

Town of New Fairfield
School Safety and Security Committee

MINUTES

Monday, January 10, 2022

7:00 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
Mark Beninson, BOF Member
Maria Evans, OEM Director
Pat Cosentino, Superintendent

Other Town Officials Present:

Ed Sbordone, BOE, PBC
Dr. Richard Sanzo, Director of Business Operations
Kim La Tourette, BOE
Mark Beninson, BOF
Amy Johnson, BOE
Dominic Cipollone, BOE
Khris Hall, BOS
Tim Blair, BOE

Call to Order

Patricia Del Monaco, First Selectman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting Dates

-Pat Del Monaco said that they had decided to meet quarterly at the last meeting unless something arises, so that would be early April.

-Rich Sanzo made the suggestion that they revisit this agenda item at the end of the meeting based upon the discussion at the end of the meeting, there may be a need to meet sooner.

-Pat Del Monaco agreed but wants to set the quarterly meeting date on the calendar. Pat Cosentino suggested April 4, which works for everyone. Pat Del Monaco said that, if need be, they will revisit this for an additional meeting before April 4.

Speak Up Update

Superintendent Cosentino said that they are still using Speak Up and started the school year by reminding all of the students how to use Speak Up. On December 16, they had a Gaggle alert that was intercepted in an email sent to Mr. D'Amico, the Principal of the high school, alerting him to an Instagram post of the baby-the alert had no images. She said that the timeline was already discussed with the Board. This happened in the evening, she saw it at 4:42am and James saw it a little before that at 4:00am and forwarded it to Christine Baldelli, herself and the SRO. At 4:55am, Dr. Cosentino called dispatch. She said that "never assume" is a good motto here. He was aware of the situation but the next day they found out he was aware of the situation about the MHHS bus. There was a lot of communication going back and forth-parents and students were very nervous and community members felt that school should be closed. That Friday, there was also the hoax with middle schools. They worked hard with the police, and SRO and there was no credible threat to the schools, so they remained open. About ½ of the school population district wide was absent-some staff but mostly students and they had an uneventful day.

With any Gaggle or Speak Up they always follow-up. On January 5 they were supposed to have a safety protocol meeting with administrators and staff but that was the day of the ice storm and they will reschedule.

911 Curriculum

-Maria Evans introduced herself-Emergency Management Director and she also runs Dispatch and the 911 center. She discussed the 911 curriculum in the schools regarding giving the students the tools to insure their own safety and situational awareness. In November, she sent information from the state website that overlooks emergency telecommunications which has jumping points for curriculum and links regarding what people and children as young as preschool need to know about 911. The idea is to get 911 in children's minds, as young as Pre-K-the basics (such as providing address and phone number) on how to and when to call 911. This information goes through various grades and more detail, depending upon the age and goes up to teen level, such as why it is normal to feel scared when calling, the reasons to call, to stay calm and don't hang up, pranks, etc... It is a good way for children to take this home and discuss with their families. Not all adults realize what 911 is for.

-Pat Cosentino said that Maria sent this information to her in November and last week all of the Consolidated School (Pre-K-2) were taught the curriculum Maria sent in PE class and it was given to the Pre-K teachers. It will be shared with MHHS next and 911 is discussed in the Middle School in health class.

-Maria Evans said that is wonderful and the children are also used to seeing a police officer in school so they are not scary to them.

-Pat Cosentino said that she will also write an article for the Town Tribune.

-Maria Evans said that she wants to keep it on everyone's map about how important it is.

-Pat Del Monaco asked if there were any questions-there were none.

Multi-Media School Security Grant Program Award

-Rich Sanzo said that there is good news to share-he was notified that a grant submitted through the state in June was received-it is through the school security grant program multi-media award and it is awarded to communities that have established communication connections between schools and their local police and dispatch. They filed the grant for enhanced communication, as well as additional video surveillance features that had come up in prior security audits as gaps. The reimbursement grant award is based upon some expenditures already made as well as some that they will be making in the future. In total, the Town will expect to receive about \$52,000 from the State of CT. This is good news since it will offset some of the costs they have had and will have going forward on improving security in our schools.

School Security Protocols, Staffing and Infrastructure

Pat Del Monaco said they will enter Executive Session for this segment of the meeting. She sees BOE members and this is a topic of interest among the Board members so she will invite all of them in. In the future she will limit Executive Sessions to the representatives on the 3 Boards and perhaps the Chairman of the BOE and BOF, otherwise, the group is very large.

Pat Del Monaco made a motion to enter Executive Session and invite: Sarah Roy as requested by the Superintendent of Schools, Rich Sanzo-Business Operations Director for the School District, Ed Sbordone-BOE and PBC, Kim La Tourette-BOE, Lori-Ann Beninson-BOS, Amy Johnson-BOE, Dominic Cipollone-BOE, Khris Hall-BOS, Tim Blair-BOE, Mark Beninson-BOF.

Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. All in favor-Pat Del Monaco, Pat Cosentino, Maria Evans, Nick Ieraci, Samantha Mannion and Mark Beninson

Pat Del Monaco made a motion to re-enter the regular meeting. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. In favor-Pat Del Monaco, Pat Cosentino, Mark Beninson, Samantha Mannion, Maria Evans, 1 abstention-Nick Ieraci.

Pat Del Monaco made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. Pat Cosentino, Pat Del Monaco, Samantha Mannion, Mark Beninson, Maria Evans and Nick Ieraci all in favor.

Adjournment