing of this policy.
3. Policy 6172.3 - Educational Instruction under Parental Direction (Home Schooling)
4. Bylaw 9325.2 - Order of Business

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full board the approval of the following policies and bylaws: Policy 5131.911-Hazing-Bullying, Policy 5141.25- Students with Special Health Care needs and Bylaw 9325.2-Order of Business. Rick Regan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Samantha Mannion explained that Policy 6172.3-Education Instruction under Parental Direction (Home Schooling) allows students that are home schooled students to take a class in the district at the discretion of the Superintendent and if there is room in the class. It was decided to suspend this policy during this pandemic so that students that are not in the New Fairfield district are not in the buildings. It was noted that this policy will be discussed further in the future.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full board to suspend Policy 6172.3 until further notice. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

D. Reduction in Force (Executive Session)

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jordan Krohn reiterated his concerns will distance learners and the difficulty with having young children sit by a computer for a long period of time.

X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Rick Regan - Asked about the distribution of AP results for this year.

Kim LaTourette - Thanked Katherine Matz and Melissa Busnel for their presentation at the subcommittee meeting. She thanked all the staff members who provided enrichment to the students. She thanked all the administrators for all their hard work and positive attitude.

Ed Sbordone also thanked everyone for all the hard work.

Samantha Mannion thanked everyone and is impressed with the presentations.

Stephanie Stazza thanked everyone for working on the reopening plan.

Kathy Baker thanked everyone.

Greg Flanagan thanked everyone and expressed gratitude that students can go back to school.

Dominic Cipollone noted that he appreciates that decision to open school full time and asked everyone to trust the leaders.

Peggy Katkocin thanked everyone and asked that everyone remain flexible and patient.

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

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:34 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a reduction in force and to invite Dr. Pat Cosentino into the Executive Session. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:39 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the New Fairfield Board of Education non renew the teacher contract of Charles Hine at the end of the 2019-20 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 Charles Hine 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. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Greg Flanagan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 p.m. Peggy Katkocin seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos