

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – November 7, 2024

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy, High School Counseling Department Chairman Kim Laughlin, Selectman Tom Perkins, BOF Chairman Thora Perkins

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. October 17, 2024 - 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 noted that he was looking forward to the items on tonight’s agenda and having a positive meeting.

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

- The Rebel Players performance of the play *The Dining Room* was very successful.
- The Rebel Players Jr. will perform *Annie Jr.* the weekend of November 22nd.
- School will be open on Monday, November 11th for Veterans Day will lots of activities scheduled to honor and teach students about Veterans.

Dr. Craw asked Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy to give an update on the STRIDES program. Maria Kennedy noted that eight New Fairfield families attended the Open House on November 5th. There will be another Open House in the near future for anyone that was unable to attend. The first day of the STRIDES program was Wednesday, November 6th. Newtown students will hopefully start on Monday, November 11th. She gave a description of the STRIDES facility. Maria Kennedy thanked Dr. Craw, Phil Ross, Angie Mahoney and Carrie DePuy for their help with implementation of this program. Dr. Craw thanked Ms. Kennedy for her leadership and hard work with this program.

C. Student Representatives' Reports

Senior Representative Emilia Sedlak spoke of the following:

- The Fine Arts Booster Club is having a pastry and cookie dough fundraiser. The last day to order is Friday, November 8th.
- The Guidance Department is offering all Seniors help with the Common Application on Fridays.
- DECA is holding a food drive for Thanksgiving until November 11th.
- The 2025 Yearbook is currently for sale. Information can be found on the school's website.
- The Beta Club is hosting a Vendor/Craft Fair on Saturday, November 9th
- Representatives from branches of the military will be available on November 11th to give information to students who may be interested in careers in the Armed Forces.
- The National Honor Society is hosting a Blood Drive on November 11th.
- Rebel Players Jr. will be performing *Annie Jr.* the weekend of November 22nd.

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The World Language National Honor Society Induction Ceremony was held recently.
- The National Honor Society Induction Ceremony was held recently.
- A mock election was held on November 1st.
- The play *Dining Room* was held the weekend of November 1st.
- The Fairfield County Math competition was held recently.
- The National Honor Society is offering tutoring for students.
- The Wellness Center is open after school from 2:15 to 3:45 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- PSAT National Merit Scholarship qualifying test scores will be released soon.
- School will be closed November 27th - 29th for Thanksgiving break.

Chairman Dominic Cipollone congratulated Ella Skogstrom for being inducted into the National Honor Society.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on Nov. 7th and reviewed budget vs. actual and everything is on track. There was an update on the building projects and an update on shared services.
2. Curriculum - Tim Blair noted that this subcommittee met on Oct. 28th and discussed the following:
 - K-5 Literacy Resources
 - High School graduation requirements, including changes in State Legislation for the SEE Projects.
 - Social media and cell phone education update and how it affects overall student wellness.
3. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on October 23rd. They discussed state mandated changes to policies regarding sexual harassment for both staff and students. They discussed the new policy on non-lapsing education funds and reviewed changes to the policy regarding suspension and expulsion.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on October 23rd and reviewed the subcommittee meetings on Capital projects and Medical Insurance. They discussed the possibility of having a joint meeting with the BOF, BOS and BOE. Chairman Thora Perkins will discuss the logistics of this possible meeting. The BOF approved the calendar of meetings for 2025. The BOS and BOE will present their budgets to the BOF on Saturday, March 1, 2025. The BOE will be the second presentation at 10:45 a.m.

2. Parks and Recreation Commission - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this commission met on Oct. 21st and voted against approving a blanket purchase order for expenses. They discussed the possibility of opening the Town Beach without lifeguards. Public Works took out the docks for the winter. New Fairfield Day was held on October 19th and Trick or Treats was held on October 25th. Both were successful. The Turkey Run will be held on Sunday, November 24th. The Holiday parade, tree lighting and Santa's Workshop will be held on Saturday, November 30th with a rain/snow date of December 1st. The next meeting of the Parks and Rec Commission will be Monday, November 25th.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Fairfield High School Student Outcomes Presentation

High School Counseling Department Chairman Kim Laughlin gave a presentation regarding the outcome of students from the Class of 2024 since their graduation. She spoke of students attending four-year colleges, two-year colleges or trade schools, military service or choosing to take a gap year. She noted that the role of the school counselor is to help with academic development, career planning and social and emotional growth. She compared the outcome of the Class of 2024 to the outcome of the classes of recent years.

Kim Laughlin spoke of the focus for the Guidance Department for 2024-2025 which includes the Junior JumpStart program, Trade Career Fairs and increased access to program information. She spoke of the enhancement of curriculum development, program implementation and vertical alignment. She further spoke of upcoming events and programs for the department.

B. NESDEC Enrollment Projections (New England School Development Council)

Dr. Craw spoke of the enrollment projections for the near future and how it affects budget planning. He noted that enrollment has remained steady at a little over 2000 students and it is expected to remain steady for the foreseeable future. He spoke of the projections by grade and by respective schools.

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

Carrie DePuy noted that the old Consolidated School building has been demolished. The piping is complete for the propane at the high school. They are currently waiting for inspection before the propane can be used.

D. Board of Education 2025 Regular Meeting Dates

The Board reviewed the calendar of meetings for 2025. The Superintendent's evaluation will be on June 12th. The CABA self-study will be done on May 1st.

E. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)

1. Policy 5114 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process

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 October 31, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

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

Kimberly LaTourette thanked Maria Kennedy for all her hard work and wished her well in the future.

B. District Priorities/Superintendent's Goals

Dr. Craw spoke of District priorities for 2024-2025 which include the following five priority areas:

- Curriculum, Instruction, Wellness, Student and Staff Attendance and Resources for Learning.

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the District/Superintendent Goals as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion.

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

C. FY 2025 Budget Transfers

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the requested FY 25 budget transfers as presented. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

D. New Fairfield Middle School Space Utilization Feasibility Study

Dr. Craw spoke of accomplishments for spacing needs at the Middle School and spoke of current needs that still need to be addressed. Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner and Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy gave a presentation of current needs at the Middle School.

MOTION: Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board the expenditure of an amount not-to-exceed \$10,000 to prepare a feasibility study for renovations to the existing New Fairfield Middle School. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone **OPPOSED:** Amy Johnson and Kathy Baker

E. Board of Education Policy

1. Policy 6172.3 - Educational Instruction under Parental Direction (Home Schooling)

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policy 6172.3 - Educational Instruction under Parental Direction (Home Schooling). Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

F. Board of Education Policies

Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policy 3171.1 Policy 4000.1/4200.1 and Policy 5145.44)

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 3171.1, Policy 4000.1/4200.1 and Policy 5145.44. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

1. Policy 3171.1 - Non-Lapsing Education Fund (Non-Regional School District)

Dr. Craw explained the new legislation regarding the non-lapsing Education Fund.

2. Policy 4000.1/4200.0 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment
3. Policy 5145.44 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment

Samantha Mannion noted that these policies are state mandated language changes that expanded the definition of sexual harassment. One policy is for staff and the other is for students.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to approve the following policies as presented: Policy 3171.1, Policy 4000.1/4200.1 and Policy 5145.44. Amy Johnson seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

G. Board of Education Policies

1. Rescind Policy 4118.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
2. Rescind Policy 5145.5 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to rescind Policy 4118.112 (Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace) and Policy 5145.5 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tom Perkins asked about the spacing issues at the Middle School and asked about specific rooms that might be available.

Thora Perkins spoke of the importance of the Gifted and Talented program and asked that finding space for them at the Middle School be a priority.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - Kathy Baker asked for an update on the bus lot.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kimberly LaTourette spoke in favor of keeping schools open on Veterans Day and spoke of the wonderful learning opportunities for all students to learn about Veterans.

Greg Flanagan thanked Maria Kennedy for all her work during her tenure at New Fairfield and wished her well.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos