

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, September 17, 2020,
at 7:00 pm. in the Meeting Hill School Cafetorium 24 Gillotti Road, New Fairfield, CT.
(Also available via Zoom)

MINUTES - September 17, 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, 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, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel, Selectman Khris Hall, and Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh.

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

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to move agenda item V “Recognition- CABE Student Leadership Awards” to item IIA on the agenda. 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

IIA. RECOGNITION - CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Dr. Cosentino presented CABE Student Leadership awards to Middle School and High School students that was postponed in the spring due to COVID-19.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. September 2, 2020 - Special meeting - approved with the addition that Kimberly LaTourette’s name be added to the list of absent members.
- B. September 3, 2020 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Rick Regan made a motion to approve the agenda for tonight’s meeting with the addition of Information Item C. “School Reopening Plan.” 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

V. **CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS** - Moved to item II. A.

VI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

VII. **BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman's Report - Peggy Katkocin asked if any Board members would like to make a comment in response to comments and concerns that were posted to social media over the past weekend. No Board members commented at this time. Peggy Katkocin thanked every staff member for their help with reopening of schools. She noted that parents have been cooperative, and the students are very excited and engaged and thrilled to be back at school.

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

- She has heard only wonderful things about the opening of schools.
- All schools will be going full-time beginning the week of Sept. 21st.
- All schools will hold Open Houses via Zoom. Information regarding this will go out soon.
- Contact Football has been cancelled for the fall.
- Julie Luby and the Building Principals are meeting with families to work out issues with Room and Zoom.
- It was decided that the first BOE meeting of the month will be held exclusively on Zoom and the second BOE meeting of the month will be held in the MHHS Cafetorium.
- There is currently a free school lunch and breakfast program that is open to any New Fairfield child under the age of 18 whether or not they are a student of New Fairfield schools.
- There will be a Professional Development Day on Friday, September 25th and also one in October and November.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Student Representative Cayden Walker reported on the following:

- Links for the virtual Open House have been sent to the parents.
- Students are happy to be back to full time school. He noted some minor issues with technology and some concerns with an early lunch wave, but school is running smoothly so far.

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

- Gave a student's prospective as a full-time distance learner and noted that the classes are going well. The lessons are exciting and engaging and there have been no issues.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management

Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on September 17th and discussed:

- Budget vs. actual for the current year as of August 31st.
- Budget considerations with the reopening plan and the costs of reopening the school due to COVID. The BOE surplus for 2019-2020 is \$625,540. Even if the BOF allows the BOE to keep 100% of the surplus, there will still be a shortfall of approximately \$335,000. This will be discussed further.
- Spoke of the free lunch program waiver. It is hopeful that this program will continue at least until December.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on Sept. 16th and reviewed the surplus for 2019-2020. The BOE surplus is \$625,540, the BOS surplus is approximately \$623,000 and the surplus in revenue is approximately \$301,338. The total surplus is approximately \$1.5 million. The BOF discussed giving both the BOE and Town 100% of their

surplus. The school reopening plan was also discussed at the BOF meeting. The BOF will vote on the surplus at their October 21st meeting.

2. Parks and Recreation - Greg Flanagan noted that many of the Parks and Rec events have been cancelled due to COVID, but there was a discussion of the possibility of having a great light fight for houses that wish to decorate for Halloween. The rims on the basketball nets by the playground have been removed at the direction of the Health Director. The Parks and Rec Commission will discuss the budget impact of the increase in minimum wage at their next meeting.

3. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that the School Security and Safety Committee met on September 14th and discussed support for school dismissals from both the town and the police department. The committee also went into Executive Session to discuss safety designs for the school building projects.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Performing Arts Update - Dr. Cosentino spoke of her efforts to bring back as many extracurricular activities as possible. She spoke specifically of music and fine arts. Major Minors will begin this fall at Meeting House Hill School and a full chorus at MHHS will start in the spring. The 5th grade band will start virtually within the next couple of weeks. There will be band and chorus at the Middle School and Unified Theater. These events may be virtual. The High School has a percussion group playing on garbage cans. There will be a posting for a Fall Drama advisor and a Spring choral director. Bell kits will be purchased for the high school students since wind instruments are not allowed at this time. It was noted that there will be no Marching Band at this time.

B. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update - Dr. Sanzo noted that the Permanent Building Committee has been meeting and reviewing technical aspects of both school building projects. They recently met with representatives from O&G. There are new members of the O&G team working on the project. He spoke briefly of the estimating process. The next meeting of the PBC is scheduled for Tuesday, September 22nd.

C. School Reopening Plan - High School Principal James D'Amico spoke of the reasons for having a hybrid schedule for the first two weeks. He noted that this gave the school time to observe lunch waves, class changes and dismissals. He noted that the Health Department did an observation over the last few days and their feedback was very complimentary.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for September 10, 2020, as recommended by the administration. 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. Approval of Grant Application

1. Derx Foundation Grant

a. Virtual Enrichment

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the grant application to the Derx Foundation for Virtual Enrichment in the amount of \$27,000. 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

C. Superintendent/District Goals 2020-2021

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Superintendent/District Goals 2020-21. 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

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Michele Pineyro spoke as a parent of a tenth-grade student and praised the teachers for the wonderful job they are doing with distance learning. She noted that her daughter felt included and engaged and was having a wonderful experience. She thanked everyone involved for all their hard work. She also thanked Dr. Cosentino for the work she is doing to get extra-curricular activities back again and noted how important they were for students.

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Board members asked for the following information for future meetings:

- Report on student learning gaps and ways to address them.
- Impact of Professional Development in the classroom.
- Update on distance learners.
- Input on budget preparations for 2021-2022.
- Update on Special Education students.
- Update of standardized testing and what is being done to address possible learning gaps.

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Members of the Board of Education thanked all staff members, parents and everyone involved in student learning for all their hard work with making this year as normal as possible. They noted that they are very proud of everyone in the district. There was a brief discussion of social media and it was noted that all comments should be directed to either the Board members or the administration to make sure information is accurate.

Samantha Mannion thanked staff members of the High School for putting together “Senior Day” for the Class of 2021.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 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