

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a meeting on Thursday, April 2, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES – April 2, 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 and Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Dr. Rich Sanzo explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public who will get a chance to speak during Public Participation.

Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. March 19, 2020 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Chairman's Report – Peggy Katkocin noted that:

- The BOF met on April 1st via a virtual meeting and discussed the high school building project. The project was sent to the Permanent Building Committee as soon as it passed referendum. The discussion of the BOF on April 1st noted that there are some challenges with the proposed site. Since the referendum, the piece of property at 78 Gillotti Road has become available for sale which may be a preferred site for the high school project. Members of the BOF asked that the BOE endorse this idea. Peggy Katkocin encouraged BOE members to log onto the PBC meeting scheduled for April 7th to get all the facts on this project before making any decisions regarding the site. She further suggested that after that meeting, the BOE virtually meet on April 8 to vote on whether or not to endorse the plan.

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

- Aramark meals are available for pick up at the high school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. to anyone with children under the age of 18.
- Thanked everyone for working so hard to make distance learning so successful.
- Gave a special “shout out” to students in honor of “Autism Awareness Day.”
- Chrome Book delivery will be finished tomorrow, April 3rd. She thanked Karen Fildes and her staff for putting together the Chrome Books. She further thanked the school nurses for helping to facilitate the delivery of these computers.
- The district has donated gloves and masks to Danbury Hospital.
- Asked everyone to be flexible during this crisis and especially with distance learning. She noted that the social and emotional well being and needs of the students and families needs to be the first priority.

Assistant Superintendent's Report - Assistant Superintendent Julie Luby spoke of distance learning and specifically:

- Every student that is in need of a Chrome Book has received one.
- Sent two separate surveys to staff members and parents regarding distance learning to help guide decisions that need to be made by the district. A portion of these surveys asked for feedback about how disruptive the coronavirus crisis has made their home life. It was noted that over half of the respondents claimed that they were struggling at this point. The parent survey also showed that 80% of parents felt that the communication from teachers was very good. The staff survey showed that they are struggling too and are asking for direction and professional development. There was a suggestion of students having a Zoom meeting with teachers that will start next week. There was a brief discussion of plans for report cards and grading during this time.

C. Committee Reports

1. Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee - Stephanie Strazza noted that this subcommittee met on April 2nd and discussed plans for distance learning for Special Education students, including IEPs. Service providers have been in touch with students. PPTs will only be done if necessary. She spoke of requirements from the State and rules that have been relaxed due to the closure of schools. There was a brief discussion of the challenge of distance learning for special needs students.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met virtually on March 25th and April 1st and discussed the following:

- Medical plan as it relates to the upcoming budget.
- Spoke of budget cuts and noted that the BOF was told that the BOE agreed to the required cuts and will report back to them with details in the near future.

- There was a discussion regarding concerns of the State’s ability to fund ECS and other revenues. It was noted that there was an executive order from the Governor that stated that the town will get all the expected ECS and Special Education money for this year and next year.
- The BOF discussed preparing an article for the *Town Tribune* to explain the Governor’s order in regards to adopting a budget. This order requires the BOS to direct the BOF to adopt a budget without a referendum.
- The bonding that was supposed to happen in March was postponed until April 7th. The municipal rates are approximately 2.5%.
- The Medical consultant will be at the April 15th BOF meeting to further discuss the Medical plan.
- The BOF discussed and accepted the 2018-2019 audit.
- The BOF had a discussion of the proposed budget for 2020-2021 and the school building projects.
- The BOF has another virtual meeting on April 8th.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Dr. Sanzo noted that the PBC will hold a special meeting on Tuesday, April 7th and will give an update on the Consolidated School project, including some revised site layouts. The PBC will also be reviewing the site plans for the high school project that includes the site option from the original referendum design, as well as a proposal for a new site option that would incorporate the purchase of 78 Gillotti Road. The architects and owner’s representatives will be meeting throughout the week and will put together a detailed analysis. He spoke of the possible savings with the project if the property at 78 Gillotti Road is used. Dr. Sanzo encouraged the BOE members to join the virtual PBC meeting on April 7th at 7:30 p.m.

VIII. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM

A. 2020-2021 Budget Reduction Scenarios

Dr. Cosentino gave some scenarios for budget cuts in response to the request from the BOF. She noted that since there may be some retirements for this year it would make sense to wait until the next BOE meeting scheduled for April 21st to vote on the cuts. The requested cuts from the BOF are \$337,600 from the Operating budget and \$100,000 from the Capital and Nonrecurring budget.

IX. ACTION ITEM

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report dated March 26, 2020, as recommended by the administration. 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

B. New Course Proposals

1. Algebra I Workshop
2. Geometry Workshop
3. Algebra II Workshop

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the new courses: Algebra I Workshop, Geometry Workshop and Algebra II Workshop. 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. Board of Education Policy

1. Policy 5131.911 – Hazing - Bullying

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education policy listed below as presented: Policy 5131.911 Hazing – Bullying. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

D. New Fairfield Public Schools 2019-2020 Revised Calendar

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the revised 2019-20 school calendar as presented. 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 - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - Members of the Board discussed the following: Members of the BOE thanked everyone involved in setting up the system for distance learning and everyone that has helped the district during this pandemic. Members encouraged residents to stay well, take care of themselves and to check in on their neighbors. BOE Chairman Peggy Katkocin noted that the food pantry is in great need for food and encouraged anyone that is able to donate.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. 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

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos