

Town of New Fairfield
School Safety and Security Committee

MINUTES

Monday, September 27, 2021

7:30 P.M.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Dr. Richard Sanzo gave a brief overview of the rules and procedures for having a virtual meeting.

Members present:

Patricia Del Monaco, First Selectman
Samantha Mannion, BOE
Anthony Yorio, BOF Member
Maria Evans, OEM Director
Pat Cosentino, Superintendent

Other Town Officials Present:

Ed Sbordone, BOE, Finance Dir., Treasurer
Dr. Richard Sanzo, Director of Business Operations

Call to Order

Patricia Del Monaco, First Selectman, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting Dates

Rich Sanzo suggested quarterly meetings to provide ample time in between meetings to provide substantive updates. They can always call a meeting in the interim if there is an important topic to discuss. He felt that after tonight's meeting a quarterly meeting would be appropriate going forward at the discretion of the regular committee members. All agreed that 7:00 p.m. would be a good time. Selectman Del Monaco said that the next meeting would be in January and asked whether the first Monday in January would be better or Monday, January 10. Anthony Yorio said that after November he would not be on the Board of Finance so January would give the BOF enough time to appoint another person. January 10 was good for everyone at 7:00 p.m.

Speak Up Update

Pat Cosentino started and they have received a couple of notifications that followed the process. There was nothing as serious as in the past. She and Karen Fildes invited Pat Del Monaco to a Wednesday morning meeting with Sgt. Nick Ieraci who has some questions about things coming to the police that maybe shouldn't come to police. They will go over the flow chart with him about what happens when a call comes in, where it goes, what you do, who takes action, etc... He has a copy of the flowchart already. He has some questions about why some things are going to the police and not to the schools. Pat Cosentino said they should all get together to work it out.

Rich Sanzo said that in the last Committee meeting the Committee asked how Speak Up is being publicized. It has been included in the newsletters in updates to families. The website is still being built but there is a link on the menu and it is one of the first items up there. He can share what has been shared with the students by the High School as part of Rebel Time. The students were given an overview of what Speak Up is at the start of the school year and how they can access it. He shared what is up on the website for students and what can be reported, confidentiality, monthly reminders to students' emails and how they can submit tips. Something similar was done at the Middle School and he wants to share the efforts the school administrations are making to make Speak Up known and available and they reinforce and encourage students to reach out to a trusted adult, teacher, coach, administrator, parent or staff member if they have a concern, as well as access to 911. This is another tool in their toolbox if they are not comfortable going through more traditional mediums.

Construction Update/Security

Rich Sanzo gave a brief update and said that in various different forms he has gotten questions about security on the campuses. One of the things he wants to make sure the Committee is aware of is that every single construction worker on the High School and Meeting House Hill (MHHS) campus has gone through a thorough background

check. Those checks are conducted by O&G before any individual is allowed to step foot on any of the campuses. The results of those checks are sent to Nick Ieraci and Nick reviews them before anyone is allowed on the campuses. There have been some individuals who have not been approved and they never step foot on any of the campuses. All construction workers on our campuses have to be badged at all times so they can be easily identified, and they are.

Rich said that, also, they have been continuously refining some of the physical parameters of security. As an example, at the MHHS site, the construction area is entirely fenced in and the gate is closed at the end of the day to make sure there isn't any inappropriate access to the construction site. They have been working on getting that set up at the High School. They have been doing the land clearing and now that they have moved past the land clearing, they have set up the fences with the gates. O&G has been very responsive as we have pointed out minor issues that need to be addressed, such as making sure those gates are being closed. He wants to assure the Committee that safety and security is at the top of our minds as they move through these construction projects. O&G has a full safety protocol in place done in collaboration with the BOE and Town side as it relates to background checks and ongoing updates they provide through their safety officer.

Maria Evans asked about whether the construction workers have to adhere to proof of vaccine or weekly testing because they are on campus.

Rich Sanzo said that they follow the Executive Order 13G and initially we were requiring only individuals working in the buildings but O&G has applied that order to every worker on our campuses.

Anthony Yorio asked what type of checking they are conducting for the background checks because some are not as reliable as others.

Rich Sanzo said that he was not sure but would get back to him but he knows it is criminal and other data bases.

Maria confirmed that Nick Ieraci is reviewing them all.

Rich Sanzo stated that Nick wants to review every single background check, not only the ones that that come back with red flags that O&G would determine that he should see.

Anthony said that he wants to be sure that NCIC is checking the information they receive, not Nick

There were no questions.

Safety & Security Master Plan

At 7:45 Pat Del Monaco made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss the Safety and Security Master Plan and she would like to invite Rich Sanzo and Ed Sbordone. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.

At 8:05 Pat Del Monaco made a motion to reenter the regular meeting. The motion was seconded and all were in favor.

Adjournment

Before adjourning, Pat Del Monaco said that this may be Anthony Yorio's last meeting and she wants to thank Anthony. He was instrumental in the start of the Committee and putting it together and she wants to thank him for his contributions. They have made a lot of progress and she appreciates his service on the Committee. He is always welcome to come to their meetings.

Anthony said he is taking time to focus on his family and he thanks Pat for her leadership and being open to the Committee and he appreciates the opportunity for everyone working on it.

Pat Del Monaco made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded. All were in favor.

Adjournment