

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 7:00 pm in New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield.

**MINUTES – December 5, 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, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Selectman Tom Perkins,

**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. November 7, 2024 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - Approved by consensus

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Christine Creter, Terry Eagan and Linda Hubbard spoke of concerns with the recent turnover of nurses in the schools.

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the importance of the entire community together to improve the well-being of all the students.

B. Superintendent’s Report- Dr. Kenneth Craw and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck presented Sarah Sanborn with a plaque to honor her as New Fairfield “Teacher of the Year.”

C. Student Representatives’ Reports

Senior Representative Emilia Sedlak spoke of the following:

- The Senior Class is hosting a “Diaper Drive” throughout the month of December to benefit foster families.
- The 2025 Yearbook is currently for sale on the school’s website. Family and business ads are due by January 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The Festival of Culture will be held on Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup> from 10 a.m. to 2.p.m.

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The next payment for the Washington, DC trip is due by Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> the final payment is due on January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- School will be closed for Christmas Break beginning Monday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> and will resume on Thursday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Tim Blair noted that this subcommittee met on November 25<sup>th</sup> and discussed technology and recognized Director of Technology Paul Gouveia and his staff. They discussed a strategic plan for artificial intelligence and curriculum. There will be another Curriculum subcommittee meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>.
2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on November 20<sup>th</sup> and reviewed updated requirements for graduation and the policy concerning the forms for the Superintendent's evaluation.
3. Special Education Ad Hoc - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this committee met on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepstzul spoke of her new role and shared some pictures of the new STRIDES location. An information night for parents was held for the Early Learning Center program. The lottery for the typical peers will be held in January. The Unified Sports Volleyball season just ended. New Fairfield students were able to attend a Unified Homecoming Dance at Joel Barlow School. The Ad Hoc committee discussed the nursing situation in the district and it was noted that the pool for substitute nurses has increased.

#### E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone gave a summary of recent BOF meetings:
  - BOF Medical subcommittee meeting November 19<sup>th</sup> - Consultant Tom Kowalchik spoke of the projections for 2025-2026 and the possibility of an increase to the amount budgeted for the medical fund. He noted that claims were over budget for October and gave a breakdown for the first four months of the fiscal year, two months were under budget and two months were over budget. The Medical subcommittee is looking into the possibility of joining the Eastern Connecticut Health Medical Collaboration. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 in the Town Hall Annex.
  - BOF regular month meeting November 20<sup>th</sup> - The BOF discussed the Medical fund and capital projects. The meeting calendar for 2025 was approved. The next meeting of the BOF will be Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be a joint BOF and BOE meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The BOE and BOS will present their budgets to the BOF on Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - The next BOF Capital subcommittee meeting will be held on December 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. via zoom.
2. Parks and Recreation Commission - Greg Flanagan noted that this commission met on November 25<sup>th</sup> and discussed Summer Programs. The members attended the Freedom of Information training session. The Turkey Run was successful and the commission discussed details for the Holiday Light Parade.
3. Calendar Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that the calendar committee met on November 18<sup>th</sup> and reviewed two different draft calendars for the 2025-2026 year. The committee voted on one to recommend to the full board.

### **VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

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

High School Principal James D'Amico noted that the propane issue in the Culinary Arts kitchens has been fixed. He thanked Culinary Arts Teacher Andrea Forzaglia for her patience and creativity while this issue is being addressed. Dr. Craw thanked Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross and staff for their work with this issue. The propane issue in the Science Rooms will be addressed next.

#### B. FY 2026 Budget Assumptions

Dr. Craw spoke of Budget Assumptions and noted that the biggest factors in developing the budget are enrollment and salaries. He noted that enrollment is comparable to previous years. There was a brief discussion of revenue generated from ELC tuition and Sherman student tuition. Other factors to consider are shared services and how the Sherman tuition revenue is allocated. Capital projects to be discussed include the removal

of the underground storage tank at the Middle School, additional classrooms needed at the Middle School and Rebel Turf replacement. A draft Capital Project plan will be presented that the December 19<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting.

C. New Fairfield Public Schools 2025-2026 Draft Calendar

Dr. Craw reviewed the draft calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. There was a brief discussion of the dates and times for Parent/Teacher conferences. This will be reviewed by the Curriculum subcommittee.

D. Student Attendance

Dr. Craw compared absentee rates for 2022, 2023 and 2024 and gave a breakdown of schools. He spoke of the importance of good attendance for both students and staff.

E. Board of Education Policy (Second Reading)

1. Policy 5114 - Suspension and Expulsion Due Process

F. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)

1. Policy 2400 - Evaluation of Superintendent
2. Policy 6146 - Graduation Requirements

## 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 December 4, 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

B. Board of Education Regular Meeting Dates

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2025 Board of Education Regular and Board of Education Subcommittee meeting dates as presented excluding Policy subcommittee meeting dates. Samantha Mannion 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. Superintendent Evaluation Process

Samantha Mannion gave a brief description of the updated evaluation forms.

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Superintendent's evaluation form. 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 - None

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - There was a request for an update on the School Climate and it was noted that this should go to the Policy subcommittee first.

## XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Greg Flanagan assured the public that he takes the concerns about the turnover of the nurses very seriously. Kim LaTourette encouraged everyone to be an upstanding team member.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m. 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

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos