

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

MINUTES – March 18, 2021

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel, MHHS Third Grade teacher Pam Quist, High School Teacher Sarah Kelly and First Selectman Pat Del Monaco

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone, including members of the public.

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 4, 2021 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. NEW FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT CHOIR PRESENTATION

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino introduced the New Fairfield High School choir who performed via Zoom in honor of Board of Education Appreciation Month.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BOE member Kathy Baker thanked everyone who contributed to the Post Grad party that will be held this year at Quassy Amusement Park. She further spoke of the opportunity for residents to “Surprise a Senior.” Information for this will be provided soon.

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report- Peggy Katkocin spoke of the following:

- Spoke of misinformation on social media regarding the school building projects and noted that information on social media is often misleading. She noted that the vote in October 2019 was strictly on bonding for both of the schools and not specific buildings. Once the

referendum passed, this project became the purview of the Permanent Building Committee. She reminded everyone of the inefficiencies of the current building and that building a new school was the only option that would receive reimbursement from the State.

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

- March is "Connecticut Board of Education Member Appreciation" month.
- Reminded everyone that all PBC meetings are open to the public and encouraged taxpayers to attend.
- Wished the Girls Basketball Team good luck in the SWC playoffs.
- Track and Field students will participate in the SWC playoffs in Bethel.
- Spring sports will start soon.
- Reminded everyone that New Fairfield COVID numbers are high and encouraged everyone to continue to practice COVID safety precautions.

Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes explained the process of contract tracing and notification for students and families.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Representative Cayden Walker reported on the following:

- High School Juniors will take the SATs in school on March 24th. All other students will be on remote learning for that day.
- Seniors and their families have been sent a questionnaire regarding preferences for graduation. It is requested that this survey be returned by Friday, March 19th.
- The Girls Basketball Team will play on March 19th.
- Congratulated High School Junior Luke Rigoglioso for receiving the President's Volunteer Service Award.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on March 18th and discussed:

- Monthly summary of Budget vs. Actual as of the end of February.
- Summary of projected year end which anticipates a deficit of approximately \$424,000. This deficit will be covered by the 2019-2020 surplus.
- School lunch fund anticipates a deficit of approximately \$50,000. This deficit is reduced as more meals are distributed.
- COVID related relief funds were discussed.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on March 17th and discussed the following:

- Budget planning for 2021-2022 and beyond,
- Necessity of Town projects,
- BOE budget and ESSER funds,
- Specific cuts or adjustments to either the BOS or BOE budgets were not discussed.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee

• Kimberly LaTourette noted that the March 8th meeting was cancelled but she reached out to Parks and Rec Director Linda Lull and noted that the Parks and Rec Department is hoping to have summer camps this summer and is waiting for guidelines from the State.

3. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this meeting was cancelled.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Remote Learning

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of data for remote learning for each school and noted that there are more remote learners in the higher grades than in the lower grades. She introduced 3rd Grade teacher Pam Quist and High School teacher Sarah Kelly who gave a presentation regarding a day in the life of a remote learner.

B. District Management Group 2015 Report

Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel spoke of the DMG reports. Ms. Busnel spoke of studies that were conducted in 2012 and in 2015 and how these studies are used to help Special Education and struggling students. Ms. Misuraca spoke of the commendations that the district received to help Special Education students and opportunities noted that can help these students in the future. There was a brief discussion of projected staff for 2021-2022 to help Special Education students.

C. i-Ready Data

Julie Luby explained the role of i-Ready Data and noted that it has been administered twice so far. She spoke of factors that affect the results including the COVID pandemic, the fact that it was given to both remote and in-person learners and that this is a new tool that has recently been introduced. She also spoke of how the placements have changed from fall to winter. This will be administrated again in early June.

D. Board of Education Policies (*Second Reading*)

1. Bylaw 9260 - Board Member Protection
2. Bylaw 9310 - Development, Distribution and Maintenance of Manual of Policies, Regulations, Bylaws
3. Bylaw 9311- Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Policies
4. Bylaw 9312 - Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Bylaws
5. Bylaw 9313 - Formulation, Adoption, Amendment of Administrative Regulations
6. Bylaw 9314 - Suspension of Policies, Bylaws, Regulations
7. Bylaw 9320 - Board of Education Meeting
8. Bylaw 9321 - Time, Place, Notification of Meetings, Quorum
9. Bylaw 9321.21 - Board of Education Organizational Meeting
10. Bylaw 9322 - Public and Executive Sessions
11. Bylaw 9323 - Construction of the Agenda/Actions by the Board

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

Dr. Rich Sanzo gave an update on the Consolidated School building project (CELA). He noted that most of the recent work is focusing on Zoning and regulatory approvals. He spoke of concerns from neighbors regarding the bus lot at Consolidated School. The PBC has asked the design team to make modifications to this bus lot. A special PBC meeting will be held on March 19th to discuss the bus lot. There will be a special Zoning Commission meeting on March 22nd to present the revised bus lot plans. There will be special PBC/BOE joint meeting on March 23rd to have both boards approve the final documents to allow the CELA project to proceed to the State.

IX. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

A. 2021-2022 Budget Update

Dr. Sanzo spoke of the proposed budget and the possibility of using the ESSER II grant money to reduce the budget. He spoke of funding the K-5 and 6-11 Math programs, the Fountas and Pinnel Assessments and Instructional software with money received from the ESSER II grant and to reduce the BOE requested budget by \$294,000. These items were chosen because they are one-time expenses and would not create a hole in future budgets. Using these grants for would reduce the BOE budget increase from 2.48% to 1.76%.

B. ESSER II Funds

Dr. Sanzo spoke of the possibility of using ESSER II funds for mental health support, enrichment opportunities, professional development and college and career counseling.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to reduce the 2021-22 operating budget by \$294,000. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

X. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report as of March 11, 2021, as recommended by the administration. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. Acceptance of Donation

1. Donation Fundraising by NFHS Rebel Cheerleaders

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to accept a donation from the NFHS Rebel Cheerleaders of a Ben's Bell Display valued at \$4,700. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - Amy Howley and Kelly Mele asked about the enrollment for the ELC program and asked about the possibility of having a separate BOE meeting to discuss concerns regarding the ELC program.

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Stephanie Strazza thanked the teachers for the Remote Learning presentation. She also cautioned the public not to rely on information about the school building projects on social media. She encouraged residents to get involved in the budget process.

Kathy Baker noted that she is very pleased that New Fairfield students are able to have in-person school.

Greg Flanagan thanked Dr. Cosentino for acknowledging BOE member appreciation month.

Dominic Cipollone spoke of the Middle School Parent/Teacher conferences and the possibility of shortening the time off for conferences in the future.

Ed Sbordone encouraged residents to get involved in the budget process and reminded everyone that the next BOF meeting is March 24th.

Kim LaTourette thanked all the teachers for going above and beyond this year during COVID. She also thanked Dr. Karen Fildes for providing the dashboard update.

Rick Regan encouraged everyone to attend the PBC meetings to learn about the school building projects.

Peggy Katkocin encouraged everyone to get the COVID vaccine as soon as they are eligible.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos