

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

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

MINUTES – March 7, 2024

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Tim Blair, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone,

ABSENT: Kathy Baker, Greg Flanagan, and Amy Johnson

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, and Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 15, 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 reported on the following:

- Encouraged everyone to come together as a community during the budget negotiations and do what is best for the students.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow

- There was an Ad Hoc Start Time subcommittee meeting recently. They discussed the five-year contract for the bus company. Dr. Crow noted that the start times will remain the same for the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- March 8th will be a late arrival for students due to morning conferences.
- SATs for Juniors will be given the week of March 25th.
- March 22nd will be an early dismissal.

Junior Representative Emilia Sedlak noted that:

- DECA is holding a food drive with donation boxes at the school throughout the month of March.
- The musical Matilda will be performed March 21st to March 24th.
- Spring Athletic registration is currently open.
- The Washington, DC trip for Juniors will be March 13th to 15th.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Tim Blair noted that the Curriculum subcommittee met on February 26th and discussed Strategic Planning update. They discussed three goals which include an engaging K-

12 curriculum, challenging instruction and student wellness. At the subcommittee meeting, Dr. Woleck gave an update on the Professional Learning days that were held in February and shared feedback. The subcommittee also had an update of the Science Curriculum and the Elementary Reading Pilot program.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on February 28th and three policies are on tonight's agenda for first reading. They also discussed the possibility of a bylaw regarding electronic participation at Board of Education meetings.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF has met several times since the last BOE meeting:

- February 19th - Medical subcommittee meeting - It was noted that medical claims are trending favorable as of late. The next meeting of the medical subcommittee will be on March 19th. The medical consultant will present budget recommendations at the March 20th regular BOF meeting.
- February 21st - Regular meeting - It was noted that the audit was filed for 2022-2023. They also discussed the unassigned fund balance.
- March 2nd - Budget presentations - The BOE presented a budget with a 4.95% increase over last year which includes both operating and medical. The BOS presented a budget with a 3.77% increase over last year including operating and medical. The total proposed budget increase including operating, medical, debt service and capital and nonrecurring is currently 9.51%.
- A reduction of \$550,000 is required to reduce the budget by 1%.
- March 6th - Budget meeting - The BOF reviewed the Grand List, adjustments to property tax, non-tax revenue and the capital budget for both the BOS and the BOE. The debt service is currently approximately \$7.9 million.
- March 7th - The audit subcommittee met and reviewed the "Recommendations to Management Letter" and voted to approve the audit for 2022-2023 to the full BOF.

The next meeting of the BOF will be held on Wednesday, March 13th at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Update

Dr. Craw gave a brief update regarding the budget and noted that the BOE adopted budget has an operating increase of 4.95% over last year. He further thanked all the BOE members in honor of Board of Education Member Appreciation Month.

B. Temporary Bus Parking Lot Update

Dr. Craw noted that a committee has been put together to discuss options for the bus lot. Members of the committee include: Dr. Craw, First Selectman Melissa Lindsey, Board of Education Chairman Dominic Cipollone, PBC Chairman Don Kellogg, Town Engineer Tony Iadarola, Zoning Enforcement Officer Evan White, High School Principal James D'Amico, Director of Building and Grounds Phil Ross, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Owners' Rep. Scott Pellman, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner and Athletic Director Mark Ottusch. There was a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of this committee.

C. Board of Education Policies – *(Second Reading)*

1. Policy 4121 - Substitute Teachers
2. Policy 5118 - Nonresident students

D. Board of Education policies – (First Reading)

1. Policy 4115 - Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support
2. Bylaw 9323 - Construction of the Agenda
3. Bylaw 9324 - Advance delivery of Meeting Materials

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kim LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Personnel Report for February 29, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Tim Blair seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone.

B. Continuation of Health Benefits

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval to authorize the Superintendent to offer continuation of health insurance benefits for teachers who notify the intent to resign by Friday, April 26, 2024. Kim LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone.

C. Acceptance of Donation

1. Fine Arts Booster Club

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the Fine Arts Booster Club donation of \$4,000 for the purchase of wireless microphones for the New Fairfield High School Theater. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sue Huwer asked for a copy of the contract for the solar project when it becomes available. She further noted that she was very impressed with Elementary School Principal Allyson Story at the Curriculum subcommittee.

Kim LaTourette encouraged taxpayers to get information regarding the budget from reliable sources instead of social media. She thanked everyone who agreed to serve on the bus lot committee.

Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF will meet twice about the budget before the next BOE meeting. It was noted that a BOE special meeting will be called to discuss budget changes if necessary.

Dominic Cipollone encouraged everyone to keep an open mind during the budget process.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos