

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 19, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT 06812.

MINUTES – January 19, 2023

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, New Fairfield High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, New Fairfield Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Elementary Principal Allyson Story, Elementary Assistant Principal Rob Spino, Elementary Assistant Principal Steven Groccia, Elementary Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Athletic Director Mark Ottusch, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, and Supervisor of Special Education Melissa Busnel

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 5, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- Had a great visit to the High School and thanked everyone involved.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw referred to his budget presentation made immediately prior to this meeting.

C. Student Representatives’ Report

Junior Representative Brennan Hearty spoke of the following:

- Eighth graders visited the high school recently.
- Course selection for next year begins on February 6th.
- The new semester starts on Monday, January 23rd.
- There will be a Winter Formal in the near future.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on January 19th. They discussed the year-to-date budget and 54.8% of the budget has been spent so far this fiscal year. There is a possibility of a deficit for the projected budget

depending on utility costs, building and grounds costs, and special education expenses. Oil prices have been locked in for the season. The Google reconciliation showed no deficiencies.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on January 18th and discussed the following:

- Upcoming bonding for the school building projects. This is the final bonding for approximately \$12 million.
- The General Fund policy was approved. It was clarified that prior year closing expenditures will be treated as expenditure surpluses as was done in the past.
- The BOF discussed the budget surplus for the BOE. A motion was made to transfer \$155,255 to the BOE non-lapsing account. This motion was defeated. A subsequent motion to transfer \$95,000 was approved.
- The BOF discussed the budget surplus for the BOS.
- It was decided that the February BOF meeting will be held virtually, and the March meetings will be held in-person.

2. Parks and Recreation Commission - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec Commission met on January 9th. Seasonal positions will be posted on the Town's website. Lifeguards and an Outdoor Cinema Technician are still needed for this season. There is a possibility of building a pavilion and playground at the Town Beach. The Commission discussed holding Summer Camp at the MHHS campus since the High School will be closed due to construction. They discussed the proposed trail around Margerie Reservoir.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Director of Buildings and Grounds Carrie DePuy noted that the high school project is on time and student tours will begin soon. The Consolidated Early Learning Academy still has a punch list of things that need to be done. It is hopeful that this will be done soon.

B. Board of Education Policies (Second Reading)

1. Policy 5132 - Dress and Grooming

C. Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget

There was a discussion of having one of the three upcoming budget workshops via Zoom. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of virtual vs. in-person meetings.

MOTION: Tim Blair made a motion that one of the three budget workshops scheduled for January 24th, 25th and 31st be held via Zoom, at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

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 January 19, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. New Fairfield Public Schools 2023-2024 Draft Calendar

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2023-24 school calendar as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Attitudes and Behaviors Survey

There was a lengthy discussion about the nature of the survey questions and the goal of the survey. High School Principal James D'Amico noted that this same survey had been given in the 2018-2019 school year. He noted that the goal of this survey is to identify community assets that support youth and to identify areas for improvement both in school and the community.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval to grant permission for the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey to be conducted electronically in grades 9-12 with the condition that a letter go home to parents explaining the survey and giving them the opportunity for their student to opt out if desired. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

OPPOSED: Tim Blair

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Eileen Hacaj spoke in support of the Attitudes and Behavior Survey. She noted that even though some of the questions may be uncomfortable but could potentially help a student, and thus is well worth the effort.

Stephanie Marlow spoke in support of the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey and expressed that this survey could potentially catch "red flags."

Nicole Furphy asked if it is possible to have a similar survey for the parents.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kathy Baker thanked members of the public for giving their opinions regarding the Attitudes and Behaviors Survey. She further encouraged members of the public to give their opinions regarding the budget.

Greg Flanagan thanked Dr. Craw and his staff for the detailed budget presentation.

Ed Sbordone asked for public participation regarding the budget and encouraged everyone to voice their opinions to the Board of Finance.

Kimberly LaTourette reminded the public that they can also send emails regarding the budget if they are not able to attend the meetings.

Dominic Cipollone encouraged parents to communicate to their children as much as possible, especially with uncomfortable topics.

Stephanie Strazza spoke of the importance of a healthy school environment and making sure all students feel welcome.

XII. 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, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos