

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 7:00 pm via zoom.

**MINUTES – December 21, 2023**

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

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, First Selectman Melissa Lindsey, Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Tom Perkins, BOF Chairman Doug Jendras, and BOF member Thora Perkins

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

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. December 7, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus.

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to amend the agenda to move Action Item D to Action Item E and to add Action Item “Feasibility Study” as Action Item D. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:

- Spoke of what he was grateful for this time of year, specifically the students, staff, and families.
- Read a letter that the BOE received a letter from the new BOF Chairman Doug Jendras regarding the 2024-2025 budget. In the letter, Mr. Jendras noted that the BOF would like to work with the BOE in a positive manner regarding the budget. The BOF asked that the BOE smooth the ten-year capital spending plan evenly over ten years and limit the payroll and non-payroll increases to 2% or less.
- Spoke of the need for a permanent location for the bus lot and explained the pros and cons of the possible locations. He spoke of a possible meeting in January to come up with a solution for the bus lot.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow spoke of wonderful performances at the schools including the Middle School Play Little Mermaid Jr., Middle School Band and Chorus and High School Chamber Singers.

C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> is a half day of school.
- The first semester ends on January 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> is the last day to donate to the National Honor Society Food Drive.

Junior Representative Emilia Sedlak noted that:

- The Environmental Club will be hosting a clothing drive.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on December 21<sup>st</sup> and reviewed budget vs. actual spending. There is a slight deficit in Special Education primarily due to vacancies in the BCBA positions and the need to fill these positions with contracted employees. It is hopeful that some of the BCBA positions will be filled soon. The subcommittee also discussed a five-year capital improvement plan. Quotes have been received for the replacement of the track and field.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance

Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on December 13<sup>th</sup> and elected Doug Jendras as the new chairman. Thora Perkins was elected as the new clerk of the BOF. Thora Perkins and Claudia Willard will serve on the Medical Subcommittee, and Thora Perkins, Claudia Willard and Doug Jendras will serve on the Audit Subcommittee. Mark Beninson will serve as the Fire Department liaison and will serve on the School Safety Committee.

Doug Jendras and Thora Perkins will serve as liaison to the Board of Education.

At the December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the BOF adopted their calendar of meetings for 2024 and adopted a new Public Comment policy. They discussed budget guidelines for the 2024-2025 budget. The next regular meeting of the BOF will be Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.

The BOF Medical Subcommittee met on December 19<sup>th</sup> and discussed claims for the year. Current claims are below what was projected. The Medical Subcommittee will meet again on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>.

2. Parks and Recreation

Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Recreation Commission met on December 11<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- Chairman Sean Loughran presented a plan for the P&R Commission to the Planning Commission for the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- The Parks and Rec Commission thanked the Public Works Department for their help with the Light Parade, Tree Lighting and Turkey Run.
- Summer positions will be posted soon. Due to the need for lifeguards, the P&R Commission will reimburse the cost of the lifeguard course to anyone that works as a lifeguard this summer.
- The commission decided to increase boat slip and jet ski fees, and the cost for Summer Camp.
- The commission decided to keep the cost for beach passes the same as last year.
- There was a discussion of the P&R Commission regarding day passes and parking fees for non-residents.

### 3. Calendar Committee

Ed Sbordone noted that the Calendar Committee met on December 20<sup>th</sup>. A draft calendar was given to the BOE members. This will be discussed further under Information Items.

## **VII. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### A. New Fairfield High School Master Schedule Update

High School Principal James D'Amico spoke of surveys and research regarding possible changes to the master schedule. He spoke of feedback that was received and the factors that were taken into consideration by the committee. The recommendation of the committee is that a change should be made for the next school year. Mr. D'Amico gave a timeline of what needs to be done in order to incorporate by next year.

### B. Solar Update

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross spoke of discussions with Greenleaf energy for the addition of solar panels on the new high school and the elementary school addition.

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

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that Mitchell Oil will be coming into the high school on Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> to fix the propane problem for the Culinary Arts and Science Lab classrooms. More information will be given at the next meeting.

### D. Board of Education Policy (Second Reading)

#### 1. Policy 6172.6 - Distance Education

### E. New Fairfield Public Schools 2024-2025 Draft Calendar

Dr. Craw reviewed the draft calendar. He noted that the committee discussed the optimal time to start school in the fall. Three professional development days are spread out throughout the year. This will be on the agenda as an action item for the first regular BOE meeting in January.

## **VIII. ACTION ITEMS**

### A. Request to the Board of Finance for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Surplus Funds

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of a request to the Board of Finance of \$33,327.01 from the FY2022-23 surplus to the BOE Capital and Non-Recurring Fund, pending final audit. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

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

Carrie DePuy noted that these funds are earmarked for intercom systems in the Middle School.

### B. Board of Education Policy

#### 1. Policy 7230.2- Extensions/Renovations or Replacements

**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: 1. Policy 7230.2-Extensions/Renovations or Replacements. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone.

C. Acceptance of Donation

1. Old Timers Athletic Association of Greater Danbury

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the Old Timers Athletic Association of Greater Danbury donation of \$3,500 for new equipment for the New Fairfield High School Athletic Department. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone.

D. Feasibility Study

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board to conduct a feasibility study for New Fairfield Middle School by JCJ Architecture not to exceed \$20,000 to determine the best use of the old high school cafeteria space. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone.

E. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Many members of the BOE gave their opinions regarding the bus lot location.

**XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Members of the BOE wished everyone Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING PARAPROFESSIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:19 p.m. to discuss a paraprofessional request and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Craw into the Executive Session. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:19 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Pamela McNally's request for an extension of an unpaid leave of absence, with a return to work on January 25, 2024. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **OPPOSED:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Kloos