

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, November 19, 2020,  
at 7:00 pm. via Zoom.

**MINUTES – November 19, 2020**

**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, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino

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.

**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. November 4, 2020 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to amend the agenda for tonight’s meeting to add Action Item VIII.A.1. Discussion of Community Outreach Subcommittee. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report - Peggy Katkocin noted that the district is on remote learning until Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>. She thanked all staff members and families for all the work and support during this difficult time.

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

- This is American Education Week. She thanked all staff members for their hard work. She noted that the entire district will be on remote learning until December 7<sup>th</sup>. She spoke of the disappointment with having to go to remote learning but was thankful that the first 10 weeks of school were able to be in person. The decision to go to remote learning was made in consultation with the Department of Health and school nurses.
- Ed Advance has childcare available at Meeting House Hill School for families who need it.

### C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Representative Caden Walker spoke of the following:

- The high school has been on remote learning for the last week.
- The National Honor Society is offering virtual tutoring for students.
- He participated in a focus group through the Prevention Council regarding a survey that was given a few years ago regarding drug use and other behaviors with students.

### D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on November 19<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- Budget vs. Actual Expenditures - There is a projected deficit of approximately \$1.3 million. This will be offset by the ESSER and CRF grants and the return of the 2019-2020 surplus. The projected deficit after the offsets is approximately \$100,000.
- Google Vault Reconciliations from July 1<sup>st</sup> - September 30<sup>th</sup> showed that there was no unauthorized access.
- The Capital Improvement Plan for 2020-2030 was presented and will be discussed in more detail during the budget cycle.
- A Coronavirus Relief Fund Grant will be used for the Middle School Building Management System.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that the Policy Subcommittee met on November 18<sup>th</sup> and introduced two additional policies. They are in the process of doing a walk-through audit of BOE Bylaws. There are eight policies on tonight's agenda for second reading.

### E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on November 18<sup>th</sup> and approved an additional appropriation for Town Properties Capital to upgrade the HVAC systems in Town Hall and the Annex to meet Coronavirus specifications. The cost of the project will be offset by a STEAP grant in the amount of \$128,000. The BOF also reviewed the Medical Plan and noted that as of June 30, 2020, the town retained \$2.2 million in the reserve fund.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Greg Flanagan noted that Parks and Rec Commission met on November 16<sup>th</sup> and discussed Phase I of the boat dock replacement. There will be a drive-by Santa behind Town Hall. The Tree Lighting will not be open to the public but will be video-taped and posted on-line. The Light Parade will take place on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The Great Light Display will be ongoing from December 8<sup>th</sup> to December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

3. Safety Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on November 18<sup>th</sup> and noted that there was nothing to report.

4. Calendar Committee - Kathy Baker noted that this committee met on November 9<sup>th</sup> and discussed the school calendar for 2021-2022 school year, which strives to provide for more full weeks with less disruption to learning.

5. School Security and Safety Committee - Rick Regan noted that this committee met and discussed information about SPEAK UP that will be implemented once school is back to in-person learning. The rest of the meeting was held in Executive Session.

## VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. Snow Days and Remote Learning Days - Assistant Superintendent noted that the State of Connecticut will allow districts to use remote learning as a school day for when closed for inclement weather. This is approved for this school year only. The curriculum must have the same integrity as a typical remote learning day with synchronous learning. An exception to this is for weather instances when power or internet is out. The notification for this will be through the school messenger system.

B. New Fairfield Public School 2021-2022 Draft Calendar - Dr. Cosentino noted that the committee met to come up with a calendar for 2021-2022. Full weeks are set up whenever possible.

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

1. Policy 4118.231/4218.231- Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
2. Policy 5131.6 - Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
3. Bylaw 9000 - Rule of Board and Members (Powers, Purpose, Duties)
4. Bylaw 9010 - Limits of Authority
5. Bylaw 9012 - Legal Responsibilities of Board of Education
6. Bylaw 9020 - Public Statements
7. Bylaw 9030 - Commitment to Democratic Principles in Relation to Community, Staff and Students
8. Bylaw 9040 - Board Related Responsibilities

D. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update - Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo gave an update on the building project and noted that both projects are continuing at a very rapid pace. He and Dr. Cosentino will be meeting with the State to review the CELA project regarding the design development. O&G is currently reviewing the logistics of construction with both projects. Estimates will be reviewed and presented to the PBC after Thanksgiving. Applications for approvals from Town Boards have been submitted.

## 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 November 12, 2020, as recommended by the administration. 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

#### A.1. Discussion of Community Outreach Subcommittee

There was a brief discussion of this subcommittee and it was noted that it was formed for a specific purpose which does not currently apply, so it was decided to suspend this subcommittee for the foreseeable future.

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to suspend the Community Outreach Subcommittee and to suspend any meeting dates for 2021. Greg Flanagan 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. BOE 2021 Regular Meeting Dates

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2021 Board of Education Regular and Board of Education Subcommittee meeting dates as amended. Stephanie Strazza seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

### C. Acceptance of Grant

#### 1. Derx Foundation Grant

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the acceptance of the Derx Foundation Grant in the amount of \$15,000. 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

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS -** Dominic Cipollone noted that Parent-Teachers conferences seem very rushed and asked about the possibility of reviewing the process for these conferences. The Board will look into this in the future.

**XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Members of the Board thanked staff members, teachers and nurses in the district for all their hard work with school so far this year. They encouraged everyone to remain vigilant with COVID precautions. Members of the Board thanked all the veterans and everyone involved in putting together the virtual Veterans' Day assembly.

Chairman Peggy Katkocin noted that she has volunteered to help with Contact Tracing. She encouraged any nurses that may be available to help to contact the Town's Health Director.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. Samantha Mannion 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