

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.  
Virtual meeting via Zoom

**MINUTES – March 19, 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, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Christine Baldelli, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco, Selectman Khris Hall and Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Paul Gouveia 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 5, 2020 – Regular meeting - approved by consensus
- B. March 11, 2020 – Special 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 March 18<sup>th</sup> via a virtual meeting. They discussed the budget at length and asked the BOE to come back with reductions of \$337,600 in operations and \$100,000 in Capital and Nonrecurring for a total of \$437,600. An email was sent to the BOE from the Administrators with suggested cuts.

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

- Thanked Rich Sanzo, Karen Fildes and Paul Gouveia for all their hard work with putting the Zoom virtual meetings together.
- March is Board of Education member appreciation month. MHHS Art teacher Emily Mancini and her students made wind chimes for the BOE members that will be given to them once everyone is back together.
- Noted that she has extensive conversations with other Superintendents of Schools in the area and throughout the State and with administrators in the district concerning the response to the Coronavirus.
- Thanked the Aramark staff for serving over 1400 meals in two days. Next week, meals will be available for pick up on Monday and Wednesday. Breakfast and lunch are available for anyone with students in the schools.
- Thanked the administrative team for all their hard work with rolling out distance learning that is aligned with the curriculum in the classrooms. This will begin on March 25<sup>th</sup>. March 23-24 will be planning days.
- CIAC has not cancelled Spring Sports but warned that athletes should not engage in organized team practices or workouts until the social distancing is relaxed. She noted that athletes should not engage in playing with any other team as this may affect their eligibility to play once the seasons resume.
- The Board retreat scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled, but the Board may meet virtually to discuss the budget.
- The Commissioner spoke of the Governor's plan and it is expected that the schools will be closed past the original date of March 31<sup>st</sup>. As of now, the last day of schools is scheduled for June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Superintendent is working with the Commissioner on issues that impact seniors. They are asking the Federal Government for a waiver about testing.
- Encouraged anyone with any questions or concerns can contact the school principals or central office via email.

C. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on March 19<sup>th</sup> and discussed the monthly summary of budget vs. actual. There is more encumbered than prior years but the district is in line with where they need to be. Dr. Sanzo will analyze how the budget will be impacted by the coronavirus and will report back to the full Board of Education. There were some transfers made to the Special Education account.

D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF meeting virtually on March 18<sup>th</sup> and discussed the proposed budget for 2020-2021. The board started with a proposed increase of 4.79% which included an additional \$200,000 for medical. After a lengthy discussion, the BOF decided that they wanted the proposed increase to be under 3%. In order to do that, \$822,000 must be cut from the proposed budget. There is an estimated surplus from the current year's budget of approximately \$400,000. The BOF decided to take \$400,000 off of Capital and Nonrecurring and to split it as \$100,000 for the BOE and \$300,000

for the Town. The remaining \$422,000 was split on an 80/20 basis of \$337,600 (BOE) and \$84,400 (Town). These cuts will be discussed further at the April 1 BOF meeting.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec Committee met on March 9 at the New Fairfield Town Beach. The arms to the boat docks have been repaired and the pavilion at Rebel Field is scheduled to open on March 21<sup>st</sup> but may be delayed. Candlewood Clean Up and the Sip and Stroll are both scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from the New Fairfield Lions Club came to the meeting and spoke of their offer to possibly rebuild the Snack Shack at the Town Beach. This will be discussed further at the BOS, Planning Commission and Economic Development Commission respective meetings.

3. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on April 6 at 7:30 p.m. It is unsure if this will come to fruition.

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

### A. New Course Proposals (*Second Reading*)

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

### B. Board of Education Policies (*Second Reading*)

1. Policy 5131.911 – Hazing - Bullying

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

Dr. Sanzo noted that the work on the building project is continuing in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Permanent Building Committee met remotely on March 18<sup>th</sup> and made a short list of Construction Management firms which included Gilbane, O&G, Downs and Fusco. These firms have been issued an RFP (Request for Proposal) and will expect to interview in mid April. The PBC will meet on March 24<sup>th</sup> and will look at site plans.

## VIII. ACTION ITEM

### A. Personnel Report

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report dated March 12, 2020, as recommended by the administration. Samantha Mannion 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. Acceptance of Donation

1. New Fairfield Community Thrift Shop, Inc.

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the donation of \$1,000 to be used for the fifth grade field trip for students who are unable to attend due to financial reasons. 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

2. Old Timer's Athletic Association of Greater Danbury

**MOTION:** Rick Regan made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the donation of \$2,500 to purchase a shed/storage container for the New Fairfield High School tennis team. 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

C. Continuation of Health Benefits

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval to authorize the Superintendent to offer continuation of health insurance benefits for teachers who notify the intent to resign by Thursday, April 9, 2020. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

D. 2020-2021 Budget

Dr. Pat Cosentino noted that the Board of Finance held a virtual meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup> and voted to ask the BOE to come back with budget cuts for the 2020-2021 budget of \$337,600 in operating expenses and \$100,000 in capital expenses. There was a lengthy discussion of potential cuts and the best ways to achieve these numbers with the least impact to student programs and education. Specific topics discussed included the roof at the Middle School, instructional coaches and the Special Friends program. It was noted that the BOF does not have line item control over the BOE budget and can only give the bottom line number. The BOE will discuss this further a meeting in the near future.

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion that the BOE meet the cut imposed by the Board of Finance of \$337,600 from the operating budget and \$100,000 from Capital and Nonrecurring. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - Stephanie Marlow thanked the BOE for moving so quickly in getting the at home packets to the students so quickly and making sure that everyone is safe.

**X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** - Members of the Board discussed the following:  
Rick Regan thanked everyone that set up the virtual meeting.  
Kim LaTourette thanked Emily Mancini for making the wind chimes in honor of BOE member appreciation month.  
Ed Sbordone wished everyone good health.  
Samantha Mannion encouraged everyone to stay home.  
Dominic Cipollone thanked Dr. Cosentino and administrators for setting up distance learning and reminded everyone to be patient with the situation.

Greg Flanagan thanked Aramark for getting meals together and for the administrators for their hard work. He encouraged everyone to have confidence in the administration regarding cuts to the budget.

Kathy Baker encouraged everyone to stay home.

Stephanie Strazza thanked administrators for their response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

She further thanked parents for working hard while teaching their children.

Peggy Katkocin noted that advances in medicine are usually made during the worst of times and encouraged everyone to stay home and stay healthy.

## **XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEGOTIATIONS**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:11 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining negotiations and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo into the Executive Session. 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

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:01p.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

## **ADDITION TO THE AGENDA**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to add agenda item XI.A “Memorandum of Agreement with District Bargaining Units.” Samantha Mannion seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

## **XI.A. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - DISTRICT BARGAINING UNITS**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion that the BOE gives Dr. Cosentino the authority to negotiate and sign MOAs with District Bargaining Units relating to the COVID-19 closure of schools. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 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