

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION

NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

MINUTES – March 20, 2025

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

ABSENT: Samantha Mannion

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Middle School Assistant Principal Steve Groccia, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, and Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 6, 2025 - 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:

- Thanked the AI Focus Group for their hard work. It is expected that a report will be available this June.
- Encouraged anyone sharing anything about the schools or town on social media to be factual and civil.
- He encouraged parents to be engaged in their student’s work.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw

- Spoke of how AI can help teachers and administrators.
- Spoke of an update on curriculum that will be given soon.
- He thanked all the teachers for all their hard work, especially this time of year.

C. Student Representatives’ Reports

Senior Representative Emilia Sedlak spoke of the following:

- Boy Scout Troop 137 will hold a Pasta Dinner on March 28th at Company A Firehouse. Tickets are \$12.
- Senior SEE Project presentations will be held on March 25th.
- New Fairfield Registrar of Voters will be at the high school on Monday, March 24th to help register any students age 18 or older to vote.

- The district wide Band Jam Festival will take place on Tuesday, March 25th at 6:30 p.m.
- Senior Night at the Danbury Ice Area will be held on March 29th.

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- DECA will be selling yard signs for student sports or extracurricular activities.
- Yearbook sales are still open.
- The AFL/CIO Workers Memorial Day Scholarship essay is due by April 1st.
- The Spring Musical “Little Shop of Horrors” will be performed from March 20th to March 23rd.
- SATs will be given to Juniors on Tuesday, March 25th.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this committee met on March 20th. They reviewed the budget and noted that it is in line with last year’s budget. They discussed the bids for the solar project. There should be an update on the consultant’s findings for the BOE/Town shared services concept by May or June.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone spoke of the following meetings of the BOF:

March 11th - 7:30 p.m. - BOF Special meeting to discuss possibility of the town joining a co-op for medical insurance.

March 11th - 8:30p.m. - BOF Special meeting to appoint a new member. Alternate member Peggy Katkocin was appointed to fill a vacancy due to the resignation of Cheryl Reedy.

March 12th - BOF Regular meeting to discuss the BOE Operating budget. They discussed the capital budget for both the BOE and the Town. They discussed the increasing medical claims and the decreasing medical reserve fund. The BOF discussed the possibility of joining a medical co-op.

March 19th - BOF Regular meeting. The BOF discussed the possibility of joining the medical co-op and it was decided not to join at this time. The BOF discussed funding for the medical plan and discussed bond premiums. They welcomed Jessica Sanchez as a new alternate member to the BOF.

2. Parks and Recreation

Kimberly LaTourette noted that this committee met on March 10th and discussed the following:

- A resident would like to donate a bench in memory of his son. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.
- Hand dryers will be installed in the bathrooms at the pavilion.
- The BOF is asking what the Parks and Rec funds are used for. Linda Lull noted that this list needs to include capital expenses.
- Buildings and Grounds Report - Replacement of the docks, trimming the fields and opening of the pavilion at Rebel Turf will be done soon.
- The Parks and Rec Director Linda Lull spoke of moving \$20,000 from the Self supporting 205 account to replace and repair parts of the playground. The Beach House construction project is on schedule. Linda Lull will inquire with Barnyard to see about the possibility of putting a gazebo where the old snack shop was at the Town Beach.
- The following events are upcoming:
Saturday, May 3rd - Tentative Date for Sip and Stroll,
Friday, July 11th - Boat Parade,
Saturday, September 27th - New Fairfield Day,
Friday, October 24th - Trick or Treat,
Sunday, November 23rd - Turkey Run.

VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

A. Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget

Dr. Craw noted that no direction has yet been given by the BOF regarding the budget. He will keep the BOE apprised of any updates.

B. Strategic Plan - Eduplanet Platform

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of the Curriculum Design Tool called Eduplanet that allows for curriculum design for all grade levels. She spoke of the process for implementing the program and ways that administrators, teachers, and families can learn about specific knowledge and skills that students will be learning.

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

Carrie DePuy noted that there will be a meeting with the company for the playground at the Elementary School. It is hopeful that any issues will be fixed over the summer.

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 March 17, 2025, as recommended by the administration. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

B. Summer 2025 NFMS Project

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of funding not to exceed \$50,000 from Cap and Non to initiate the relocation of department offices and restoration of NF Middle School classrooms. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

C. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Transfers

MOTION: Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the requested FY 25 budget transfers as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

D. Acceptance of Donation

1. New Fairfield Rebels Booster Club

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield Rebels Booster Club donation of \$4,000 to purchase a Hack Attack pitching machine for use by the NFHS baseball and softball teams. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

E. Ratification of the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and UE Local 222, CILU/CIPU, CILU #9 Custodians, Maintenance and Groundskeepers- July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2029 - Executive Session

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ed Sbordone reminded everyone that the next BOF will be held in-person on Wednesday, March 26th and the Final Budget mark up will be held on Wednesday, April 2nd. He encouraged everyone to attend.

Dominic Cipollone wished all the Juniors good luck with the SATs.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO CUSTODIAN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:47 p.m. to discuss documents related to Custodian Contract negotiations and to invite Ken Craw and Carrie DePuy into the Executive Session. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:56 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to ratify the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and UE Local 222, CILU/CIPU, CILU #9 Custodians, Maintenance and Groundskeepers- July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2029. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 pm. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos