

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a meeting on Thursday, February 6, 2020,
at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – February 6, 2020

PRESENT: Peggy Katkocin (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Stephanie Strazza and Ed Sbordone

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, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, New Fairfield High School Math Department Chair Cathy Hall and Math Teachers/Coaches Nicole Briggs, Chris Eide, Tracy Kielkucki, Kristy Labet, Ryan Ragan and Robin Welton

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. January 21, 2020 - Regular Meeting - The minutes were approved by consensus.
- B. January 28, 2020 - Special Meeting - Approved with the correction of the voting members that were present.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - Approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mike Scherer noted that he contacted the Superintendent of Schools regarding an incident with his daughter at the preschool program in Consolidated School and spoke of his disappointment that this matter was delegated to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. Scherer further spoke of a policy change that no longer allows MHHS students to take a bus from Meeting House Hill School to Consolidated School at the end of the day unless they are a child of a Consolidated School staff member. There was a discussion among the members of the Board of Education, and the respective principals from Consolidated School and Meeting House Hill School regarding this policy change. It was decided that this issue will be discussed further at a private meeting.

Amanda Lombard asked for clarification of the four day rotation for special classes at Consolidated School and it was noted that there will still be special every day but it will rotate among gym, art, library and physical education. She also spoke of the new policy regarding the students that were taking the bus from Meeting House Hill School to Consolidated School at the end of the day.

Laura Consiglio noted that she is happy that the building project referendum passed but encouraged the Board members to make sure that the budget concentrates on academics. She especially spoke of the need to concentrate on Math instruction. She spoke of the budget workshops and specifically the discussion regarding Special Education students.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report – None

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

- The Middle School and High School will be having assemblies about vaping on Monday, March 16th. The New Fairfield Prevention Council will also be hosting workshops regarding vaping in April and October.
- A BOE member will be needed to attend the Paraprofessional union negotiations.
- Thanked BOE members Peggy Katkocin, Kim LaTourette, Ed Sbordone and Samantha Mannion as well as First Selectman Pat Del Monaco and BOF Chairman Wes Marsh for participating in the Leadership Cadre.
- Reminded parents to keep sick children home from school.
- Congratulated Senior Representative Sophia Liguori on her acceptance to Clemson University.
- Welcomed Superintendent of Schools for Region 12 Megan Bennett and the former Assistant and Associate Principal of Bethel High School Frank Forester.

C. Student Representatives' Report

Junior Representative Nicholas Thiel-Hudson noted that:

- The Girls Basketball Team will have Senior Night on February 7th.

Senior Representative Sophia Liguori noted that:

- Thanked everyone that participated in the talent show.
- Acknowledged that this week is National School Guidance Counselor week.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the Math Self Study that will be presented tonight. The subcommittee met and discussed trends in math scores, Smarter Balance tests, specialization for math in 4th and 5th grades and the Summer Math Program that will be held throughout the town. They also discussed how to identify gifted students. He spoke of the importance of good attendance.
2. Policy -There are eight policies on the agenda for first reading.
3. Special Education - Stephanie Strazza noted that the committee met on February 6th and spoke of the transition program for special education students and the possibility for giving special education students ages 18-21 social

opportunities. They also discussed opportunities for younger special education students to socialize in the classroom.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Permanent Building Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on January 28th. Dr. Sanzo will give an update later in the meeting.
2. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this committee met on February 5th and discussed the role of the School Security and Safety Committee with the design for the new school buildings. They also discussed First Responder training for Autism Awareness and an update to Say Something and School Security and Safety staffing issues.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Shepaug Agriscience Program

Superintendent of Schools for Region 12 Megan Bennett spoke of the Agriscience program in Shepaug and gave a brief presentation and showed pictures of the program. She noted that this program is open to New Fairfield students and introduced freshman Emma Perun from New Fairfield.

Emma Perun spoke of her experience with the Agriscience program and explained the application process.

Ms. Bennett thanked the district for allowing New Fairfield students to attend Shepaug.

B. Math Self Study

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of the Math Self Study throughout the entire district. The following Math teachers and coaches spoke of their role in this self study and the expectations and recommendations for this study.

- Chris Eide spoke of curriculum resources.
- Ryan Ragan spoke of assessments and specifically STAR vs SBAC.
- Nicole Briggs reviewed assessments and SAT prep classes.
- Cathy Hall spoke of the survey of parents, teachers and students and compared programs with other districts in the DRG.
- Robin Welton and Kristy Labet looked at the delivery of the instruction and went into every Math classroom from K-12. They noted that engagement was higher in the younger grades and that there is inconsistency among each school. They composed a rubric and gave suggestions for instructions throughout the entire district.

Members of the Board of Education thanked everyone involved in this process.

C. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Policy 0200 - Goals for the Public Schools
2. Policy 3516 - Safety
3. Policy 3517 - Security of Buildings and Grounds
4. Policy 411.3/4211.3 - Minority Recruitment Plan
5. Policy 4118.112/4218.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the workplace

6. Policy 5112 - Ages of Attendance
7. Policy 5118.1 - Homeless students
8. Policy 7100 - Planning

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

Dr. Sanzo noted that the Permanent Building Committee will meet next week and will discuss hiring of a construction manager. They are working with the staff to have visits at the elementary schools. Additionally, they are having meetings with the architects and inviting high school staff. He noted that new curriculum initiatives are focused at these meetings.

VII. ACTION ITEM

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to approve the Personnel Report dated January 30, 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. 2020-2021 Budget

Chairman Peggy Katkocin spoke of the process for the budget and noted that the goal is to put forth a budget that addresses all the academic needs for the district while also recognizing the need to come up with a figure that the taxpayers can afford. She encouraged everyone to keep the building project in mind when considering the operating budget. She noted that this budget, once passed by the BOE may be cut further by the Board of Finance.

There was a lengthy discussion of potential positions, including a Physical Education teacher at Consolidated School, an Administrative Assistant at Central Office and a Director of Security. There was a discussion of items that can be subtracted from the budget, including vaping sensors (\$6,000), marketing (\$5,000), and pension contribution (\$1,418).

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2020-2021 Board of Education budget in the amount of \$44,364,730 for an increase of 3.3%. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to amend the budget motion to decrease the following from the budget: vaping sensors (\$6,000), marketing (\$5,000) and pension contribution (\$1,418). Peggy Katkocin seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR OF AMENDEMENT:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to amend the budget motion to delete the Director of Security for the 2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$70,000 from the budget. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR OF AMENDEMENT:** Kathy Baker, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette Samantha Mannion and Rick Regan, **OPPOSED TO AMENDMENT:** Dominic Cipollone, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

AMENDMENT TO MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to amend the budget motion to add a 1.0 Physical Education teacher for Consolidated School in the amount of \$70,651.00. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR OF AMENDEMENT:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

VOTE ON BUDGET MOTION AFTER AMENDEMENTS: The budget after all amendments is \$44,352,963 representing an increase of 3.27%. (without the debt service of \$600,000 the percentage increase is 1.87%). **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 asked about an issue with the computers at Consolidated School library. Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes noted that it is an infrastructure issue and will be fixed soon.

Stephanie Marlow also spoke of the aforementioned conversation regarding having physical education twice a week at Consolidated School and noted that this would cause some physical education classes to meet in the Multi-Purpose Room. She spoke of her concerns regarding safety in the Multi-Purpose Room due to water potentially on the floor due to a possible leaky roof. Ed Sbordone suggested that parents come to the budget presentation on Saturday, March 7th and bring this up during Public Participation.

Amy Tozzo spoke of the Math Self Study and specifically the fact that the district is acknowledging that there is a problem with Math scores. She spoke of curriculum and suggested more professional development.

Amanda Lombard spoke of Stepping Stones, Mindfulness and other creative ways to make sure that students get plenty of have movement throughout the day.

Laura Consiglio spoke in support of the budget.

X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS - Members of the Board discussed the following:

- Stephanie Strazza thanked everyone involved with the Math presentation and appreciated the budget discussion.
- Kathy Baker thanked public for the helpful comments regarding the budget.
- Greg Flanagan thanked everyone in the Math program for their hard work. He further thanked the community for their outpouring of support for a close family friend that lost their home in a fire this week.
- Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for the Math presentation and the budget discussion.

- Rick Regan suggested that Board members get involved with the budget process sooner in the year.
- Kimberly LaTourette thanked everyone that participated in the Leadership Cadre. She thanked the parents that attended the Special Education Ad Hoc meeting and all the parents that spoke at tonight's meeting. She further thanked MHHS Principal James Mandracchia and Consolidated Principal Rob Spino for keeping safety in mind when deciding on the bus policy. She also thanked Emma Perun for her presentation of the Shepaug Agriculture School.
- Ed Sbordone noted that the budget process is not completed. He encouraged everyone to attend the presentation on March 7th.
- Samantha Mannion suggested that next year, the BOE have a few workshops without the other boards to go over the budget.
- Peggy Katkocin noted that Leadership Cadre was very successful. She encouraged Board members to keep all taxpayers in mind when deciding on the budget.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE SUPERINTENDENT'S MID-YEAR EVALUATION

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:58 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation. 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

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 10:29 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

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 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