

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**MINUTES – May 6, 2021**

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

**ABSENT:** Kathy Baker

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Pat Cosentino, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Dr. Richard Sanzo, Director of Instructional Technology and Communications Dr. Karen Fildes, Pupil Personnel Director Katherine Matz, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo, Meeting House Hill School Principal James Mandracchia, Meeting House Hill School Assistant Principal Allyson Story, Consolidated School Assistant Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca and Special Education Supervisor Melissa Busnel.

**MEMBERS OF THE PERMANENT BUILDING COMMITTEE:**

George Martignetti (Chairman), Paul Boniello, Ann Brown, Michael Del Monaco, Ed Sbordone (Alternate), Anthony Yorio (Alternate).

Director of Business and Operations Dr. Rich Sanzo explained the procedure for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone including members of the public.

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Peggy Katkocin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. April 20, 2021 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus**

**V. NEW FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT**

Christine O’Hare from JCJ Architecture gave a brief overview of the project for the New Fairfield High School project and discussed the documents that will be presented to the State during the week of May 10<sup>th</sup>. She noted that this project consists of three stages which include Phase I (Hazardous Materials Abatement, Demolition and Site and Building Construction, Phase II (Fixtures, Furniture and Equipment and Data) and Phase III (Technology Equipment). She noted that Zoning approval from the Town was received in New Fairfield. The plan is to go to bid the first week of June.

Jeff Elliott from JCJ Architecture gave an overview of the new high school footprint.

**PBC MOTION:** George Marginetti made a motion to certify that these final plans and project manuals for the new High School Project as prepared for bidding and dated March 1, 2021, and the professional cost estimate, completed in accordance with Level 3 of ASTM International Standard

E1557, Standard Classification of Building Elements and Related Sitework-UNIFORMAT II for this project, dated April 30, 2021, have been reviewed and approved for this project on May 6, 2021. Paul Boniello seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Paul Boniello, Ann Brown, Michael Del Monaco and George Marginetti

**BOE MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to certify that these final plans and project manuals for the new High School Project as prepared for bidding and dated March 1, 2021, and the professional cost estimate, completed in accordance with Level 3 of ASTM International Standard E1557, Standard Classification of Building Elements and Related Sitework-UNIFORMAT II for this project, dated April 30, 2021, have been reviewed and approved for this project on May 6, 2021. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

**PBC MOTION:** George Marginetti made a motion to recommend to the full Board to certify that these final plans and project manuals for the Pool Locker Room Project as prepared for bidding and dated March 1, 2021, and the professional cost estimate, completed in accordance with Level 3 of ASTM International Standard E1557, Standard Classification of Building Elements and Related Sitework-UNIFORMAT II for this project, dated April 30, 2021, have been reviewed and approved for this project on May 6, 2021. Michael Del Monaco seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Paul Boniello, Ann Brown, Michael Del Monaco and George Marginetti

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to certify that these final plans and project manuals for the Pool Locker Room Project as prepared for bidding and dated March 1, 2021, and the professional cost estimate, completed in accordance with Level 3 of ASTM International Standard E1557, Standard Classification of Building Elements and Related Sitework-UNIFORMAT II for this project, dated April 30, 2021, have been reviewed and approved for this project on May 6, 2021. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

The PBC adjourned their portion of their meeting at 7:34 p.m.

## **VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SCHOOL SECURITY**

Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:35 p.m. for the purpose of discussing School Security and to invite the following people into the Executive Session: Dr. Pat Cosentino, Dr. Rich Sanzo, Peter Bachman (JCJ), Jeff Elliott (JCJ), Christine O'Hare (JCJ), George Marginetti (PBC) and Anthony Yorio (PBC). Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Peggy Katkocin made a motion to come back from to Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

## **VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION- None**

## **VIII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Chairman's Report - Peggy Katkocin spoke of the following:**

- Wished all staff a happy Educator's week.
- Wished Happy Nurses Day to all nurses.
- Spoke of the BOF meeting of May 5<sup>th</sup>. The final markup was postponed until May 12<sup>th</sup>. Public input at the May 5<sup>th</sup> BOF meeting was overwhelmingly against any increases to the budget for 2021-2022. Chairman Katkocin encouraged members of the BOE and public that are in favor or adding to the budget to speak up at BOF meetings. She spoke of the process for the referendum. There was a brief discussion of the proposed budget and how much is due to the school project.

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

- Thanked everyone who delivered signs for Staff Appreciation Week.
- Thanked Nurses during Nurses Appreciation Week.
- Information about Summer Programs will come out in May.
- The BOE will discuss the Superintendent Evaluation in the near future.
- Thanked everyone involved with putting on the Junior Prom on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Senior Prom will be held on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Thanked the PTOs for all they did for Staff Appreciation week.
- Encouraged parents to let their children ride the bus to avoid traffic problems.
- She is currently working with Town of New Fairfield Health Director Tim Simpkins and the Town of New Fairfield to establish a Vaccine Clinic for students over 12 years old. A letter was sent to parents to register on VAMS. Tentative dates for this would be June 3<sup>rd</sup> and June 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **C. Student Representatives' Report - None**

### **D. Committee Reports**

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that there were no action items at the last meeting but the following was discussed as information items:

- There was an update on the Fine Arts program, including Music curriculum and Visual Arts.
- There was a discussion of the SBAC and Next Gen exams. These exams will be in person.
- The AP exams will be held in person on school issued devices.
- There was an update on summer school.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee held a regular meeting and moved forward many policies for First Reading. Tuition for children of out of district staff members was discussed.

### **E. Liaison Reports**

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the increase for the current proposed budget is 3.66%. Out of this, 2.81% is for debt service and .85% is the remaining budget. He noted that the original bonding of the school projects was \$25 million for 25 years with an assumed interest rate of approximately 3.5%. Instead, the Town was able to bond for 20 years with an interest rate of 1.63%. The BOF received feedback at their May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting encouraging them to further reduce the budget for 2021-2022. He encourages anyone who wants to comment on the budget to attend their May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee - Kimberly LaTourette noted that Parks and Rec committee met on April 26<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- Welcomed Terra Volpe as a new member. There are currently two vacancies on the commission.

- Day Camp will be held from June 28<sup>th</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>. It will be open for Grades K-6 and held outside except for inclement weather. There are 100 spots per week.
  - Day Camp will be held at the Town Beach on Friday mornings. The Town Beach will be open to the public from 1:30 to 6:00 p.m.
  - Two new Waterfront Directors will be at the Town Beach this summer. There is currently a shortage of lifeguards so it is possible that only the South Beach will be open.
  - There will be some outdoor movies and concerts this summer.
  - The Sip and Stroll will be held Columbus Day Weekend.
3. School Security and Safety Committee - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup> and was held mostly in Executive Session. There was a discussion of concerns about the Speak Up Program.

## IX. INFORMATION ITEMS

### A. Speak Up

High School Principal James D'Amico explained the role of the Speak Up Program at the high school. This program was introduced in February and will be reintroduced next week during the Rebel Block. Middle School Assistant Principal Cheryl Milo spoke of how this program works at the Middle School. She noted that this is promoted through the Homeroom teachers and information was sent to Middle School parents. Dr. Cosentino spoke of Speak Up and encouraged parents to call 911 if they have concerns about either their own child or another. She spoke of the possibility of incorporating information into the curriculum about how and when to call 911.

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

Dr. Rich Sanzo noted that bids on the CELA project are due on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Rick Regan asked if there are other major votes that need to be done for either project. Dr. Sanzo noted that each Phase will need to be approved. He further spoke of the building specs and the possibility of combining the bell schedule for the Middle School and High School if necessary.

### C. BOE Policy 5118.11 Tuition for Students of Staff Members

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to amend Agenda Item IX. C. to reflect that it is on the agenda as a first reading. Peggy Katkocin seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Samantha Mannion spoke of the newest version of the policy for tuition for students of staff members and noted that it would only affect new hires. She asked that everyone review this policy before the next BOE meeting.

## X. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

### A. 2021-2022 Budget

Dr. Cosentino noted that she has a meeting with the State on Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup> regarding the American Relief Act. It is hopeful that information on how much grant money will be received for the district and if there are any restrictions for these funds will be announced.

### B. Remote Learning 2021-2022 School Year

Julie Luby gave the statistics for remote learners in the district. The Kindergartens and First Graders have settled into their remote classes. The high school is past the date for students to make changes from remote to in-person or vice versa.

There was a discussion of adjustments that will need to be made for the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Cosentino noted that the State Department of Education has stated that remote learning in an opt out form will not be required for the 2021-2022 school year.

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board that consistent with the Interim Guidance for Remote Learning for the 2021-2022 School Year as issued by the Connecticut State Department of Education, effective with the commencement of the 2021-2022 school year, the New Fairfield Board of Education (“Board”) shall discontinue offering remote learning opportunities for students associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The District shall no longer provide students with voluntary access to remote learning at the unilateral request of students/families. The Board authorizes its Superintendent of Schools to take such actions necessary to implement this change. The Board further authorizes the Superintendent to take any emergent steps necessary relating to remote student programming associated with the COVID-19 pandemic or other emergencies as may be needed, subject to the Board's subsequent approval. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion.

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

## **XI. ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Personnel Report**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for April 29, 2021, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

### **B. Board of Education Policies**

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policies and Bylaws listed below as presented. Peggy Katkocin seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Samantha Mannion explained the changes to Policy 6146.

1. Policy 6146 - Graduation Requirements
2. Bylaw 9324 - Advance Delivery of Meeting Materials
3. Bylaw 9325 - Meeting Conduct
4. Bylaw 9325.2 - Order of Business
5. Bylaw 9325.4 - Voting Recording
6. Bylaw 9325.5 - Request for Information by Board Members
7. Bylaw 9326 - Record of Meeting/Minutes
8. Bylaw 9327.1 - Board Member Use of Internet Social Networks
9. Bylaw 9330 - Board/School System Records
10. Bylaw 9350 – Hearings
11. Bylaw 9360 - School Board Legislative Programs
12. Bylaw 9400 - Monitoring Products and Processes

### **C. New Fairfield Public Schools 2021-2022 Revised Calendar**

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2021-22 revised school calendar as presented to add two in-service days to the NFEA work year to be scheduled prior to the first day of the 2021-2022 school year. Dominic Cipollone seconded the

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

## **XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

High School Principal James D'Amico noted that New Fairfield High School Players will present the Musical *Working* virtually on May 21-23. Information will be sent out to the entire district.

## **XIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Rick Regan asked about having a discussion about the possibility of restarting the committee regarding the start times at the Middle School and High School.

## **XIV. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Kimberly LaTourette thanked everyone involved in making Teacher Appreciation and Nurses Appreciation weeks special.

Ed Sbordone encouraged everyone to give their opinions about to the BOF regarding the budget and to vote at the budget referendum.

Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for appreciation for Staff Appreciation Week. He reminded everyone that this is Asian American and Pacific Islander month.

Greg Flanagan thanked everyone for making Teacher Appreciation week special.

Stephanie Strazza thanked everyone for Teacher Appreciation week, and all noted that there were many activities held recently that were very enjoyable.

Peggy Katkocin thanked all the BOE members that are also educators.

## **XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING SCHOOL SAFETY CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:26 p.m. for the purpose of discussing School Security and to invite Dr. Pat Cosentino, Dr. Rich Sanzo, Dr. Karen Fildes, James D'Amico and Cheryl Milo into the Executive Session. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** 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 9:48 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

## **XVI. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:49 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos