

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

MINUTES – June 17, 2021

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

ABSENT: Rick Regan

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, 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, Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca, First Selectman Pat Del Monaco and Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh

Director of Business and Operations 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. June 3, 2021 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. MEETING HOUSE HILL SCHOOL MAJOR MINORS PRESENTATION

Meeting House Hill School Major Minors students gave a virtual music presentation.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Board of Finance Chairman Wes Marsh spoke of the recent budget referendum and noted that it passed by only a small percentage. He spoke of the low voter turnout and ways to continue to educate taxpayers about the budget process.

Board member Kathy Baker suggested that more advertising be done for budget referendums in the future.

Anne Marie Valerioti spoke against mask mandates and urged the Board to consider not requiring masks for students in the fall.

Jim Mellett asked the Board to consider forming a committee to consider the possibility of having school year-round.

Amy Johnson spoke against the mask mandate and asked the Board to reconsider this requirement.

Terra Volpe thanked the BOE for all their hard work and guidance during the pandemic.

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

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

- The budget passed at referendum on June 5th.
- Congratulated the Girl's Lacrosse Team on winning the State Championships.

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

- Congratulated the Girl's Lacrosse Team on winning the State Championships.
- Congratulated the Boy's Lacrosse on winning the SWC championships.
- Congratulated High School Track athletes.
- Congratulated the High School Seniors on their graduation that will be held tomorrow, June 18th. This ceremony will be live streamed.
- Thanked all staff members who helped out with graduations and step-up ceremonies for transitioning grades.
- Town meetings will go back to in-person meetings effective July 1st. Dr Cosentino spoke of the increase in participation since meetings have been virtual and asked the Board to consider having the first meeting of the month in person and the second meeting of the month via Zoom.
- CABE meeting docs will change to Board Docs in the near future. Board members will receive an email regarding this.
- Thanked everyone for a successful school year and wished everyone a happy and healthy summer.

C. Student Representatives' Report - None

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on June 17th and discussed the following:

- Monthly summary of budget vs. actual expenditures report as of May 31st. This report was in line with prior years.
- The quarterly summary of budget vs. projected report as of May 31st projects that the budget will be in a flat at the end of the year. It is expected that there will be a surplus in regular education but a deficit in special education.
- The Capital Improvement Plan was presented for years 2020-2030. This will be presented to the full board in the near future. This plan includes a feasibility study for putting air conditioning in both the Middle School and Meeting House Hill School.

2. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone noted that his subcommittee met and discussed:

- A special meeting was held to discuss approval of textbooks in the high school. Law textbooks and Math textbooks were discussed. There was a brief discussion of the 80 minutes Math block in the high school and the suggestion of having college students tutor high school students hired by the district so that families will not have to pay for tutors.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on June 16th. The main topic of the meeting was the budget and how the school building projects will affect future budgets.

2. Parks and Recreation Committee - The June 14th meeting was cancelled. It is hopeful that it will be rescheduled in the near future.
3. School Security and Safety Committee - The June 15th meeting was cancelled. It is hopeful that it will be rescheduled in the near future.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. What We Learned during the Pandemic

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby along with the principals from all four schools presented a video on what was learned from the pandemic at their respective schools.

B. Summer School Update

Director of Curriculum Alyce Misuraca spoke of a Summer Program that is available for students entering 1st through 8th grades. This program is fully funded through Federal funds. The main goals of this program are to reengage remote learners, promote literacy experiences and offering enrichment opportunities. The two sessions of this program will be held in July and August. There are approximately 85-90 students participating in this program.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby spoke of the high school summer school program. This program is designed to help students recover courses that may have been missed during the pandemic. The only cost to students for this program is a deposit that will be refunded as long as they participate in the program. This is an on-line learning model except for the final exam.

C. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Plan

Dr. Cosentino spoke of a requirement that the district must send to the State a plan outlining the return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. The draft is due to the State by June 23rd. The State will then give feedback to the district and the final plan will be due in August. Julie Luby gave a brief description of the draft plan.

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

Dr. Sanzo announced that the High School building project has gone out to bid. A walk through was held with the Construction Manager and all of the contractors that are expected to bid on the project. The bids are expected to be returned by July 8th.

The PBC has awarded all of the early packages for construction on the CELA project. The official date for start of construction is June 28th. Meetings and webinars for families will be scheduled soon to share safety protocols regarding the construction project.

The Zoning Commission will hold a special meeting on Monday, June 21st to discuss the special permit regarding the bus lot at Consolidated School. Board of Education members are encouraged to attend.

IX. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

A. ARP ESSER Grant

Dr. Cosentino spoke of possible positions that may be added to district and funded through ESSER grant money. Other uses for the grant money include the purchase of Chromebooks and supplies for remote learning possibly instead of snow days. Members of the Board gave their consensus for Dr. Cosentino to begin to recruit for these positions.

X. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for June 10, 2021, as recommended by the administration. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, 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. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

1. Policy 4212.42 - Drug and Alcohol Testing for Bus Drivers
2. Policy 5141.4 - Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect or Sexual Assault
3. Policy 6159 - Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program
4. Policy 6171 - Special Education

C. Board of Education Policies

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 4118.112/4218.112, Policy 5145.5, and Bylaw 9160. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full board the approval of the following policies and one bylaw. Stephanie Strazza seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

1. Policy 4118.112/4218.112 - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
2. Policy 5145.5 - Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment
3. Bylaw 9160 - Student Representation on Board of Education

D. New Course Proposal

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to suspend the rules referring to the approval of a new course ECE Introduction to Allied Health Professions. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

It was noted that the reason for the suspension of the rules is so that the textbooks can be ordered for the 2021-2022 school year.

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the course ECE Introduction to Allied Health Professions to be offered in the spring of the 2021-2022 school year at New Fairfield High School. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

E. New Textbook Adoption

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the adoption of the new textbooks *Better Business*, *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law 2021*, *EnVision Mathematics Common Core and Bridges in Mathematics*, *The Learning Center*. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

F. Non-Union Salaries and Benefits - Executive Session

G. Superintendent's Evaluation and Contract - Executive Session

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Terra Volpe spoke in reference to the earlier public comment regarding unmasking the students for next school year and noted that it may not be up to the BOE but instead the purview of the Connecticut Department of Education.

Dr. Cosentino noted that there is a Governor's Executive Order that everyone must be masked if there are children present. This is in force until at least July 20th. She noted that the plan for the upcoming school year is for everyone to return to school with masks and to reevaluate at that time.

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - The next regular meeting of the BOE will be held on Thursday, August 5th. Board members that wish to add something to the agenda should contact central office.

XIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Members of the Board thanked the entire staff for all their hard work this year and encouraged them to recharge during the summer. They congratulated the graduating Seniors in New Fairfield and thanked everyone involved with all the Senior celebrations. Board members Greg Flanagan and Samantha Mannion were congratulated on the graduation of their children.

Stephanie Strazza noted that even though there is frustration with COVID restrictions, she reminded everyone that New Fairfield schools were opened all year despite the pandemic.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING NON-UNION CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMPLETING AND APPROVING THE CONTRACT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING CONFIDENTIAL ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION REGARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN CONNECTION WITH PERSONNEL MATTERS

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:55 p.m. for the following purposes and to invite Dr. Cosentino to the first two parts of the Executive Session.

- To discuss Non-Union contract negotiations,
- To discuss confidential attorney client privileged communication regarding roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education in connection with personnel matters and to invite Attorney Natalia Sieira Millan
- To complete and approve the contract of the Superintendent of Schools.

Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made the motion to come out of Exec session at 10:10 p.m. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Non-Union Salaries and Benefits

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the non-union salary increases for the 2021-2022 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Superintendent's Contract

MOTION: Stephanie Strazza made a motion to approve the contract for the Superintendent of Schools until June 30, 2023, as amended by the Board of Education. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Peggy Katkocin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m. Dominic Cipollone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos