

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, October 15, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.
at the Meeting House Hill School Cafetorium and via Zoom

MINUTES – October 15, 2020

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

ABSENT: Kathy Baker

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, 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 and Middle School Teachers Roseann Petruso and Keely Sproviero.

Network Administrator for the BOE Paul Gouveia 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. RECOGNITION OF WCSA AWARDS** - Dr. Cosentino presented WCSA awards to Middle School and High School students because the ceremony was postponed in the Spring of 2020. She gave a brief description of each student. Chairman Katkocin congratulated the students and thanked their parents for supporting their students.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - A. October 1, 2020 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - Approved by consensus
- VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None
- VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**
 - A. Chairman’s Report
 - Peggy Katkocin reminded BOE members that they will have a meeting with the Permanent Building Committee that will include a tour of the building site at the high school.
 - Peggy Katkocin thanked all four building principals and noted that October is School Principals’ month.
 - B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Pat Cosentino spoke of the following:
 - Thanked the Principals from all four schools in honor of “School Principals” month.
 - Noted that Wednesday, October 21st is Bus Driver Appreciation Day.

- Reminded families that clocks will be set back on November 1st. She encouraged everyone to drive safely and be careful in the dark.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Student Representative Cayden Walker reported on the following:

- Congratulated Caitlyn Cennamo and Nicholas Thiel-Hudson for winning National Merit Scholarships.
- The PSATs for Juniors will be held on October 29th.
- The New Fairfield High School Peace Project, in partnership with the Danbury Women's Center, will sponsor events to raise awareness to end Domestic Violence on October 27th.
- New Fairfield High School students will receive information about Team Harmony web series that begins on October 20th entitled "Hate - What are you going to do?"
- Class officer elections were held this week.

Senior Student Representative Nicholas Thiel-Hudson reported on the following:

- High School Parent-Teacher conferences will be held next week.
- Thanked Mr. Rohwedder and Mrs. Cheung for coordinating the SATs for Seniors.
- The National Honor Society has resumed peer tutoring. Students have received a link to sign up if necessary.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Safety Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on October 7th and discussed the following:

- The bus service is going well.
- The Town has hired an additional Police Officer effective November 1st
- Food service is going well and is currently at 50% of pre-COVID usage.
- Emergency drills are continuing as scheduled.
- There are no major student injuries to report.
- Traffic issues at drop off and pick up are improving.

2. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that the next meeting of the School Security and Safety Committee will be held on Monday, October 19th at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Remote Learning - Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of a survey that was given to school families. This survey yielded a 50% participation rate with mostly favorable responses. Separate surveys were given for parents of remote learners and parents of in-person learners. There was a brief discussion of increasing of rigor throughout the district.

Parents of remote learners were asked a variety of questions about communications, remote learning, curriculum and synchronous instructions. They were asked if there is a time frame for when they expect their children to return to school. Based on this survey, many students may return by spring. Parents of in-person learners were asked about how safe they feel sending their children, as well as questions about curriculum, rigor of work and hybrid classes. Overall, parents of both sets of students praised the teachers and staff for all their hard work this year.

Dr. Cosentino noted that there are 2121 students in the district. This does not include nine out-placed students. As of October 14th, there are 303 remote learners and 26 home-schooled students. Before COVID, there were 13 home-schooled students in the district.

B. Core 21 - Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli and Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo spoke of the role and purpose of CORE 21. These units last 21 days and teach 21st century skills. Teachers Roseann Petruso and Keely Sproviero spoke of the details, logistics and benefits of CORE 21. Some Middle School students spoke via Zoom and gave a brief description of their projects.

C. BOE Policies (*Second Reading*)

1. Policy 5112 - Ages of Attendance
2. Policy 6141.3272 - Electronic Resources
3. Policy 6145.1- Extra Class Activities: Closed Forum
4. Policy 6145.2 - Interscholastic Competition

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for October 8, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Kimberly LaTourette

It was noted that Kimberly LaTourette supported this motion but abstained from voting due to not being physically present at the meeting and attending via Zoom.

B. Acceptance of Donation

Dr. Cosentino noted that a Meeting House Hill School parent won a national contest through Shutterfly. The prize for this contest allows every student at Meeting House Hill School to receive free school photos and yearbooks. The value of this contest is approximately \$14,245.00.

1. Shutterfly Lifetouch LLC

MOTION: Greg Flanagan to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the donation of yearbooks with a value of \$7,125 and spring photos with a value of \$7,120 for Meeting House Hill School, with an approximate value of \$14,245.00. Rick Regan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Kimberly LaTourette

It was noted that Kimberly LaTourette supported this motion but abstained from voting due to not being physically present at the meeting and attending via Zoom.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - Rick Regan asked about budget discussions and it was noted that this will be discussed at the October 29th BOE retreat.

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Dominic Cipollone thanked all the Administrators for Administrator's month.
- Greg Flanagan asked about the curriculum at the high school and whether or not students are required to watch the Presidential Debate and/or the Supreme Court Nominee hearings. High School Principal James D'Amico noted that some of the Social Studies and Government classes have covered this but it was not a school wide requirement.
- Samantha Mannion spoke of the challenges of having the Board meetings in person with the cameras for Zoom and the difficulty of hearing. There was a brief discussion of the logistics of

the various forms of meetings and there was a suggestion of going back to an all Zoom format. This will be discussed further at the Board member retreat on October 29th.

- Rick Regan noted that the schools have been allowed to open because everyone has been vigilant and careful with COVID-19 recommendations. He encouraged everyone to remain vigilant with the COVID-19 requirements so that school can remain in session.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza **ABSTAINED:** Kimberly LaTourette

It was noted that Kimberly LaTourette supported this motion but abstained from voting due to not being physically present at the meeting and attending via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos