

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, May 1, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – May 1, 2025

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Greg Flanagan (arrived 7:12 pm), Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, and Middle School Teacher Rachel Wilson

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. April 3, 2025 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting with the addition of Information Item D "Policy 6172 - Alternative Education Programs." Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

V. RECOGNITION ~ CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Middle School Science Teacher Rachel Wilson presented the CABE Leadership awards to students Elizabeth Cook and Colin Hood.

High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau presented CABE Leadership awards to students Madison Cipollone & Hudson Schaefer.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Pat Toth asked for an update on the policy which decides the process for how to name fields after certain individuals.

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Noted that the fiscal year 2025-2026 passed at the first referendum and thanked everyone that voted.
- He thanked the principals and administrators for implementing the new cell phone policy in the schools.

- Recommended the book “The Anxious Generation” by Jonathan Haidt which speaks of four “harms” that are causing anxiety in today’s youth. These include social media, sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation and addiction.
- Spoke of a “Cookie Swap” hosted by the High School PTO between New Fairfield High School Culinary Arts students and the New Fairfield Senior Center.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow

- Thanked everyone in the community who supported the budget at referendum.
- Noted that today was “Decision Day” for college acceptances. He congratulated all the Seniors and spoke of the many accomplishments throughout the year.

C. Student Representatives’ Reports

Senior Representative Emilia Sedlak spoke of the following:

- A raffle is currently being held as a fundraiser for the Class of 2027. The drawing will be held on May 9th and the prizes are gift cards to local establishments.
- Tomorrow is the last day to donate to the “Food for All” initiatives.
- Senior Prom will be held on May 17th.
- SEE Projects will begin on May 9th.

Junior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The PTO has organized a Staff Appreciation Luncheon for May 14th.
- The Fine Arts Boosters are holding a clothing drive on Saturday, May 3rd.
- AP exams begin next week.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on April 22nd and discussed the budgeted vs. actual numbers. A few line items are running on a deficit but are expected to be on budget by the end of the year. A new Finance Director was hired and will begin May 1st.

2. Curriculum – Tim Blair noted that this subcommittee met on April 28th and had two presentations. The first was on Mathematics progression and the second was on Summer Reading Programs at each school. There was a suggestion of having the BOE members share reading suggestions.

3. Policy – Samantha Mannion noted that the subcommittee met on April 30th. They discussed the policy for naming fields and memorials and the cell phone/electronic device policy. Policy 6172 (Alternative Education Program) was discussed and moved to the full board for a first reading for tonight’s meeting.

E. Liaison Reports

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

April 22nd - Medical Subcommittee - The claims for March were as expected and didn’t change the projection. The committee reviewed prescription drug and medical claims. They discussed the importance of building and maintaining a reserve in the medical fund and discussed the possibility of adopting a policy that will require a minimum amount in the reserve fund. The subcommittee will recommend to the full Board of Finance an Individual Stop Loss of \$200,000 and the premiums associated with that. The next meeting of the Medical subcommittee will be held on Tuesday, May 20th at 3:30 p.m. in the Annex.

April 23rd - Regular Meeting - The BOF reviewed ongoing updates. The audit has been finalized but not adopted yet. An audit subcommittee has been set to review the audit before bringing it to the full BOF. Town Treasurer Terry Friedman spoke of the need to clarify the Investment Policy to specify that the Investment Policy does not apply to Pension Plan investments, Other Post Employment benefits (OPEB) and Length of Service Award (LOSAP).

April 28th - Special Meeting - The BOF set the Mil Rate at 26.33 for Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicles.

The next regular meeting of the BOF will be on Wednesday, May 28th.

2. Parks and Recreation - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec Commission met on April 21st.

- Hat City will clean the Beach House twice a week for a charge of \$65 each time.
- The cost of demolition for the snack shop is approximately \$5,500 plus extra to add a slab for a possible gazebo in the future. There was a brief discussion of asking Public Works to install this slab and the approximate measurements.
- All of the boat slips have been filled and paid for the 2025 season. There is still one jet ski slip available.
- Summer camp will run from June 16th to July 31st with 180 campers. There will be one field trip per week and beach days on Fridays.
- The “Sip and Stroll” will be held on Saturday, May 3rd. The price per glass is \$30 if purchased ahead of time and \$35 at the day of the event. There was a discussion of ways to make sure that everyone has purchased a glass. Linda Lull noted that some of the businesses had concerns with patrons coming in multiple times.
- The Candlewood Lake Authority Clean Up Day will be held on Saturday, May 17th. Participants will meet at New Fairfield Beach.
- Mike Mallon approached the commission about the possibility of donating a bench in memory of his son, Michael Mallon. He showed pictures of the sample bench and there was a discussion of the exact location.
- New Fairfield Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 27th. There was a discussion about this event and whether it is worth continuing. There are approximately 1500 attendees each year and the cost to Parks and Rec is between \$6,000 and \$10,000. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.
- Saturday, May 3rd - Sip and Stroll; Memorial Field concerts - June 26th, July 10th, July 24th and August 7th; Friday, July 11th - Boat Parade; Saturday, September 27th - New Fairfield Day; Friday, October 24th - Trick or Treat; Sunday, November 23rd - Turkey Run; Saturday, November 29th - Santa’s Workshop.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Strategic Plan Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck gave a presentation regarding the Strategic Plan. She spoke of the Vision of a Learner and compared the plan to Lego building. She spoke of the Curriculum Leadership Committee, Instructional Practices and the Vision of a Learner. She spoke of how data is used to affect curriculum and professional development. Unified Programs were also discussed.

Dr. Woleck spoke of goals for 2025-2026 and thanked all the staff members who have worked on this. Dr. Craw noted that a progress report of goals will be discussed at the next meeting.

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

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted the following:

- Topsoil is being installed at the old Consolidated School site. Paving will be done soon.
- The playground at the Elementary School will be fixed over the summer.
- Demolition of the turf and track will begin on June 16th and is expected to be done by August 1st.
- Work will start soon for the new PPS office area.

C. Board of Education Policy (Second Reading)

1. Policy 5131.911 - Connecticut School Climate Policy

D. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)
1. Policy 6172 - Alternate Education Programs

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 April 28, 2025, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

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

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ed Sbordone asked for an update on the Capital and Nonrecurring projections at a future meeting.

Samantha Mannion asked for an update on the residency policy and results with the enforcement over the last year.

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sue Huwer spoke of concerns with electronic devices and encouraged everyone to read “The Anxious Generation.”

Kimberly LaTourette encouraged parents to read “The Anxious Generation.”

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos