

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, October 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – October 5, 2023

PRESENT: Dominic Cipollone (Chairman), Tim Blair, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone, and Stephanie Strazza

ABSENT: Kathy Baker and Greg Flanagan

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy, High School Principal James D’Amico, New Fairfield Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, and Elementary School Assistant Principal Rob Spino

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. September 21, 2023 - Regular meeting - approved by consensus

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sue Huwer spoke of the proposed solar study and thanked the BOE for tabling the decision to help fund the study. She noted that while she is in favor of the solar study, she expressed that the study should not be financed with BOE funds.

Don Kellogg asked the Board to consider adding AP Physics to the High School curriculum.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

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

- Spoke of a letter that he received from a teacher in the district regarding ideas that her students came up with as incentives for better attendance.
- Spoke of a possible “Meet the Candidates” event that the high school for students to ask questions of candidates for New Fairfield Boards and Commissions.
- Spoke on behalf of Board member Greg Flanagan who thanked everyone at New Fairfield High School for helping his daughter during a recent medical incident at school.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw

- Spoke of the importance of relationships in education.
- Open House was held for all four schools including an Open House for Special Education families. He thanked Pupil Personnel Director Maria Kennedy for her help with this.
- The Healthier Start Time study will be resume with the possibility of the new times being implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.
- Spoke of the new age requirement for students entering Kindergarten. Currently, children turning five on or before December 31st can enter Kindergarten in September. The new law would require students to turn five before September 1st. This will start with the 2024-2025

school year. There will be a committee to look at the best ways to support families with this new requirement. More information regarding this new requirement will be given at meetings in the near future.

- Dr. Craw spoke of three components for a successful school year which include the importance of attendance, good communications between the school and the families and encouraging reading.

C. Student Representative Reports

Senior Representative Brennan Hearty noted that:

- Representatives from many colleges will be at the high school in the next couple of weeks.
- Seniors will attend Rebel Kick Start while the underclassmen take the PSAT's on October 12th.
- Yearbooks are currently for sale.
- Parent Conferences will take place at the high school on October 11th and 12th.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Stephanie Strazza noted that this committee met on September 25th. They discussed the new Kindergarten age requirement and the introduction of play based learning for younger grades. There is legislation to add a Personal Finance class into curriculum which New Fairfield already has. The committee discussed the Science of Reading legislation. A Curriculum Report will come out in October and will be discussed at a future meeting.

2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on September 27th and voted on Policy 1330- Use of School Facilities. They also discussed the policy for non-resident students and the new legislation regarding Kindergarten age requirements.

3. New Fairfield High School Start and End Time Ad Hoc - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on Oct. 5th and discussed a timeline for possible implementation of the new start time. They discussed how transportation would be affected by the new times. Surveys will go out to families, students and teachers.

E. Liaison Reports - None

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. New Fairfield High School Building Project Update

High School Principal James D'Amico thanked everyone for the successful Ribbon Cutting on September 23rd. He spoke of compliments received from Senator Richard Blumenthal.

B. 2023 Standardized Testing Results

Dr. Craw spoke of results for Standardized Testing for 2023 and specifically spoke of improvements in Math. He noted that data is used to form programs but reminded everyone that there are multiple assessments throughout the year and that students are assessed in many ways. Specific tests used for assessments include Advanced Placement Tests, SATs, Next Generation Science Standards and Smarter Balance Tests.

High School Principal James D'Amico spoke of data from AP Exams, SATs and Next Generation Science Standards for the high school students. There was a brief discussion of AP classes and how they compare to Early College Experience (ECE) classes. He spoke of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding benchmarks for all the assessments. There was a brief discussion of action plans and the positive influence of coaches.

Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner and Elementary School Principal Allyson Story spoke of Smarter Balance Assessments and of the number of students meeting or exceeding benchmarks in both English Language Arts and Math. They spoke of Next Generations Science Standards. There was a

discussion of scores this year compared to pre-pandemic scores. There was a discussion of the effect of absenteeism on scores and the importance of both teachers and coaches.

C. 2024-2025 Budget Calendar

The Board reviewed tentative dates for upcoming budget meetings.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for September 28, 2023, as recommended by the administration. Stephanie Strazza seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

B. District/Superintendent Goals

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the Superintendent/District Goals 2023-24. Tim Blair seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

C. Board of Education Policies

Suspension of the Rules (referring to Policy 1330)

1. Policy 1330 - Use of School Facilities

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to suspend the rules referring to Policy 1330 "Use of School Facilities." Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Samantha Mannion spoke of changes to Policy 1330, specifically an increase in the Field Fee schedule due to the need to replace the turf field at the high school.

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Board of Education Policy 1330 as presented. Ed Sbordone seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

D. Ratification of the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the New Fairfield Administrators' Association July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027 (Executive Session)

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Tom Perkins asked about the origination of the new legislation regarding the age to begin Kindergarten. It was noted that this is Connecticut General Statute. He further asked where he could find test assessment data in relation to other towns.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Craw spoke of the solar project study and noted that the Town was able to move forward without the need for a BOE contribution.

Amy Johnson asked for a punch list of items for both the high school and elementary school project.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Samantha Mannion encouraged residents to visit the Board of Education tent at New Fairfield Day on October 14th.

Dominic Cipollone reminded everyone to not discuss political views in front of children.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO NFAA CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:26 p.m. for the purpose of discussing documents related to NFAA contract negotiations and to invite Dr. Craw into Executive Session. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:39 p.m. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to ratify the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and New Fairfield Administrator's Association for the period of July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2027. Samantha Mannion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Stephanie Strazza seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Tim Blair, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone and Stephanie Strazza

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos