

Board of Education Regular Meeting 2024

Thursday, May 2, 2024 7:00 PM

New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT., 33 Route 37,
New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

III.A. April 4, 2024 - Regular

III.B. April 11, 2024 - Special

IV. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

V. RECOGNITION ~ CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

VI. **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]*

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

VII.A. Chairman's Report

VII.B. Superintendent's Report

VII.C. Student Representatives' Report

VII.D. Committee Reports

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

VII.D.2. Policy (*Samantha Mannion*)

VII.D.3. Field Fees (*Ed Sbordone*)

VII.E. Liaison Reports

VII.E.1. Board of Finance (*Ed Sbordone*)

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

VIII.A. New Fairfield High School/Consolidated School
Building Project Update

VIII.B. Elementary School Structure

VIII.C. FY25 Budget Update

IX. ACTION ITEMS

IX.A. Request for Additional Appropriation

IX.B. Personnel Report

X. **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]*

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – April 4, 2024

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Kathy Baker, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone,

ABSENT: Tim Blair

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross, Board of Finance member Wes Marsh, Board of Finance member Thora Perkins and Christine O’Hare from JCJ Architecture.

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. March 18, 2024 - Special meeting - approved by consensus
- B. March 21, 2024 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Katie Williams spoke of an accident involving a student on Marty Morgan Field and the challenges of getting ambulances to the fields due to the temporary bus lot. She noted that this particular accident happened on a day when there was not a lot of traffic but spoke of concerns about possible accidents when there are multiple events going on and many cars are forced to park illegally.

Jena Alviti spoke of concerns with the temporary bus lot blocking ambulance access and the fact that no one had a key to the gate in order to let the ambulance in.

BOF member Wes Marsh noted that the BOF cut the BOE proposed operating budget by \$350,000 at the April 3rd BOF meeting. He further noted that the BOF voted to reduce the BOE proposed capital budget by \$600,000 but promised to commit to using the fiscal year 2023-2024 surplus for the replacement of the turf field and track. Interest income has exceeded the budgeted amount, so a surplus is expected.

Pat Bower asked for direction as to whether taxpayers should support this budget at referendum. He further asked for statistics on the difference between what the district pays to educate Sherman students and the amount of tuition money received.

John McCartney spoke of his disappointment with results of the budget votes at last night’s BOF meeting.

Terra Volpe thanked the BOE for all their work with the budget process and for not allowing politics to interfere with their work on the BOE.

Britney Kozlenko spoke of the dangers of cutting staff due to budget reductions.

Amanda DiCarvalo asked about the possibility of cutting an administrator or assistant principal.

Amy Kuntze agreed with the suggestion of cutting administrators and questioned why the Elementary School has three assistant principals. She noted that the separation of Consolidated School and MHHS as two schools despite being in the same building is confusing. She further spoke of support for the gifted and talented programs.

Andrew Lund noted that education budgets need to have increases in order to grow. He spoke in support of programs and not cutting any staff members.

Jena Alviti thanked the BOE for all their hard work and asked for guidance on how the taxpayers should vote at referendum.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report - Dominic Cipollone reported on the following:

- Spoke of consensus building and thanked the taxpayers for speaking during public comment at all meetings and defended everyone's right to speak. He noted the need to fight for the most vulnerable students. He especially spoke in support of out-placed special education students and assured families that they will always get the support they need.

B. Superintendent's Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw thanked everyone.

- Thanked everyone for their participation at the April 3rd BOF meeting and noted that he was proud to be Superintendent in this district. He congratulated the Middle School and High School students that spoke at the BOF meeting in support of the budget.

C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- Spring Break will be from April 15th to April 19th.
- AP Tests will start in the beginning of May.

Junior Representative Emilia Sedlak noted that:

- Many students were selected to perform in the All-State Music Festival.
- Students in Grades 9-11 participated in Restorative Peer Leadership training.
- Junior Prom tickets will be on sale next week.
- Scholarship applications will be due soon.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Sue Huwer noted that the Curriculum subcommittee met on March 25th and discussed the following Information Items:

- Middle School Unified Arts Program.
- World Language Department expansion.
- Increasing Foreign Language instruction in the Middle School with the goal of bringing scores up.
- Instructional Coach roles and responsibilities were explained.
- K-5 Reading Pilot Update

2. Special Education Ad Hoc - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this subcommittee met on April 4th and discussed the following:

- Reviewed the roles of paraprofessionals to make sure they are used efficiently.
- There are currently six vacancies for paras in the district.
- Discussed coverage due to the resignation of a special education teacher.
- To date, thirteen students have registered for Unified Sports. Track and Field will begin soon. A grant was received for the Unified Sports program.
- The subcommittee discussed the expansion of the STRIDES program and the move to a new location. There is a plan to partner this program with Newtown.
- The subcommittee discussed opening the STRIDES program to other districts on a tuition basis, but it was decided to hold off on this for now.
- The subcommittee discussed transitioning for Special Education students that will be moving up to a new school for next year.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on April 3rd and voted on the final mark-up. A cut of \$350,000 was made to the BOE proposed operating budget. The BOF voted to approve \$119,000 for the capital and nonrecurring fund. A cut of \$600,000 was made to the requested BOE capital budget with a promise from the BOF that they will commit to using \$600,000 of the 2023-2024 budget surplus for the turf field and track replacement.

Dr. Craw spoke of the how the removal of the oil tank at the Middle School will affect the capital and nonrecurring fund for next year.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Fairfield Middle School Feasibility Study Presentation and Discussion

Dr. Craw spoke of the need for improvements to infrastructure at the Middle School.

Christine O'Hare from JCJ Architecture gave a presentation of the possibilities and needs for the Middle School, including improvements that can be made in the near future to make the best use of the space. She spoke of the current spaces and ways to use some of the old high school building. Phase I would include a STEAM Room, Media Center, and outdoor recess area for the Middle School.

Director of Buildings and Grounds Phil Ross explained the timeline and process for the projects.

Dominic Cipollone invited BOF and BOE members to reach out to him if they would like a tour of the Middle School.

B. Fiscal Year 24-25 Budget Update

Dr. Craw spoke of the reductions made by the BOF and noted that there are limited spaces to make adjustments. He will come back to the BOE with recommendations for cuts using the guiding principles and doing what is best for students and staff. He explained the reasons for the administrators at Consolidated/MHHS and noted that reducing an administrator will not save money in the budget.

C. Temporary Bus Parking Lot Update

Dr. Craw noted that the work group for the bus lot met recently and discussed alternative locations. They will meet again on April 5th.

D. STRIDES Program Expansion

Kimberly LaTourette spoke of the increase in rent for the new STRIDES location but noted that the increased cost would be offset by savings on transportation because Newtown has a van that can be used at no cost.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kim LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Personnel Report for March 28, 2024, as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone (Greg Flanagan temporarily left and did not vote on this motion)

B. 2024-2027 Sherman Contract

There was a discussion of the accounting for Sherman tuition as non-tax revenue that goes into the Town budget. Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy spoke of how per pupil expenditures are calculated and the challenge of figuring out the exact costs to the district for Sherman students.

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the contract between the Town of Sherman and the Town of New Fairfield for the period beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027, and to authorize the Board secretary to sign the contract. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

C. Healthy Food Certification

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion that Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the New Fairfield Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion that the New Fairfield Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

D. Board of Education Policies

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Board of Education Policies listed below as presented: 1. Policy 4115 - Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support 2. Bylaw 9323 - Construction of the Agenda 3. Bylaw 9324 - Advance Delivery of Meeting Materials. Amy Johnson seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

1. Policy 4115 - Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support
2. Bylaw 9323 - Construction of the Agenda
3. Bylaw 9324 - Advance delivery of Meeting Materials

E. Paraprofessional Leave of Absence Request - Executive Session

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Maureen Kenny spoke of the wonderful morale in the schools and thanked the BOE for all their hard work with fighting for the budget.

Millie Kellogg asked the BOE to continue to fight to have the Sherman tuition become part of the BOE budget instead of the Town's non-tax revenue.

Rachel Penny thanked the BOE for fighting for the budget and the students.

John McCartney thanked the BOE for looking out for the needs of the students.

Britney Kozlenko noted that she is a mentor for the Robotics Team in Brewster and offered her services as a volunteer if New Fairfield would like to establish a similar program.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Samantha Mannion spoke of the budget referendum and encouraged everyone to get as much information as possible before voting. She referred to comments from taxpayers asking for direction from the BOE about how to vote for the budget and spoke of being uncomfortable telling anyone else how to vote.

Amy Johnson spoke of her disappointment with the cuts to the BOE capital budget.

Greg Flanagan thanked everyone that supported the BOE budget and noted that New Fairfield has a wonderful school district and should be proud.

Ed Sbordone expressed his support for the Superintendent and thanked everyone that supported the budget. He noted that the BOE has been very transparent throughout the whole budget process and found comments made to the contrary at the April 3rd BOF meeting disturbing.

Kim LaTourette noted that she trusts the administrative team to make the best decisions with the budget and encouraged taxpayers to continue to participate in the process.

Dominic Cipollone read a letter from absent BOE member Tim Blair expressing his support for the budget and the administration. He spoke against any cuts to the proposed budget and noted that New Fairfield is guided by the right team and will continue to grow.

Dominic Cipollone spoke in support of the budget and noted that momentum for support of the budget needs to continue.

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

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:34 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a paraprofessional leave of absence request. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Greg Flanagan made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:36 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board of Education the approval of Margaret Brady's request for an unpaid leave of absence beginning on April 1, 2024, with a return to work on May 28, 2024. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a special meeting on Thursday, April 11, 2024, via zoom.

MINUTES – April 11, 2024

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

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Director of Technology Paul Gouveia, High School Principal James D’Amico, High School Assistant Principal Scott Rohwedder, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzer, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Elementary School Assistant Principal Dr. Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary School Assistant Principal Rob Spino, Director of Building and Grounds Phil Ross, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Maria Kennedy, Special Education Supervisor Monika Krepsztul, Elementary Special Education Supervisor Alex Lambert, Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores, and Selectman Pat Del Monaco

Broadcast Coordinator Rebecca Bitner 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 7:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Fiscal year 2024-2025 Budget Update

1. Operating Budget
2. Capital Budget

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw gave a brief presentation of the effect of a \$1 million cut to the Board of Education Operating and Capital budgets for fiscal year 2024-2025. He spoke of the cumulative effects of the cuts for future years. He noted that the BOF voted down a motion to cut \$250,000 from the operating budget and voted in favor of a \$350,000 cut to the BOE operating cut. They also approved a cut of \$675,000 to the BOE capital budget. This cut came with a commitment from the BOF to use surplus funds from the 2023-2024 budget for the replacement of the Rebel turf and track unless other funding sources become available in the meantime.

Dr. Craw presented the BOE with a list of cuts to the staff and how they affect class sizes and the structure of the staff. He further spoke of how the \$675,000 cut to capital budget will affect the timing of the turf field replacement and the capital needs for the Middle School. It was noted that the BOF will consider appropriating \$75,000 from the unassigned capital budget for these projects.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck gave a presentation regarding roles and responsibilities of the assistant principals including meetings with teachers, attending PPT meetings and adhering to state mandates.

Elementary School Principal Allyson Story spoke of the roles of the administrators to work as a team and to support the staff. There was a discussion among the BOE members as to the importance of the administrators at both the Middle School and MHHS/Consolidated School. The Board members discussed the effect of larger class sizes, concerns of losing the gifted and talented programs and possible funding sources for the replacement of the turf field and track.

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to recommend to the full board to authorize the Superintendent to request an additional appropriation from the Board of Finance in the amount of \$75,000 for Capital Projects, specifically the Middle School intercom and the Middle School STEAM room. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

IV. ACTION ITEM

A. Reduction in Force (Executive Session)

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Amber Fidel, Millie Kellogg, Terra Volpe, Jena Alviti, Amanda Levetown, Katherina Fostano, Stephanie Strazza, Katie Williams, Don Kellogg, and Pat Bower thanked the BOE and the school system and spoke of concerns with cuts to the BOE budget.

VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Greg Flanagan spoke of concerns regarding cuts to the budget which will impede the ability to sustain a top school district.

Samantha Mannion spoke of the cumulative effects of cuts.

Sue Huwer spoke of concerns to the cuts to the capital budget and asked about the possibility of starting the replacement of the track and field that could be financed with the budget surplus.

Tim Blair spoke in support of the school district and against any cuts.

Amy Johnson spoke against any cuts to the BOE budget.

Kim LaTourette spoke of the need to make sure that the students and staff feel valued and important.

Ed Sbordone spoke in support of the BOE and against any cuts.

Dominic Cipollone thanked the public for their comments in support of the budget.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING REDUCTION IN FORCE

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:43 p.m. to discuss a reduction in force and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw into the Executive Session. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:57 p.m. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board that pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151, the New Fairfield Board of Education nonrenew the teacher contract of Daniela Nudo and Paloma Moore at the end of the 2023-24 school year as recommended by the Superintendent due to reduction in force. I further move that the Superintendent of Schools be directed to communicate this action of the Board in writing to Daniela Nudo and Paloma Moore and that the Superintendent of Schools be authorized to respond on behalf of the Board of Education to any requests for other data which may be forthcoming from the teacher and/or his/her representative pursuant to applicable provisions on Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-151. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw stressed that the contract non-renewals for both Daniela Nudo and Paloma Moore were not performance based but strictly a reduction in force.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Kim LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos

New Fairfield HS Gas Smell Narrative

5-1-24

The following is a narrative describing the process for initial activation and corresponding evaluation of the gas piping in the new building. It should be noted that the gas issue has been a focus of the design and construction team with routine updates to the District administration, permanent building committee and at the bi-weekly Owner Contractor Architect (OAC) meetings.

As part of the construction sequence and prior to substantial completion and building turnover, the propane lines were purged with nitrogen gas to evacuate the pipes. After purging the new pipes, the system was filled with propane and the system was reviewed by the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). The initial review noted that propane with odorant (the egg type smell) was present at the science rooms, culinary lab, and kitchen. Propane is an odorless gas; an odorant (Mercaptan) is added to the propane to alert the user of the presence of propane.

Between the start of school and the **middle of October** the school staff raised the concern that there was a lack of propane smell in the science rooms. The Fire Marshal inspected the school and noted that the propane had odorant on the first floor (kitchen and culinary rooms) and on the second floor (2 science rooms). The Fire Marshal did not detect odorant in the three third floor science rooms. It was assumed that the perceived lack of odorant for safe operation was due to limited use and with new piping the smell can diminish unless it experiences steady use. Through research performed by the design and construction team it was believed that an increased use of gas would "Pickle" the pipes so the pipes would stop leaching odorant from the mostly static gas. This is not an exact science and the time to pickle pipes can vary greatly depending on use.

The week of **October 23, 2023**, the Construction manager O&G Industries set up Bunsen burners in the science rooms in an attempt to burn additional propane restoring the required smell.

On or about **November 1, 2023**, Colliers Project Leaders (CPL) discussed this issue with Mitchell Propane (the propane supplier) and they stated that they had never experienced this issue before. Mitchell recommended purging the lines again with nitrogen and reintroducing propane.

On **November 7, 2023**, with the assistance from the science department, O&G and CPL burned (12) Bunsen burners in each of the following classrooms, 302 (3 hours), & 304 (4 hours). O&G and CPL staff noted that the perceived odorant was stronger after the usage but was not accepted by the Fire Marshal.

At the **November 10, 2023**, working group meeting, there were two courses of action discussed to resolve the lack of consistent odor. The first option would involve continuing to burn propane through the use of Bunsen burners under controlled situations which would pickle the pipes over time. The second option recommended by Mitchell Propane required purging the lines and reintroducing the propane. According to NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health), the purging of the lines may remove any pickling of the pipes that had taken place to date.

On **November 14, 2023**, after the Owner project meeting, O&G and CPL confirmed that there was some level of odorant present in the third-floor science rooms but was not significant compared to first floor areas.

On **November 22, 2023**, CPL coordinated with the School and O&G industries to burn (12) Bunsen burners in each of the following classrooms, 302, 304, & 312. (3 hours each classroom)

On **November 28, 2023**, CPL requested that the Fire Marshal reinspect the science classrooms for the odorant.

On **November 30, 2023**, CPL and O&G industries met with the Fire Marshal to inspect rooms 312, 302 and 304. The Fire Marshal had a faint smell of odorant in rooms 302 & 304, but the odorant was not consistent. The Fire Marshal did not detect odorant smell in room 312. The inspections moved to the second floor and the odorant was not present in either of the science classrooms. The Fire Marshal then inspected the culinary classroom and kitchen, both locations had a consistent but faint odorant smell in both locations. The inspection moved to the exterior underground propane tanks and odorant smell was confirmed at the bleeder valve. The bleeder valve is used during the filling of the tanks to let the worker know that the level of the tank is full. The location of the bleeder valve is at approximately 80% of the volume of the tank. CPL contacted Hygenix, the project's environmental engineer, to provide air sampling as requested by the Fire Marshal.

In addition to the lack of odorant, when the team inspected room 202 water came out of both gas turrets at the left rear table (northeast table). The Fire Marshal directed the gas to be shut off to the school.

On **December 1, 2023**, CPL met on site with the plumbing contractor, O&G and Fire Marshal to reinspect the kitchen and culinary classroom and both locations had a consistent faint odor. The team investigated the source of the water in science room 202 and it was confirmed that there was water in the gas piping which was isolated to room 202. The plumbing contractor opened the low point for room 202 and drained the water. The plumbing contractor proceeded to open all six of the lab tables low point drains for the science tables in room 202 and found evidence of water in 5 out of the 6 tables. The plumbing contractor found no water in any of the propane lines in the remaining second floor and third-floor science rooms.

On **December 4, 2023**, CPL reached out to Linc Energy Systems, Lakewood, Colorado, leading distributor of GPL odorizers and spoke with a representative regarding the situation with the propane. Their initial reaction was that the pipes needed to be pickled and that they work with other companies in the Northeast that are capable of pickling the pipes. CPL spoke with Ngek Phinit, from Mitchell Propane who confirmed that they have not had this issue with any of their other customers. Similar to previous discussions Mitchell recommended purging the lines and then refilling. In addition, O&G contacted the following companies for assistance with little success due to the fact that these companies do not provide the product to New Fairfield.

- Hoffman Energy
- Leahy's Fuel
- Jennings Oil & Propane
- Paraco

- Petro
- AmeriGas
- Hocon
- New England Propane
- Connecticut Propane & Petroleum

On **December 5, 2023**, Hygenix (the districts environmental consultant) conducted sampling of the propane using a single gas detector for mercaptan. Hygenix sampled science rooms 302, 304, 202, and 204 and could not obtain a sample that registered the mercaptan odorant. The kitchens remained shut down with the gas shut off and the pilot lights for the kitchen equipment were extinguished.

On **December 6, 2023**, CPL, and the Fire Marshal, using a single gas detector, tested the underground storage tanks (UST) for the presence of odorant. The samples were taken off the bleeder valves of the tanks which results in a sampling of the liquid propane. We obtained readings of 5.05 ppm of Mercaptan for the north tank and 2.51 ppm for the south tank. The industry standard is a range between 2.5 and 5.0 for acceptable levels, which is subjective.

On **December 7, 2023**, the Fire Marshal asked Leahy's Fuel to take odorant readings of the underground storage tanks. Leahy's took their samples using a piece of equipment called an Odorator. The sample was taken from the propane line that runs into the building before the regulator which is past the tank bleeder valve location where the tests were taken on the previous day. Testing at this location outside of the tank results in the testing of the gas vapor itself which is no longer in a liquified state. They were unable to detect any odorant in the propane, see the attached report dated December 7, 2023.

On **December 8, 2023**, Mitchell Propane took readings of the underground storage tanks using an Odorator from the propane line that runs into the building before the regulator which is the same location that Leahy's sampled the previous day. Mitchell initial reading from the north UST was 0.53. Mitchell then "bled" air off the top of both tanks and took additional Odorator readings. The north UST reading was 0.44 and the south UST was 0.42. This is a different criterion from the tests taken on December 6, 2023, which were calculated in PPM. The December 8, 2023, tests are percent of LEL (lower explosive limit) and the acceptable level is 0.50 and below.

At this point, it was not clear to the team if lack of odorant was being caused by the underground storage tanks or the leaching of the odorant in the new pipes. To eliminate one of the variables temporary tanks were installed by Leahy's Fuel and piped into the building using the existing piping. The temporary tanks were installed on **December 12, 2023**. By computation of the volume of the pipe in the building and the use of the kitchen equipment it would take between 35-38 hours to burn off the existing gas in the piping before the new gas from Leahy's would reach the kitchen equipment. This computation did not account for the length of the exterior piping. Leahy's visited the site on Friday afternoon, **December 15, 2023**, and could not detect any odorant in the kitchen and shut the tanks off. Leahy's removed their tanks from the school on December 19, 2023.

On **December 28, 2023**, Mitchells performed a full building purge with nitrogen and then reintroduced propane from their own temporary propane tanks installed. The temporary tanks

were installed bypassing the underground storage tanks (USTs) and piped using the existing piping to the building. The kitchen and culinary classrooms were brought online and mercaptan odor was present and acceptable to the Fire Marshal and that equipment was placed back in operation. The science rooms were put on hold until the odorant readings could be taken. Mitchell opened available pipes in a science lab and the kitchen to inspect the piping for corrosion. There was no visible corrosion.

On **January 15, 2024**, CPL coordinated with the school and O&G industries to set up Bunsen burners in four of the science classrooms. 204 (2.5 hours), 302 (4.5 hours), 304 (4.5 hours), and 312(4.5 hours). Mitchell was scheduled to sample the propane in the science rooms.

On February 12, 2024, Mitchell Propane took Odorator readings, with the Fire Marshal present. Room 302 was tested and the reading was 0.19, which is within the acceptable level of below 0.50. The Odorator reading in room 204 was 0.26. Mitchell furnished their report via email on **February 27, 2024**, which was forwarded to the Fire Marshal for review. Because the February 12, 2024, testing that showed acceptable readings was taken by the gas supplier, on **March 5, 2024**, the Fire Marshal requested a third party test the propane. A propane consultant, Silverback Consulting Group, LLC, was referred to the Town Fire Marshal by the former State Fire Marshal. Chris Keyser, LLC was recommended to the Town Silverback to independently validate the readings taken by Mitchell. The proposal for the Chris Keyser, LLC was presented to the Building Committee on **March 12, 2024**, and approved. The scheduling of the sampling was delayed due to the negotiations of the contractual release between the Town and Chris Keyser, LLC.

On April 17, 2024, The third-party sampling took place during spring break by Chris Keyser. The Fire Marshal was present for the sampling. Using a DTEX odorant detection system, similar to the previously used Odorator, samples were taken in the science classrooms. No odorant was detected. The kitchens that were running off the temporary tanks since December 28, 2023, were also tested. Again, no odorant was detected. Sampling was then performed at the temporary tanks and the underground storage tanks. No odorant was detected in the temporary tanks. Odorant was barely detected at the south underground storage tank. Chris Keyser, LLC findings letter is attached. All systems were shut down due to the lack of odorant.

On **April 22, 2024**, the team met with Silverback Consulting, Amp Tech (vapor distribution specialist), and Chris Keyser, LLC. Due to the lack of odorant detected in the tanks during the April 17, 2024 sampling, the consultant recommended evacuating the propane from the two underground storage tanks, purging the tanks and then reintroducing propane with a higher concentration of mercaptan into the tanks, and running the high dosed propane through the system. Amp Tech visited the site in the afternoon of April 22, 2024, to review the current conditions and provide a scope of services for performing the consultant's recommendations. While he was onsite, he was able to detect, by smell, odorant in the two temporary tanks and the two underground storage tanks.

Mitchell Fuel was notified of the **April 17, 2024**, sampling results and performed their own odorant sampling on **April 26, 2024**. Mitchell Fuel took samples from the two temporary tanks and two underground storage tanks. The readings were acceptable and ranged from 0.34 - 0.47,

Due to the varied results of the sampling, the Town Fire Marshal has requested detailed analysis of the propane currently in the system. Silverback recommended firms to take the sampling. Propane samples will be taken from the two underground storage tanks, a science classroom, and the culinary kitchen. The sampling is being scheduled for the week of **May 6, 2024**.

Next steps (pending the results from the testing scheduled for the week of May 6, 2024)

1. If the lab results show there is no mercaptan at the two underground tanks, kitchens and science classrooms. The underground tanks will be evacuated of the propane currently in the tanks, the tanks purged to remove any moisture in the tanks. The tanks would then be filled with propane with a double dose of mercaptan and then the system be filled again and tested to confirm there is the required small of gas during operation. -
2. If the lab results show there is mercaptan in the underground tanks but it is lost in the building, the underground tanks will be evacuated (but not purged) of the propane currently in the tanks because the results eliminated the tanks as the issue and the focus would be on the piping. The tanks would then be filled with propane with a double dose of mercaptan. The interior piping would be purged and the building systems re-filled with the double dose gas. The gas would be then tested at all locations to confirm that the required gas smell has been achieved.



130 White Street
 Danbury, CT 06810
 www.Leahys.com
 203-748-3535
 Dr 416 Tr 95
 Service Invoice #
 00000218164

CT Lic#401821 HOD#205

Account: 10G
**SERVICE ORDERS FOR
 CUSTOMERS WITHOUT
 ACCOUNT NUMBERS
 DANBURY, CT 06810**

Contract:
Expires:
Trouble: 011 1 HOUR- OTHER
Date: Thursday, 07 December, 2023
Dispatch: Start: Complete: Print:
 07:52 09:16 09:59 10:45

Instructions

Readings

Comments

With Odorator 2 tester could not smell gas at 3% gas. Testing also with direct smelling of gas out of tank with no real smell of gas. Per fire marshalls orders, tanks are off. School is looking for some temporary solution to get gas to building.
 To the best of your knowledge Are there any un capped gas lines? No

Parts and Labor

Qty Description

By signing below, I acknowledge that all work is done to my satisfaction and I agree to pay the full amount of the invoice.

RSA Encrypted Digital Biometric Signature

Signed By: SERVICE ORDERS FOR on 12/7/2023 at 9:58 AM



(800) 237-3835
nemitchell.com
CT Lic. #390200
HOD #145

ENERGY PRODUCTS & SERVICES

(High School)

Parts	Amount
No Parts	

Account Number 523589

Customer Name New Fairfield Board of Education

Job Address 54 Gillotti Rd.
New Fairfield

Gas Check # _____
Use Commercial kitchen, Dispatched 11:06 AM/PM
~~Bundsen~~ Bundsen Arrived 11:30 AM/PM
burners Finished 12:30 AM/PM
Pressure Test _____

I don't think that
were purged of air,
prior to delivering to
job site.

Pressure: _____ Operating Pressure: _____ Manifold Pressure: _____

Tnk Mfg:	Size: <u>UG 1990</u>	Ser#
Type:	% <u>60</u>	Test Date
Tnk Mfg:	Size: <u>UG 1990</u>	Ser#
Type:	% <u>70</u>	Test Date
Tnk Mfg:	Size:	Ser#
Type:	%	Test Date

• 45% on tank closet
to curb by driveway

• 42% on tank closet
to fence towards road.

TK Condition: OK
Work Done: Complete Incomplete

Checked gas in underground
tank for odorant levels
on both 1990 UG tanks.

Equipment Info:
Make _____
Model # _____
Serial # _____
Make _____
Model # _____
Serial # _____
Make _____
Model # _____
Serial # _____
Comments _____

Had to bleed out air out
of both tanks to get readings.

Gas sniffer showed .45 on
first tank and .42 on
second tank. Both show
acceptable numbers.

Labor	Total Parts	Hrs	Sales Tax	Total
T.T. <u>1/2</u>				

Truck: B-85 Tech: NP KU Date: 12/8/2023

Customer Signature [Signature]

System Name: _____
Location: _____
Date Tested: _____ Test Person: _____

ODORATOR % Gas Reading: _____
Actual % L.E.L.: _____
Actual % Gas: _____

Signed: _____

Propane Correction Chart

ODORATOR % Gas Reading	Actual % L.E.L.	Actual % Gas
.00	0.0	0.00
.05	2.4	0.05
.10	3.9	0.09
.15	5.5	0.12
.20	7.5	0.17
.25	9.0	0.20
.30	10.5	0.23
.35	12.5	0.28
.40	15.0	0.33
.45	18.0	0.40
.47	19.0	0.42
.50	21.0	0.45
.55	25.0	0.55
.60	30.0	0.66
.65	35.0	0.77
.70	40.0	0.88
.75	46.0	1.01
.80	52.0	1.14

* Anything in the red numbers, call supervisor

Form Review: _____ Field Review: _____

Mark Schweitzer

From: Ngek S. Phinit <nsp@nemitchell.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:49 PM
To: Mark Schweitzer
Cc: John Busch; Norbert Mitchell III; Mark Lucas; Matthew Mitchell; Nick Ierace; Donna Docktor
Subject: Odorant Level in Science Labs.

This Message originated outside your organization.

To, Whom this may concern.

On February 12th, 2024, Norbert E. Mitchell Co. went to the New Fairfield High School science labs, to perform an odorant test. With the L.E.L meter, the odorant was readily detectable. With the odorant sniffer, we detected a reading of .22 % of odorant in the gas. The scale, is the lower the number, the better. Anything lower than .50% numerically is good. The higher the number the less odorant there is in the gas. The odorant level of the mercaptan in the propane@ the appliances at the science labs on the Premises of the New Fairfield High School, 54 Gilotti Rd. New Fairfield. CT 06812, is found to be readily detectable and compliant. Thank you

N. Phinit
Propane service
203-744-0600
nsp@nemitchell.com

April 19, 2024

Chris Keyser Consulting LLC
172 School Street
Rutland, VT 05701

Mark Schweitzer, PE
135 New Road
Madison, CT 06443

RE: New Fairfield High School Propane Odorant Testing

Via Email

Dear Mark

This letter outlines the testing on various points in the school's propane distribution system. The testing was conducted with you and the local fire marshal on April 17, 2024 during the midday. The testing was done with a DTEX odorant detection system, model DX-1000L (see manufacturer's calibration certificate attached). I conducted an "Odor Intensity Test" on each point. This test sets the instrument to a prescribed percentage of gas to air ratio. To be compliant with federal regulations (40 CFR Part 102.625) this percentage needs to be less than .40 gas/air ratio. Below is a summary of the results.

Site	Description	Result – Scale Null to 5
#1	Science Lab Rm #204	Null
#2	Science Lab Rm #312	Null
#3	Science Lab Rm #302	Null
#4	Science Lab Rm #304	Null
#5	Kitchen Distribution Manifold	Null
#6	Temporary Tank	Null
#7	Right UG Tank	1

In addition to these instrument guided results, I also opened valves in Site #1 and Site #4 as well as the relief valve on #7 to the air and found the odorant faint to everyone's smell. These results indicate that on this day the various gas/air ratios do not meet federal regulations.

Please find attached;

- My certificate of training.
- Invoice for services

Sincerely Yours

Chris Keyser,
President

Cc: file

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Worldnet**



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1-855-396-5267
www.energyworldnet.com

**Energy
Worldnet**



EWN-975764

**Keyser,
Chris**



CSK Consulting LLC

802-236-2304



Certificate of Calibration

YZ Systems
8825 N Sam Houston Pkwy W
Houston TX 77064
(281) 362-6500

Calibration Equipment:

Equipment	Serial Number
Gas Analyzer	B04037-M

This DTEX unit has been calibrated to the following procedure:

TP-0034

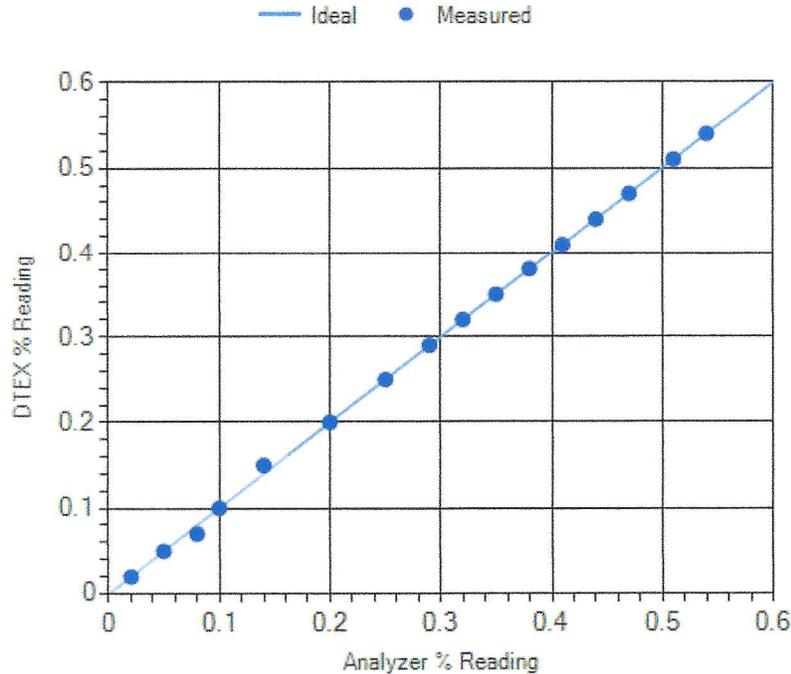
DTEX Unit Information:

Model Number: DX-1000L
DTEX Serial Number: 01714
Calibration Temp: 20.6
Calibration Operator: OHERNANDEZ

Local Calibration Date: 10/3/2023 5:40:41 PM
Customer Calibration Date: 10/3/2023 6:40:41 PM

Customer Next Cal Date: 11/1/2025

Instrument Verification:



The DTEX instrument identified above has been calibrated and approved for use.