

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Thursday, April 30, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
Virtual meeting via Zoom

MINUTES – April 30, 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, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, 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, Consolidated School Principal Rob Spino, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, Athletic Director Mary Stolle, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca and Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel

I. CALL TO ORDER: Network Administrator Paul Gouveia explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public.

Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

High School Principal James D’Amico spoke of a survey that was given to the high school students regarding distance learning. He noted that there have been approximately 300 responses so far and encouraged students that have not yet responded to do so. He further encouraged high school seniors to send a picture of themselves with t-shirts or notes announcing their future plans that will be publicized on June 1st. These photos should be sent to yearbookseniors@newfairfieldschools.org

Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes noted that Kindergarten registration will be launched online tomorrow, May 1st.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby noted that there will be a second survey sent out to parents in the near future to get feedback on distance learning and the overall well being of families in the district.

Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz noted that PPT meetings have been postponed unless there is a specific reason to hold the meeting. Case managers will be communicating with families in the next couple of weeks. She further noted that ESY (Extended School Year) is being planned as if they will be back in the building for July and August. This will be adjusted if necessary. She encouraged anyone with questions to reach out to her.

Consolidated School Kindergarten teacher Michelle Brown spoke of potential cuts to the budget and asked that they reconsider cutting a .5 custodian and to possibly consider adding another custodian to Consolidated School at this time. She further spoke of the many advantages of staff development and asked that this not be cut.

Stephanie Strazza read a letter from a 5th grade student Emma Simanelo at Meeting House Hill School in support of not cutting the enrichment program.

IV. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM

A. 2020-2021 Budget

BOE Chairman Peggy Katkocin spoke of the BOF meeting that was held on April 29th that requested that the BOE show line item cuts to the 2020-2021 budget in the amount of \$812,600. This is broken down in two rounds of \$437,600 and \$375,000 respectively. She spoke of the possible extra help and intervention that students may need when school resumes and noted that she would definitely not want to see any staff members cut from the budget.

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo noted that the BOF has asked to see two separate lists of cuts. The first would be Round 1 in the amount of \$437,600 and then Round 2 in the amount of \$375,000. They also asked for details about possible surpluses due to the closing of schools and details of any anticipated additional expenses that may arrive once the students return to school. He spoke of a specific scenario that further reduces the capital budget and restores the proposed cut of the district enrichment gifted teacher as well as the Middle School instructional coach/gifted teacher in addition to eliminating the nonresident tuition that was proposed. Dr. Sanzo broke these reductions into Round 1 and Round 2 lists. It was noted that the BOF does not have line item control over the BOE budget.

There was a discussion among the BOE members about their concerns about the proposed cuts. Dominic Cipollone spoke of his concerns regarding the cutting of a custodian and the Special Friends program. Stephanie Strazza noted that no programs should be cut that directly affect students. There was a suggestion of exhausting the Capital and Nonrecurring account which would net \$265,000. Greg Flanagan spoke of the possibility of families moving in from New York City and the importance of having a great school system. Peggy

Katkocin suggested cutting the proposed positions of Director of Security and the Secretary for Central Office.

There was a discussion about whether or not the board should enact an annual charge of \$1,000 per child for children of out of district staff members that bring their children to school. It was suggested that free tuition is a good perk that would enable the district to hire the best teachers.

Peggy Katkocin spoke of tax relief programs that are available to taxpayers in light of the COVID 19 pandemic.

There was a discussion of moving the cuts from Capital and Nonrecurring to the first round of cuts that is presented to the BOF.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to approve the release of the administration's two proposed budget reduction scenarios of \$365,000 in Capital and Nonrecurring and \$447,600 in operating items to be further discussed by the BOE in future meetings. 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

Rich Sanzo spoke of the request from the BOF for a list of realized savings due to the close of school as well as unanticipated expenses incurred from distance learning. Pressures to the budget due to distance learning include not receiving Pay to Play revenue and ELC tuition. There are some savings for not paying 100% of the transportation contract and not paying substitute teachers. Dr. Sanzo spoke of the policy that allows the BOF to allocate 50% of surplus money in a non lapsing account and asked the BOE to ask the BOF to expand the definition of the non lapsing account to include unanticipated COVID 19 and special education expenses.

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to have the BOE request the BOF to expand the definition of the BOE non lapsing account to include unanticipated COVID 19 and Special Education expenses. Rick Regan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:10 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo in the Executive Session. 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

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 6:29 p.m. Kim 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

MOTION: Kim LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to schedule the last day for NFEA members for Monday, June 15, 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

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. 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

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos