

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting via Zoom

MINUTES – May 7, 2020

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

ABSENT: Samantha Mannion

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, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Athletic Director Mary Stolle and Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel

I. CALL TO ORDER: Network Administrator Paul Gouveia explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public.

Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. April 21, 2020 – Regular - approved by consensus
- B. April 27, 2020 – Special - approved by consensus
- C. April 30, 2020 – Special - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Consolidated School teacher Michelle Brown thanked everyone involved with making the donation to the food pantry in honor of the New Fairfield teachers and staff.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Chairman’s Report - Chairman Peggy Katkocin spoke of the BOF meeting held on May 6th where she presented the second round of cuts to the 2020-2021 budget. She noted that some BOF members noted that the second round of cuts may be too deep and could negatively affect the schools in the district. She spoke of the

process for adopting the budget this year and noted that it will be done by the BOF instead of a taxpayer referendum. There was also a brief discussion of the request to the BOF to consider redefining the definition of a non-lapsing account to include unanticipated expenses to the district due to COVID 10.

Chairman Katkocin spoke of the wonderful parade given by the teachers for the Staff Appreciation Week.

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:

- Thanked everyone involved in putting together the wonderful parade for Staff Appreciation Week.
- The Middle School filled an entire car with donations for needy families.
- Working on end of the year plans and specifically being able to get into schools to collect belongings.
- The ESY (Extended School Year) will be held from July 6-August 6.
- There will be no enrichment programs in the schools this year.
- Spoke of possibility of extra support for students in August.
- Spoke of the challenge of planning without a set budget. Is hoping to get the information soon.

Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby spoke of the following:

- Two surveys were sent to families regarding distance learning. One at the beginning of distance learning and the second one about a week ago. The second survey had 526 responses. At the first survey, 50% of respondents said that they were struggling. The second survey showed that those struggling were down to 40%. Most respondents felt the communications from the school system was great. Of the respondents, 50% said that they would love more enrichment opportunities and there were many positive comments from families. She spoke of a focus group via Zoom with teachers and staff discussing issues about distance learning and what could be done differently if more time was given to prepare. She wished Happy Teacher Appreciation Week to not only teachers but to the parents of students.

C. Committee Report

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that the Curriculum subcommittee met and spoke of a new Social Studies textbook for AP US Government and Politics. This textbook is on the agenda for a first reading. They also discussed the Math curriculum.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF will mark up the budget on Wednesday, May 13th via Zoom.
2. School Security and Safety - Rick Regan noted that the School Security and Safety Committee met on May 5th and noted that the School Emergency Response team for each building will have a virtual meeting with the security consultant this month. They have also filed for the SBPP Grant.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Dr. Sanzo noted that the PBC is currently overseeing the design phase of the construction project. They selected the firm of O&G as construction manager for both projects. There have been some meetings with administrators from the elementary schools to discuss site plans for the Consolidated School project. There have been meetings with the administrators from the Middle School and High School regarding site plans. The School Safety and Security Committee is reviewing initial designs regarding modifications to improve security. The PBC will meet next week and review the design for the Consolidated School project.

There was a brief discussion of the time line for the projects and it was noted that the district must break ground within two years of the grant commitment. Delay of the project may require reapplying for the grant. Dr. Cosentino spoke of the contracts that have been signed that must be fulfilled and noted a delay in the school project will not save any money in the long run.

B. New Textbook Adoption (First Reading)

1. *The Challenge of Democracy* - Dominic Cipollone gave a brief description of this textbook.

VIII. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM

A. 2020-2021 Budget

Peggy Katkocin noted that the final mark up of the budget will be done on Wednesday, May 13th. She spoke of the impact of cuts for not only this year but future budgets. She noted that since the BOF does not have line item control over the budget, it is better to wait and see what the actual amount of the cuts will be before deciding what should be eliminated.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for May 1, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. New Fairfield Public Schools 2010-2020 Revised Calendar

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the revised 2019-20 school calendar as presented. Peggy Katkocin seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - Consolidated School teacher Michelle Brown spoke of her concerns that letters in support of the budget have not been read at recent BOF meetings.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Members of the BOE thanked everyone involved in the parade for Teacher Appreciation Day. They thanked everyone for their input regarding the budget. Public Comment regarding the budget is encouraged for at the BOF meeting on Wednesday.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos