

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 7:00 pm in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT

**MINUTES – January 4, 2024**

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

**ABSENT:** Samantha Mannion

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Incoming Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, First Selectman Melissa Lindsey, 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 14, 2023 - Special Meeting - approved by consensus
  - B. December 21, 2023 - Regular Meeting - approved by consensus
- IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - approved by consensus
- V. **BOARD OF EDUCATION RECOGNITION** - Chairman Dominic Cipollone presented former BOE member Stephanie Strazza with a plaque in recognition of her service to the BOE.
- VI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - Selectman Tom Perkins asked that the BOE agenda also be included on the Town’s website to make it more accessible for residents.
- VII. **BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**
  - A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:
    - Wished everyone a Happy New Year and encouraged the high school seniors to enjoy their time left in high school.
    - Spoke of goals for 2024 which include encouraging everyone to read more in the new year, continuing to make the district one of the top ten in Connecticut, finding an appropriate location for the bus lot and encouraging all the boards to work well together.
  - B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw wished everyone a Happy New Year. He introduced Dr. Kristine Woleck as the new Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and gave a brief description of her background and her role in the district. He spoke of the process for hiring Dr. Woleck and thanked Dominic Cipollone, Kathy Baker, Ed Sbordone and the search committee.

Dr. Woleck thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve the district and for the warm welcome.

C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- The Symphonic Band and Chorus Concert will be held on January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The Program of Studies night for 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be held on January 17<sup>th</sup>.
- The first semester will end on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

D. Committee Reports - None

E. Liaison Reports - None

## VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Reading Update

Dr. Craw spoke of Reading programs and thanked the building principals for bridging the gaps while there was no assistant superintendent. He gave a brief summary of the Reading statistics for the district.

Elementary School Principal Allyson Story spoke of the five critical components of literacy. She spoke of shifts made since the return from the pandemic. She spoke of Literacy Pilots that will best meet the needs of the district. The two programs selected are Great Minds - *Wit and Wisdom* and Open-Up Resources - *Bookworms*.

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

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross noted that the propane gas issue has been addressed and it is able to be used in the kitchen and Culinary Arts classrooms. It is hopeful that the propane for the Science Labs will be up and running in the next couple of weeks. He spoke of punch list items that were done over the winter break for both the high school and MHHS/Consolidated School.

C. Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Craw spoke of the five-year capital improvement plan that was presented at the Business and Operations subcommittee meeting. He spoke of school buildings and grounds, and specifically, the need to replace the two turf fields and issues with the Middle School. Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross spoke of lighting improvements to the turf fields and specific problems with the Middle School. There was a discussion among the Board members about the difference between renovate as new and fixing buildings as needed.

## IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Personnel Report for January 2, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone.

B. New Fairfield Middle School Feasibility Study

Dr. Craw gave specifics on the proposed feasibility study for the Middle School.

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the New Fairfield Middle School Feasibility Study by JCJ Architecture with an expenditure not to exceed \$20,000 as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to amend the previous motion to include cafeteria, library and STEM space. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR OF AMENDMENT:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone. **IN FAVOR OF MOTION AS AMENDED:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone.

C. Board of Education Policy

1. Policy 6172.6 - Distance Education

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policy listed below as presented: Policy 6172.6 - Distance Education. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone.

D. New Fairfield Public Schools 2024-2025 Calendar

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2024-25 school calendar as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone.

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - The bus lot will be discussed at a meeting in the near future.

**XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

The entire Board welcomed Kristine Woleck as the new Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.

Tim Blair spoke of the state mandate for “Right to Read” legislation and the confusion with the waiver process. He noted that there is no data that this program is successful and hoped that reliable data will be available.

Dr. Ken Craw spoke of the “Right to Read” legislation and noted that the district has appealed the waiver denial. The district has a meeting next week to ask for reconsideration of New Fairfield’s program.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos