

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

MINUTES – February 16, 2023

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: Greg Flanagan

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, New Fairfield High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Steven Groccia, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Supervisor of Special Education Melissa Busnel, and BOF member Claudia Willard

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 pm. He asked everyone to observe a moment of silence in memory of Meeting House Hill School Psychologist Sarah Gelish who passed away on Monday, February 13th. He thanked all of the staff members who helped the students understand and cope with this tragedy.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. January 24, 2023 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- B. January 25, 2023 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- C. January 31, 2023 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- D. February 2, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION- None

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:
 - The current Board of Education policies regarding use of technology in the schools and asked that the Policy Subcommittee to review these policies for possible updating.
 - The State has released a report regarding the Youth Risk Behavior Summary pertaining to the years 2011-2021. He noted that mental health has declined in the last ten years among high school students and encouraged everyone to support our youth in any way possible.

B. Superintendent's Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw thanked everyone for their leadership and help in response to the death of Meeting House Hill School Psychologist Sarah Gelish. He thanked the Regional Crisis Team from Western Connecticut and the Adult Mobile Crisis Team for their help with coping with this tragedy. The PTO will be providing breakfast for the staff on February 17th. Everyone throughout the district will be wearing purple ribbons on Feb. 17th in support of Epilepsy Awareness in memory of Sarah Gelish.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Representative Brennan Hearty spoke of the following:

- Some students recently returned from a trip to Quebec City.
- Course selection for next year was recently completed.
- The National Honor Society will be hosting a blood drive on March 8th.
- The Winter semi-formal has been cancelled.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held soon.
- Spring Sports will begin soon.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on Feb. 16th and discussed:

- The monthly summary of budget vs. actual expenditures for the current year. This is in line with this time last year.
- It is possible that there may be a deficit for this year due to non-payroll expenses and special education unanticipated expenses. This deficit may be offset by a heating assistance grant and an excess cost grant and a SEDS grant.
- Education Cost Sharing Funding may be reduced which will affect the Town's revenue.
- A Transportation update was given.
- Governor Lamont has reinstated free meals at the school. It is hopeful that this will start in the beginning of March.
- Quarterly budget transfers were approved.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on February 15th discussed the following:

- There was an update on the bus lot from First Selectman Pat Del Monaco and PBC Chairman Don Kellogg.
 - There will be a Public Hearing on March 1st regarding the demolition of Consolidated School.
 - The BOF meeting scheduled for Wednesday, December 20, 2023, was changed to Wednesday, December 13, 2023.
 - The reimbursement rate for the school projects was reduced which may cause the bonding amount for this project to increase from approximately \$12 million to \$16 million. Since the Town's audit report is not complete, bonding has been delayed until at least April.
 - The budgets will be presented to the BOF on Saturday, March 4th in person at the Community Room. The BOS will present at 9:00 a.m. and the BOE will present at 10:30 a.m.
2. Parks and Recreation Commission - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this commission met on February 13th and discussed the following:

- There was a discussion of the replacement of Rebel Turf. One of the members volunteered to help with the committee if necessary.

- The commission discussed using the gyms at MHHS for Summer Camp. They spoke of the possibility of clearing some of the trails behind MHHS at the high school in order for campers to go back and forth.
- The commission discussed a possibility of building a skate park in town. It was decided that they would rather concentrate on the building of the Beach House at the Town Beach before taking on this endeavor.
- Due to the lack of lifeguards for this summer, the Parks and Rec commission approved spending up to \$2500 to reimburse up to five students that take the lifesaving course at the Brookfield YMCA and subsequently work for the Town Beach as a lifeguard.
- The Town is in need of an Outdoor Cinema Director.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated Building Project Update

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy gave an update on the school building projects. The leak in the roof at Consolidated was caulked. The fire tanks are leaking but maintaining water levels. The playground will be temporarily fixed next week and will be permanently fixed over the summer. The high school project is on time and on budget.

B. Transportation Update

Carrie DePuy noted six buses were moved off of Middleton Drive for both the mornings and afternoons. This has lessened a lot of traffic and the residents of Middleton Drive seem to be pleased with the compromise for now. Other alternatives will be discussed in the near future.

C. ELC Update

Katherine Matz spoke of the ELC Program and noted the importance of keeping the ratio of special education students to typical students at no more than 50%. She recommended adding two more sections. This would be four classrooms (eight sessions) which is the current model. This would allow the program to cap the class sizes at 14 and add a significant number of typical students from the waiting list. Members of the Board expressed their support for adding these two sections. The approximate cost of for these sections would be \$140,000.

D. New Course Proposals (Second Reading)

1. ECE French: Global Culture
2. ECE English: Maritime Culture
3. ECE Physics II

E. New Textbook Adoption (Second Reading)

1. College Physics: A Strategic Approach, 4th edition - Pearson 2023

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 February 13, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. Quarterly Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Transfers

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the requested quarterly FY 2022-23 budget transfers as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Acceptance of Donation

1. New Fairfield Youth Basketball

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield Youth Basketball donation of \$1,500, to offset the cost of a new scoreboard for the new New Fairfield High School gym. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

2. Old Timers Athletic Association of Greater Danbury

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the Old Timers Athletic Association of Greater Danbury donation of \$3,500 for new equipment for the new New Fairfield High School Athletic Department. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

D. International Field Trip to Belize

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the international field trip to Belize as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos