

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.  
in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

**MINUTES – March 5, 2020**

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

**ABSENT:** Greg Flanagan

**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, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner and Consolidated School teacher Michelle Brown

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

- A. February 20, 2020 – Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. February 21, 2020 – Special meeting - approved by consensus

**IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** - approved by consensus

**V. ACTION ITEM**

- A. Policy 7000 - Concepts and Roles in Planning for Educational Facilities - Naming of Facility

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board to name Rebel Turf Field in honor of Lacrosse Coach Marty Morgan. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Samantha Mannion

Eric Alviti thanked all the members of the BOE for all their hard work and professionalism with everything they do for the town. He further gave a brief description of the background of Lacrosse Coach Marty Morgan and gave many examples of why the Rebel Turf field should be named for him. There will be a formal ceremony to name this field at the Alumni Game on May 30<sup>th</sup>.

**VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

**VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman's Report – Peggy Katkocin noted that:

- The BOE will present their budget to the BOF this Saturday, March 7 at 9 a.m. The BOS will present their budget at 10:45 a.m. The budget as it currently stands has a proposed increase of 4.79%.
- Spoke of concerns discussed at the School Safety and Security Committee meeting of March 4 regarding taking the Director of Security out of the proposed BOE budget. She spoke of the possibility of hiring a half year Director of Security at a cost of approximately \$35,000.

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

- Spoke of the possibility of reducing the capital budget by \$35,000 which may be used for a Director of Security.
- Gave an update on the Coronavirus and noted that updated information will be published in the March 6<sup>th</sup> newsletter. She thanked the custodians throughout the district for doing a great job of cleaning the buildings. The principals from all four schools are working with staff to develop a plan for instruction for students to do work at home in the event of a closing of the buildings. Consolidated and MHHS Schools will receive paper packets and the Middle School and High School will do work through Google classroom. Dr. Cosentino will meet with Union leaders and the Health Department to discuss plans. To date, there are no reported cases in Connecticut and all school sponsored trips are on as scheduled.
- Dr. Cosentino thanked the New Fairfield Prevention Council for organizing activities for Wellness Week.
- There will be a Vaping Workshop for parents on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Information about this will be in the March 6<sup>th</sup> newsletter.
- Staff members are recording Bedtime Stories that can be found on the district's website. It is hopeful that this can be available on Facebook live in the future.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Representative Nicholas Thiel-Hudson noted that:

- SAT Boot camp for Juniors will be held on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The Connecticut in-school SAT will be held on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The Chamber singers will have a concert at WestConn on March 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Wished the Girls' Basketball team good luck in their State Tournament game on Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>.
- The high school musical *Pajama Game* will be held on Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that this committee met on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> and spoke of Math workshops that will be offered in the fall of 2020 and will be required of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students who score below proficiency

on the PSAT. They discussed the possibility giving the PSAT in 8<sup>th</sup> grade to identify struggling students earlier. There was a discussion regarding Rebel 33 and ways to insure that this time is used efficiently. The Next Generation Accountability Report was explained to the subcommittee and will be presented to the full BOE in April. The Middle School is piloting a “Passport” program for students to go around town to use math at different establishments.

2. Policy – Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met last week. There is one policy on tonight’s agenda for first reading and seven policies on the agenda as action items.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Safety Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on February 26<sup>th</sup> and received a School Safety and Security update from Dr. Sanzo. They also discussed bus service and noted that drivers are required to report ALL incidents. The subcommittee got an update on concussions and it was noted that incidents are down from last year. Lastly, they reviewed injuries and there were no significant incidents reported.
2. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee met and had a presentation of 3D imaging for loss prevention and security. There was a discussion of the School Safety design committee for the school building projects. There was a discussion of autism awareness and first responders and there was a presentation from the vendor for “SpeakUp!” and an update on the Security Operations Center.

## VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Foundations Update - Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner along with Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino and Consolidated School teacher Michelle Brown spoke of the first year of the pilot program of Foundations at Consolidated School. This program focuses on reading and also has handwriting component. There was a brief slideshow of students practicing this program. Michelle Brown spoke of the benefits of the program and the positive feedback that she has received from teachers.

B. New Course Proposals (First Reading)

1. Algebra I Workshop
2. Geometry Workshop
3. Algebra II Workshop

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby gave a brief description of these courses and noted that they will be required of students that have not met proficiency goals.

C. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Policy 5131.911-Hazing-Bullying

D. Donation - New Fairfield Lions Foundation, Inc.

Dr. Cosentino announced that a \$500 was received from the New Fairfield Lions Club for equipment for the golf team. It was noted that donations less than \$1,000 do not require Board of Education approval and thus it was not an action item.

E. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

Dr. Sanzo noted that there was a successful meeting with OSCGR and the district was able to close out all four open construction projects. This clears the way for a grant commitment. The School Construction Bill (Senate Bill 394) that includes both New Fairfield projects was just released. The State Education Committee has a public hearing on this bill on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. Dr. Sanzo and Dr. Cosentino will submit written testimony on this bill.

The Permanent Building Committee will be meeting next on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> and will review the packets for Construction Managers and will also discuss Commissioning Agents. The Design Team will present preliminary site options. He also spoke of working with the town regarding bond service. All PBC meeting are now being recorded and available on the town's website.

**VIII. ACTION ITEM**

A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report dated February 27, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Samantha Mannion

B. Board of Education Policies

**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. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

1. Policy 0200-Goals for the Public Schools
2. Policy 3516-Safety
3. Policy 3517-Security of Buildings and Grounds
4. Policy 411.3/4211.3-Minority Recruitment Plan
5. Policy 4118.112/4218.112-Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the workplace
6. Policy 5112-Ages of Attendance
7. Policy 7100-Planning

Policy 5118.1 - Homeless Students was tabled until a future meeting.

C. Acceptance of Donation

1. Consolidated School PTO

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the donation of a bounce house for Consolidated School Physical Education Department, with a value of \$3,295.00. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, 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 to accept with gratitude the donation of an Apple MacBook Pro Laptop for the Consolidated School Art Department, with a value of \$1,489.96. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

2. Dylan's Wings of Change

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the donation of \$1,051.00 to be used to fund Wingman related events in the school, including Takeover Days, Recognition luncheons and other events that directly affect the middle school student body. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

D. SpeakUp! (Executive Session)

E. Sherman Contract - July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the contract between the Town of Sherman and the Town of New Fairfield for the period beginning July 1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2023, and to authorize the board secretary to sign the contract. Rick Regan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

F. Retirement Incentive for NFEA Members

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Memorandum of Agreement Regarding a Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Plan (VERIP) for NFEA members. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Dr. Sanzo gave a brief description of this incentive and noted that it is a onetime offer with a deadline of April 2, 2020.

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - Amanda Lombard spoke of the many benefits of the Foundations program. She also reiterated her concerns of the safety of the Multi Purpose Room at Consolidated School, especially for physical activities.

**X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** - Members of the Board discussed the following:

- Stephanie Strazza thanked everyone involved in the Foundations presentation. She spoke of the budget and encouraged feedback.
- Kathy Baker spoke of the impact that teachers have on students.
- Dominic Cipollone noted that he was pleased that the district is moving forward especially with the initiative to have Math instruction every day.
- Ed Sbordone encouraged everyone to attend the Budget Presentations this Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.
- Samantha Mannion noted that the School Safety and Security Committee voted at their March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to recommend to the BOE that the position of the Director of Safety and Security be put back in the BOE's requested budget in the amount of \$35,000.

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to add an Action Item to tonight's agenda "Discuss and act upon the approval of putting back into the BOE's requested budget \$35,000 for the Director of Security to be offset by a decrease in the Capital budget also in the amount of \$35,000." Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **OPPOSED:** Kathy Baker and Rick Regan

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to reinstate into the BOE's requested budget the Director of Security in the amount of \$35,000 to be offset by a decrease in the Capital budget also in the amount of \$35,000. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **OPPOSED:** Peggy Katkocin **ABSTAINED:** Kathy Baker and Dominic Cipollone

There was a discussion of whether or not there is enough information regarding the position of Director of Security in order to make an informed vote.

- Kimberly LaTourette encouraged parents to attend the Vaping Information program on March 16<sup>th</sup>. She noted that the band Split Decision is playing at MHHS with the proceeds going to "Make-A-Wish" for a local family. She thanked everyone involved in the Foundations presentation and announced that there is a donation box in each of the schools collecting miscellaneous items for the Troops.
- Rick Regan gave an update of the Magnet School and noted that issues in enrollment may be more at the Middle School and High School level instead of the Elementary level.
- Peggy Katkocin thanked everyone involved in the Foundations presentation and noted that the district has many good stories to tell about progress in the schools.

## **XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SCHOOL SECURITY**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:37 p.m. to discuss School Security and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo and Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes into the Executive Session. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:09 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the SpeakUp! Anonymous Reporting System which will replace Say Something, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos