

# Board of Education Regular Meeting 2023

Thursday, September 21, 2023 7:00 PM

BOE Meeting Access: BOE (9/21/23 at 7 p.m.) Web:

<https://zoom.us/j/94451493019> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 944 5149 3019, 3 Brush Hill Road, New Fairfield, CT 06812

## I. CALL TO ORDER

## II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

### III.A. August 17, 2023 - Regular

## IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

- V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - *The Board welcomes public participation. Pursuant to our Board Policy, public participation is limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker and a total of no more than thirty (30) minutes total for the entire meeting. Individuals who wish to speak longer are encouraged to attend any and all related subcommittee meetings where most of the board's groundwork is done. We value your input, but due to these time limitations, we ask you to be concise and to observe the rules of common courtesy. [9320(a) of Board Bylaws]*

## VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

### VI.A. Chairman's Report

### VI.B. Superintendent's Report

### VI.C. Student Representatives' Report

### VI.D. Committee Reports

#### VI.D.1. Business Operations/Resource Management (*Greg Flanagan*)

#### VI.D.2. Policy (*Samantha Mannion*)

#### VI.D.3. Field Fees (*Ed Sbordone*)

### VI.E. Liaison Reports

#### VI.E.1. Board of Finance (*Ed Sbordone*)

#### VI.E.2. Parks and Recreation Committee (*K. LaTourette, G. Flanagan*)

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

### VII.A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School Building Project Update

VII.B. District Goals 2023-24

VII.C. Establishing the Conditions for a Successful  
School Year

VIII. **ACTION ITEMS**

VIII.A. Personnel Report

VIII.B. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request (*To be  
voted on after Executive Session*)

IX. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - *The Board welcomes public participation. Pursuant to our Board Policy, public participation is limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker and a total of no more than thirty (30) minutes total for the entire meeting. Individuals who wish to speak longer are encouraged to attend any and all related subcommittee meetings where most of the board's groundwork is done. We value your input, but due to these time limitations, we ask you to be concise and to observe the rules of common courtesy. [9320(a) of Board Bylaws]*

X. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

XI. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

XII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
DISCUSSING PARAPROFESSIONAL LEAVE OF  
ABSENCE REQUEST**

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

**MINUTES – August 17, 2023**

**PRESENT:** Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**ABSENT:** Greg Flanagan and Stephanie Strazza

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Julie Luby, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, High School Principal James D’Amico

Video Production Coordinator Quintin Flower explained the procedures for the virtual meeting and noted that this virtual meeting is available to everyone, including members of the public.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - A. June 22, 2023 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
  - B. August 3, 2023 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - approved by consensus
- V. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None
- VI. **BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**
  - A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:
    - Spoke of his hopes for a wonderful school year, especially with the new high school building.
  - B. Superintendent’s Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw
    - Introduced Maria Kennedy as the new PPS Director for the district and gave a brief description of her background. Ms. Kennedy thanked everyone for this opportunity and noted that she is looking forward to joining the district.
    - Noted that the district is very close to being fully staffed for the year. Nine certified staff have been hired for this school year. Paraprofessionals are still needed. Anyone interested should contact the HR office.
    - Welcome Back letters will be sent out next week. The first day of school will be Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. Students in K - 8th Grade will have a full day. High School students will have a delayed opening in order to give teachers and staff time to acclimate to the new building.
    - Convocation will be held in the new high school.
    - A Ribbon Cutting ceremony will be held at the high school on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. for the entire community.
    - A retreat for the Leadership Team was held over the summer. They focused on improving attendance and making sure that all students feel comfortable and are not distracted in the classroom.

### C. Committee Reports

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

- Monthly summary of budget vs. actual expenditures for the fiscal year 2022-2023. It was noted that this report does not represent final numbers.
- An Excess Cost Adjustment of \$85,000 will be received.
- Three mid-year grants totaling approximately \$30,000 for Special Education have been received.
- It was suggested that Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy give a summary and update at an upcoming BOE meeting.
- There was a Google Doc reconciliation with no deficiencies.
- The Food Service contract was renewed for the next year. Free breakfast will be provided to all students and free lunches will be provided to those who qualify.
- The air conditioning components were installed at MHHS.
- The flooring in the Middle School was completed.
- A check list walk through was done at Consolidated School.
- The high school is expected to open on time and under budget.
- There was a discussion of possibly reviewing the policy for field fees for the new auditorium and gym.

2. Field Fees - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on August 16<sup>th</sup> for the first time since March 2022. They reviewed the committee responsibilities and roles. Ed Sbordone was elected as the new chairman as this committee. They discussed the turf and track and field replacement funds and field fees for various facilities.

### D. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone gave an update on the Board of Finance since the last BOE meeting in June.

- The June 24<sup>th</sup> budget referendum failed.
- On June 26<sup>th</sup> the BOS set the Mil Rate at 34.90 for Real Estate and 32.46 for Motor Vehicles.
- The BOF met on June 28<sup>th</sup> and increased the BOE Capital by \$7,100 and the BOE Operating by \$195,900.
- The third budget referendum on July 22<sup>nd</sup> passed.
- The BOF met on July 24<sup>th</sup> and set the Mil Rate at 34.90 for Real Estate and 32.46 for Motor Vehicles.

## VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### A. New Fairfield High School Building Project Update

High School Principal James D'Amico gave a slideshow with pictures and a description of the new high school. He thanked Director of Technology Paul Gouveia and his team for all their hard work with making sure that the technology is working in the building.

### B. Enrollment Update

Dr. Craw spoke of anticipated enrollment and noted that it was comparable to last year.

### C. Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Craw spoke of the process for strategic planning and noted that it focuses on setting priorities, building capacity and harnessing resources. He spoke of the process which includes data collection and goal setting. He spoke of the timeline for this. It is expected that the strategic plan will be implemented on July 1, 2024.

## **VIII. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEM**

### **A. Budget Update 2023-2024**

Dr. Craw spoke of budget adjustments that have been made since the budget was adopted on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. He noted that voter approved budget had a reduction of \$597,000 from the BOE approved budget from February 2023.

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to approve the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget reductions final tier list as presented by the Superintendent of Schools. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

## **IX. ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Personnel Report**

**MOTION:** Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for August 16, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

### **B. Board of Education Policy**

#### **1. Policy 5118.111 - Tuition for Students of Staff Members**

**MOTION:** Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Board of the Education Policy 5118.111 - Tuition for Students of Staff Members as presented. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None**

**XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None**

## **XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Kimberly LaTourette wished everyone a great new school year. She welcomed Maria Kennedy to the district and thanked James D'Amico for the presentation.

Samantha Mannion noted that some returning staff members are starting new positions and wished them well.

Dominic Cipollone encouraged everyone to enjoy the last days of summer.

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos



**New Fairfield Public Schools  
District Priorities  
2023-24**

**I. Teaching and Learning**

**Increase student growth and achievement by providing all students with high-quality instruction and curricula in an adaptive and flexible learning environment.**

Instruction:

- Continue the district focus on [high-quality instruction](#) using a clear and consistent definition of HQI.
- Unify all district initiatives and efforts around the [Vision of the Graduate](#).
- Continue our work on task design through building capacity on lesson study.
- Continue to refine the instructional coaching model.
- Continue to develop tiered intervention systems K-12 to support student growth and achievement.
- Continue to provide training on best practices that support the science of reading to ensure timely and focused literacy instruction for all students.
- Continue to support the implementation of Bridges and Number Corner to ensure equity of content and numeracy instruction within K-5 classes.
- Support the implementation of new middle school resources for the math and science curriculum.
- Select a resource to support grades 4 & 5 science curriculum.

Curriculum:

- Continually update and revise district curriculum through a formal process and using a curriculum design template.
- Support the writing of curricula focused on mastery of discrete standards in each subject area.
- Identify and employ a curriculum mapping tool to support the vertical articulation of curriculum.

Special Education:

- Continue to develop and implement high-quality Individual Education Programs (IEPs) that result in academic and educational growth for students requiring special education services.
- Continue to provide support and training for consistent PPT facilitation across the district.

- Strengthen collaboration between regular and general leaders and educators regarding high-quality instruction to support all students.
- Continue to provide training for special education service providers on best practices in literacy instruction for students with identified reading disabilities, such as dyslexia.
- Continue to support the STRIDES program such that students requiring special education services after completing high school graduation requirements can receive those services in district.

## **II. Healthy Learning Environment**

**Promote a healthy learning environment that fosters physical and emotional safety, respect and a sense of belonging for all students.**

### School Culture & Climate

- Continue to train staff for fidelity of implementation of Responsive Classroom (K-8).
- Continue to train staff for fidelity of implementation of Restorative Practices (K-12).
- Continue to increase a sense of belonging for all students through work with district consultants (K-12).
- Ensure all staff, students, and families are familiar with our district-wide Code of Responsibility and Respect.
- Provide staff with ongoing professional learning on understanding the Code of Responsibility and Respect to support a shared understanding of expectations.

### School Safety and Security

- Review and refine NFPS emergency response protocols and provide updated training to school staff.
- Establish safe and efficient arrival and dismissal procedures at the newly configured MS/HS campus.
- Continue to enhance our partnership with the School Resource Officers through regular monthly meetings and ongoing communication.
- Define expectations and parameters for the School Resource Officer program.
- Develop, evaluate and refine new safety and security procedures at the high school.

### Health and Wellness

- Develop district-wide expectations, protocols, and procedures to address attendance concerns.
- Hold a community forum in collaboration with the NF Prevention Council regarding the high school attitudes and behavior survey results leading to the development of assets for youth in the community.
- Utilize a multi-prong approach to reduce incidents of substance use.
- Evaluate current and anticipated needs for school-based counseling services and plan programming to support students' mental health needs, including tier 2 and 3 interventions.
- Continue the use of the Aperture universal social/emotional competence screener in grades K-12.

### High School Start/End Times & Master Schedule:

- Reconvene the Healthier High School Start/End Time Task Force, which will report to the BOE Subcommittee with its recommendations.
- Consider modifications to the high school's start & end times for the 2024-25 school year to align with adolescent sleep research.
- Continue to review the current high school master schedule by piloting a new schedule in order to enhance educational opportunities.

## **IV. Strategic Planning**

### **Initiate a strategic planning process with community involvement to set New Fairfield Public Schools' priorities.**

- Develop a strategic plan that includes soliciting input from various stakeholders.
- Create a strategic plan with targeted goals, action steps, and timelines for completion, which will serve to guide the next level of work for the district, including future budgets.
- Conduct a curriculum analysis as part of the strategic planning in order to benchmark the district's progress in developing and implementing a standards-based curriculum.

## **V. Resources to Support Learning**

### **Provide the necessary resources for learning--defined as finances, facilities, operational systems, and human resources. Adequate resources are a foundational component for New Fairfield to achieve its Vision of the Graduate.**

#### Finance

- Develop and present a FY 25 Operational and Capital Budget request to the community that is transparent, fiscally responsible and ensures continuous improvement.
- Manage the FY 24 Operational and Capital Budget to provide resources as planned and to address unanticipated expenses.
- Seek out and apply for available grants to address budgetary needs.

#### Transportation

- Conduct an analysis of the financial requirements in moving from a three-tier bus transportation system to a two-tier system with the high school and middle school sharing bus runs.
- Prepare a bid proposal and solicit bids for a new five-year transportation contract beginning with the 2024-25 school year.

#### Facilities

- Monitor the construction of the new high school to ensure an on-time opening for the 2023-24 school year and to ensure that the educational specifications have been met.
- Close out the Consolidated/Meeting House Hills Schools building project from a financial standpoint and ensure that the punch list has been completed according to the educational specifications and construction documents.
- Revise the 10-year capital improvement plan in anticipation of the budget process.

- Plan for a study of the middle school's facilities needs to be conducted during the 2024-25 school year.

#### Human Resources

- Attract and retain highly qualified staff to support continuous academic improvement; attend job fairs in the region.
- Attend area job fairs to attract high-quality candidates to apply to New Fairfield.

#### Technology

- Continue to curate, streamline and assimilate technology hardware (e.g., SmartBoards, document cameras) into classrooms to support the application of technology software throughout the district.
- Grow into our upgraded facilities to cultivate STEM initiatives and provide opportunities for real-world, authentic experiences. (e.g., K-5 STEM lab, new HS Robotics, theater, digital media, and art/music labs).
- Continue to maintain a streamlined digital repository of online tools and resources (technology toolbox/ClassLink) to support the delivery of high-quality instruction.