

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – January 23, 2024

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker (via phone), Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, New Fairfield High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary Principal Allyson Story, Elementary Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Selectman Tom Perkins, BOF member Thora Perkins

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. REVIEW OF THE 2024-2025 BUDGET

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw spoke of the budget for 2024-2025 that was presented on January 18th. He compared the percentage increase for the operating budget of 5.25% to requests from other districts in the surrounding area.

Elementary Principal Allyson Story gave a presentation regarding Consolidated School and Meeting House Hill School. She noted that even though they share a campus, they are operating as two separate schools. She spoke of the many accomplishments of the schools, specifically MHHS being named a “School of Distinction.” There has been an increase in clubs and enrichment opportunities, and an increase in math performance. Enrollment for Consolidated and MHHS is expected to increase by 17 students for next year. Since it is spread over multiple grades, there is no need for additional sections. It was noted that this budget is a “Needs Based Budget.”

Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner spoke of the many accomplishments in the Middle School, specifically growth in math, the expansion of the Strings program and the return of many extracurricular activities that were paused during the pandemic. Ms. Gruetzner spoke of the success of the first Middle School musical “The Little Mermaid Jr.” There was a brief discussion of the benefits of the “Team Model” for the Middle School. Staffing and enrollment for the Middle School is expected to remain stable. A Library/Media specialist is requested to be added to the Middle School.

High School Principal James D’Amico spoke of the many accomplishments for New Fairfield High School and thanked the taxpayers for the wonderful new school building. He noted improvements in SAT scores. Forty students were inducted into the National Honor Society and ten students were selected for the Western Regional Music Festival. A New Fairfield High School student received the UConn Day of Pride scholarship in 2023.

Staffing and enrollment are expected to remain stable for the next year. Mr. D'Amico noted that there is a higher than normal interest in New Fairfield High School from Sherman students. There was a discussion of incentives and initiatives for the high school, and it was noted that the budget requests an additional school counselor.

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy spoke of the accounting for Sherman tuition and explained that tuition received from Sherman is credited to the Town budget instead of the Board of Education budget. She spoke of dues and fees and noted that supplies were cut last year that need to be made up next year.

Members of the of BOE asked questions of the respective principals. Chairman Dominic Cipollone thanked all the administrators for their hard work on this budget.

The next Budget meeting of the BOE will be held on Wednesday, January 24th at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room. Main topics that will be discussed include the budget for Curriculum, Technology, and Central Office.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 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, Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos