

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday December 7, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

**MINUTES – December 7, 2023**

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

**ABSENT:** Amy Johnson

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, First Selectman Melissa Lindsey, Selectman Tom Perkins, and BOF member Thora Perkins

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ELECTION OF NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION OFFICERS**

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion nominated Dominic Cipollone to serve as Chairman of the Board of Education. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan nominated Samantha Mannion to serve as Vice Chairman of the Board of Education. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion nominated Kimberly LaTourette to serve as Secretary of the Board of Education. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. November 2, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

**V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to amend the agenda to move Information Item VIII.C. ahead of Information Item VIII.A. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

## **VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:**

- Congratulated everyone elected to the BOE in the recent election. He welcomed Sue Huwer to the Board.
- Spoke of a recent visit to the high school and encouraged every to visit the school if they haven't yet seen it.

### **B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow reported on the following:**

- There has been a lot of interest in the Assistant Superintendent position. They are currently in the interviewing stages, and it is hopeful that the position will be filled by February.
- Spoke of the Strategic Planning Goals.
- Introduced High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder to talk about the attendance issues. Mr. Rohwedder gave a brief presentation showing improvements to attendance records from this time last year. He spoke of measures that the district is doing to mitigate chronic absenteeism.

### **C. Student Representative Reports**

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- The Winter Semi-Formal was held at the high school on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- The National Honor Society is holding a Food Drive at the high school.
- Pajama Day will be held at the high school on December 8<sup>th</sup> to raise money for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.
- Welcomed Emilia Sedlak as the new Junior Representative to the BOE. High School Principal James D'Amico introduced Emilia Sedlak as the Junior Representative to the BOE and gave a brief description of her background. He further congratulated Senior Representative Brennan Hearty on becoming an Eagle Scout.

### **D. Committee Reports**

1. Curriculum - Kathy Baker noted that the Curriculum subcommittee met on November 27<sup>th</sup> and discussed the new cutoff date for Kindergarten students and how it affects the district. Elementary School Principal Allyson Story spoke of the registration process and the waiver process.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that the Policy subcommittee met on November 29<sup>th</sup> and tabled two policies for a future meeting and moved one meeting for First Reading at tonight's meeting.

3. New Fairfield Start and End Time Ad Hoc - Kathy Baker noted that this subcommittee met on December 7<sup>th</sup> and decided to table the recommendation until more information is received regarding transportation.

### **E. Liaison Reports**

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF Medical subcommittee met on November 14<sup>th</sup> and had a presentation from the Insurance consultant. Claims are currently approximately \$228,000 below projections. The Finance Director Olga Melnikov projected that the year-end medical fund balance will be approximately \$1.3 million. The Medical Subcommittee will meet again on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Ed Sbordone noted that the full BOF met on November 15<sup>th</sup> and discussed what will be presented to the Planning Commission for the Plan of Conservation and Development and voted to make a transfer to save interest on banking fees.

2. Parks and Recreation - Greg Flanagan noted that Parks and Recreation met on November 13<sup>th</sup> and voted to increase the salaries for office staff and the Camp Director. They discussed their presentation to the Planning Commission for the Plan of Conservation and Development.

### 3. Calendar Committee

Ed Sbordone noted that the Calendar Committee met on December 4<sup>th</sup> and discussed three scenarios for the calendar. This will be discussed more at their meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy spoke of some repairs needed for the playground that needed to be postponed until the Spring due to weather. The \$6.4 million reimbursement for the high school project was received.

Carrie DePuy spoke of not being able to use the propane in the high school which affects the Science labs and Culinary Arts. Scott Pellman from Colliers explained that there are inconsistencies with the odor in the propane and they have been working with the Fire Marshal to come up with a solution.

There was a discussion of the parking lot and the demolition of the old high school.

### B. New Fairfield High School Start and End Time Update

High School Principal James D'Amico reviewed the results of the Start and End Time survey.

### C. Budget Assumptions

Dr. Crow spoke of guiding principles and assumptions for putting the budget together. He noted that ESSER funds from COVID are no longer available. He spoke of staffing and contracted salaries and discussed unfunded mandates from the State. There was a discussion of the mandate for the State approved literacy program and waivers to maintain the current literacy program. A draft of the capital budget will be presented at the December 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

### D. Board of Education Policy (*Second Reading*)

1. Policy 7230.2 - Extensions/Renovations or Replacements

### E. Board of Education Policy (*First Reading*)

1. Policy 6172.6 - Distance Education

## **IX. ACTION ITEMS**

### A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for November 30, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone **ABSTAINED:** Sue Huwer

There was a brief discussion of the turnover of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA).

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - Selectman Tom Perkins encouraged everyone to speak to legislators regarding unfunded mandates.

**XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - Greg Flanagan asked for a future discussion of ways to give parents and spectators access to the school buildings for sporting events.

## **XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Dr. Craw noted that there will be a BOE Retreat December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. regarding the roles and responsibilities of BOE members.

Members of the Board congratulated all Board members that were reelected and welcomed Sue Huwer to the Board.

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos