

**New Milford Board of Education  
 Regular Meeting Minutes  
 July 21, 2020  
 By Zoom Virtual Meeting**

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NEW MILFORD, CT

Present:	Mrs. Angela C. Chastain Mr. Joseph Failla Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Pete Helmus Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan Mrs. Cynthia Nabozny Mrs. Olga I. Rella
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Also Present:	Dr. Kerry Parker, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Operations and Fiscal Services Ms. Ellamae Baldelli, Director of Human Resources Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services Mr. Kevin Munrett, Director of Facilities Mr. Brandon Rush, Director of Technology
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1.	<b>Call to Order</b>  The regular meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mrs. Chastain, via Zoom Virtual Meeting.	<b>Call to Order</b>
2.	<b>Public Comment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For clarification, Mrs. Chastain said that the Board policy is to listen to public comment, but not dialogue with speakers.</li> <li>• Irene Skrybailo asked what the plan was for when teachers don't feel safe to return due to their own health issues or their family. She said teachers are the backbone of our society and we need to be fair to them and let them work from home if needed.</li> <li>• Matthew Klee, a SNIS 5<sup>th</sup> grader, asked the Board to put the safety of students and staff first, especially in a plan that puts class and buses at 100% capacity.</li> <li>• Megan Byrd said she sent a five page letter to the Board with her concerns. She said the plan lacks</li> </ul>	<b>Public Comment</b>

details to help inform parents' decisions. She questioned the amount of involvement given to committee members named in the plan. She said parents need to be surveyed again about their plans for back to school. She is disappointed in the lack of communications at the town and state level. She said we need to stand up to the state for what is right for New Milford.

- Matthew Heiss said he has serious reservations about the expectations page of the plan. He has issues with the lack of accountability regarding student screenings and mask wearing. He said social distancing is not possible on buses, in hallways and in the cafeteria.
- Susan Swanson, a teacher at SMS, said opening at full capacity means close proximity to students and an increase in odds of spreading the virus, which in turn will lead to social emotional issues. Even with cohorts, teachers will push in and out of rooms increasing spread. She urged reduced numbers for social distancing.
- Melissa Healy, a Special Education teacher at NES, said she is part of a large crisis team for students. They can't adhere to guidelines in a crisis situation and PPEs will not provide enough protection.
- Margaret Albert, parent of incoming kindergartener, said data is very limited regarding spread. She said the restrictions don't make in person learning sound feasible. She said it will be important to have a strong distance learning plan for all.
- Mrs. Chastain noted that the Zoom call had reached its 300 person limit but that the call is being recorded and will be posted on the district website tomorrow.
- Roseann Petruso said she sent a letter to the Board ahead of the meeting outlining concerns. She thinks the Techpaks are a great idea for remote learning. She was on the Instructional Committee and was disappointed to have an already developed plan presented to her for comment versus developing it together. She said this is a bare plan to meet state requirements and

hopefully we will work to develop a more comprehensive model with details for instruction and safety as we reimagine school this year. She suggested Facebook Live be added to supplement Zoom.

- Mrs. Chastain said the meeting was currently streaming on one of the New Milford pages.
- Amy Photopoulos said she sent a detailed letter to the Board. She said health and safety should be the number one priority and said she wanted more detail on the level of Dr. Hack's involvement in the committee. She is concerned that CDC guidelines for social distancing are not upheld in the plan. She asked what PPEs are on hand and what has been ordered, the status of current ventilation and touchless equipment. She said the distance learning plan needs to be filled out for fair, equitable access to education.
- Susie Hackel, SNIS Reading teacher, said she is in a higher risk age bracket and is concerned about student contact and mask use. She asked that remote synchronous learning be provided.
- Katie, a Chemistry teacher at NMHS and parent of two students, said she is concerned with how students will be taught with social distancing requirements. If Chromebooks will be used instead of paper due to spreading concerns, what happens when students forget their Chromebooks or need to charge them? How does that affect students with special needs? She is concerned about crowded buses too. She said there are too many unanswered questions for a full time return.
- Christina Reddington asked the Board to recruit a new superintendent who delivers transparent, two way communication for all. She asked the Board to consider the challenges faced by working parents who she does not think have been fully represented yet.
- Gina Vanak asked the Board to advocate for what is right for all using CDC guidelines and the CEA Safe Reopening Plan. She recommends a distance learning model with a supplemental learning center as needed to start.

- Christine Taylor asked that we not return to a full reopen yet as it will be a hot spot for transmission. She said there are too many logistics that are not feasible or beneficial for students; risks outweigh benefits.
- Kim Patella, President of CEA NM, said the reentry plan is filled with unknowns and teachers already have too much to juggle without additional compliance issues. She said her name is on the draft as a participant, and while she did agree to assist, she does not endorse the plan as written and wants her name removed or a disclaimer added.
- Sterling Connor, a NMHS sophomore, said he likes the flexibility of the plan but the hybrid model to start is not equitable since it is only at the high school. The block schedule already limits exposure. He said the student body is capable of following restrictions and is not high risk. He said the parent survey indicated almost a quarter would choose remote learning, so they would be below capacity to start.
- Jill Ross, NMHS teacher, said she is concerned with the plan's lack of adherence to CDC guidelines. She also said she is concerned that the district will not have sufficient substitutes to cover for teachers who are absent due to illness.
- Dana Gartland said she is disappointed with the lack of detail in the plan. She said the district should spend its time on making distance learning a better experience for all students, teachers, and parents. She read highlights from a letter to the Governor that she had been asked to share.
- Nancy Webb said there are many families where distance learning is not possible due to special needs and/or work situations and where full remote learning creates tremendous fear and anxiety. She asked that a triage system be put in place for families with higher needs.
- Lisa Mosey said she was concerned with the many uses of "where feasible" and "where possible" in the plan. She said clear, enforceable standards are needed.
- Joseph Bittner said this is not a logical plan based on current restrictions. He noted that the

	<p>district is behind many other districts in technology for distance learning too. He said as a parent, he would like a day to experience what our students will experience to help him judge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melissa Cossuto has two children and works as an emergency room nurse at Danbury Hospital. She said she is on the fence about sending her children back to school. She said the district needs to build on distance learning to include scheduled, live lessons. She feels the hybrid model is the best and safest model.</li> <li>• Jake Runyan said he supports reopening but would like to know specifics. He said the plan references vague public health data and he would like to know what that is since data and studies come out daily. He believes creating curriculum for the learning environment is better served by focusing on one plan, not three. He said social emotional learning is modeled after the normal school environment and that is not this plan.</li> <li>• Dan Carpentieri asked if the plan is for five or two days for special education students at the high school, saying those students need staff to give full support and structure every day and they are cohorted already.</li> <li>• Michelle Pellitteri asked about notification if and when students are symptomatic or test positive and what happens regarding those exposed. She also said the plan is not plausible for special education and 504 students as presented.</li> <li>• Allison Sidel acknowledged the amount of work on the plan and the pressure from the state. She said she is disappointed with the state. The district should not have to choose academic programs over health and safety. She urged the district to take a strong stand against full reopening.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>A.</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Minutes</b></p> <p><b>Approval of the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes:</b></p> <p><b>1. Regular Meeting Minutes June 16, 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Minutes</b></p> <p><b>A. Approval of the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes:</b></p> <p><b>1. Regular Meeting Minutes June 16, 2020</b></p>

	<p><b>Mrs. Faulenbach moved to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes June 16, 2020, seconded by Mrs. Rella.</b></p> <p><b>The motion passed unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>2. Special Meeting Minutes July 2, 2020</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Rella moved to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Special Meeting Minutes July 2, 2020, seconded by Mr. McCauley.</b></p> <p><b>The motion passed unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>3. Special Meeting Minutes July 14, 2020</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Rella moved to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Special Meeting Minutes July 14, 2020, seconded by Mr. McCauley.</b></p> <p><b>The motion passed unanimously.</b></p>	<p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes June 16, 2020.</b></p> <p><b>2. Special Meeting Minutes July 2, 2020</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Special Meeting Minutes July 2, 2020.</b></p> <p><b>3. Special Meeting Minutes July 14, 2020</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the following Board of Education Meeting Minutes: Special Meeting Minutes July 14, 2020.</b></p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Superintendent's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Parker said she would defer in the interest of time.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Superintendent's Report</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Board Chairman's Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Chastain thanked the community for the emails and comments and said they are heard. She said the Board shares many of the same concerns. This is a fluid situation, which changes daily and they just don't have all the answers right now. They are committed to open communication and input; additional Zoom sessions will be offered. She encouraged community members to reach out to the Governor and other representatives. Mrs. Chastain acknowledged that this is Dr. Parker's last meeting as Superintendent. She wished her well and thanked her for her work for the students and staff of NMPS.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Board Chairman's Report</b></p>

<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion and Possible Action</b></p> <p><b>A. Bid Award</b></p> <p><b>1. Student Information System</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Monaghan moved to award the bid for the Student Information System to PowerSchool for services for a period of three years, seconded by Mrs. Rella.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said this was discussed at Operations and a presentation was given, which is imbedded in the Zoom video recording.</li> </ul> <p><b>The motion passed unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>B. Policy for Second Review</b></p> <p><b>1. 6141.321-4118.4-4218.4 Responsible Use of Technology, Social Media, District Network Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Chastain said this policy will return next month for approval.</li> </ul> <p><b>C. Policies for First Review</b></p> <p><b>1. 9320 Meetings of the Board</b></p> <p><b>2. 9325 Meeting Conduct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Chastain said these policies are for first review.</li> <li>• Mrs. McInerney said she would like the policies fleshed out to say that “any parent of a child in district” would be able to speak in public comment, whether they live in New Milford or not. Mrs. Chastain said that request will be noted prior to second review next month.</li> </ul> <p><b>D. 2019-20 Capital Projects</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. McInerney moved to approve the 2019-20 Capital Projects as recommended, seconded by Mr. Failla.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said the high school gym floors were discussed in April and May at the Facilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discussion and Possible Action</b></p> <p><b>A. Bid Award</b></p> <p><b>1. Student Information System</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to award the bid for the Student Information System to PowerSchool for services for a period of three years.</b></p> <p><b>B. Policy for Second Review</b></p> <p><b>1. 6141.321-4118.4-4218.4 Responsible Use of Technology, Social Media, District Network Systems</b></p> <p><b>C. Policies for First Review</b></p> <p><b>1. 9320 Meetings of the Board</b></p> <p><b>2. 9325 Meeting Conduct</b></p> <p><b>D. 2019-20 Capital Projects</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the 2019-20 Capital Projects as recommended.</b></p>
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	<p>subcommittee meetings. They are not on the list of recommendations so she asked if they ended up being done in house as was proposed. Mr. Munrett said the project is underway now in house.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach asked if there was a breakout of the Technology piece. Mrs. Chastain said it was listed on the Update on 2019-20 Capital Projects spreadsheet included in the packet.</li></ul> <p><b>The motion passed unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>E. COVID-19 Related Expenses</b></p> <p><b>Mr. McCauley moved to approve the COVID-19 Related Expenses as proposed, seconded by Mrs. Rella.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach noted for transparency that once this list is approved and actually drawn upon, there may be line item adjustments to the totals, since these expenditures are fluid. They may come back again and reevaluate at a later date.</li><li>• Mr. Giovannone noted that there is no staffing component presented as yet.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach agreed and said that component may need to be added in the future. She also noted that the Board had made the commitment to return any funds not fully utilized in the COVID account to capital reserve.</li><li>• Mr. Failla asked about access to funds from the Town. Mr. Giovannone said the Town has currently released \$750,000. He has sent a request that an additional \$327,000 be released by end of business tomorrow provided that the Board approves this list.</li><li>• Mr. Failla asked about the total allocated. Mr. Giovannone said the June 30, 2020 budget position shows a year end balance of about \$1.9 million, subject to final audit.</li><li>• Mr. Failla said everything is moving day to day and they just don't know for certain what they will need to start school. He said the New York Times ran an article that estimated \$1.8 million will be needed. He said the Town is</li></ul>	<p><b>E. COVID-19 Related Expenses</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the COVID-19 Related Expenses as proposed.</b></p>
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collaborating, and it is incumbent on state and federal legislators to do the same.

- Mrs. Rella said the problem of ventilation in rooms was raised at Facilities. She said there is also the possibility of not being able to use fans in rooms, compounded by mask wearing.
- Mr. Helmus noted that the Board is not obligated to spend the money since we don't yet know the final plan. He thought there might be some "nice to have" items on the list until a plan is agreed upon.
- Mrs. Chastain said it is a "chicken and egg" situation. The items need to be ordered so they will have them in time if they are needed.
- Dr. Parker noted that it is very important to move forward with the technology piece, regardless of the plan scenario, since at any given time we could become a remote site. Every day we wait, we are further behind.
- Mr. McCauley said he thought we had to order now, since if we wait items may not be available. He said everything on the list will be a "must have" at some point.
- Dr. Parker noted the PPE purchases cover only the first quarter while we see how things evolve.
- Mrs. Faulenbach reiterated that this is a fluid document, but that it is fair to say this is what is needed to get us up and running and moving forward. More conversation is coming. She said the district is fortunate to have gotten money set aside towards these items through collaboration with the town.
- Mr. Helmus asked why we are short funds.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said we are not short the funds per se, it is a management of cash flow on the town side.
- Dr. Parker said they had reached out to the Mayor and Town Finance Director with the specifics and they are hopeful the additional funds will be added to the account promptly for draw down.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

<p><b>F. NMPS Path to Reopening 2020-21 Draft</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Failla moved to approve the NMPS Path to Reopening 2020-21 Draft, seconded by Mrs. Rella.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Parker thanked the community for all the comments and said this has been a challenging few months for all as they work to address the needs of students, families and staff.</li><li>• She referenced two upcoming Zoom forums regarding the plan: one on July 29 at 4 p.m. for staff and one on August 5 at 7 p.m. for families. She said the links were emailed this afternoon. They delayed scheduling them so as to enable the Interim Superintendent to attend if possible.</li><li>• Dr. Parker said this draft represents months of planning and meets the requirements of State directives to present three scenarios: full in person, a hybrid model, and full remote. If a full in person scenario was not included, the district would not be complying with state law. She said there is still a long way to go. Now, work will shift to school level teams who will determine how best to reopen their individual schools, in conjunction with the plan and district team.</li><li>• Dr. Parker said the parent survey shows about 70% considering in person school, which in turn will lead to lower numbers in the classroom and greater opportunities for social distancing. She said she would push to open under the hybrid model if given a choice for flexibility. She noted that regional superintendents worked collaboratively to develop the same hybrid schedule among districts. Remote learning when not in schools will be both synchronous and asynchronous. She said there are decisions still to be made in this area and they need to be made with feedback from the teachers. She said they purposely changed from a “distance learning” to a “remote learning” title to indicate that the plan will be different from the spring. We have evolved and gotten better at remote learning, with additional training already having taken place.</li></ul>	<p><b>F. NMPS Path to Reopening 2020-21 Draft</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to approve the NMPS Path to Reopening 2020-21 Draft.</b></p>
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- Mrs. Rella asked if families that opt out will be provided with remote learning. Dr. Parker said they will, unless they choose to home school.
- Ms. DiCorpo noted that google classroom training has been provided to over 80 participants. The need for different types of technology devices is reflected on the COVID request approved earlier. A focus for the start of school is on 1:1 Chromebooks as well as remote charging hubs and backups as needed. Discussion regarding use of cameras in the classroom will take place with all unions; synchronous learning is important. Instructional coaches will continue to plan around the overall standards. She said it is important to include the building principals' input at all levels too. They are keeping in mind staff needs regarding areas such as collaboration, individual time with students and families, and how duties are handled. They will need teacher input here. It is all intertwined. They are looking at how best to set up structures in each school to best serve all and to do what is best for students. Everyone's input will be needed to make it work. She encouraged parents to reach out to building level principals if they are interested in joining the building level committees, and to attend the Zoom forums as they are scheduled.
- Mrs. McInerney said she appreciates the Zoom forums and asked that they be posted online following, along with any Q and A.
- Dr. Parker said the goal is to have the Zoom forums and repeated surveys to educate all going forward on the work being done by the school committees. The Governor has also said he will have more to say about school openings in mid to late August.
- Ms. DiCorpo said she is hopeful walkthrough opportunities will be provided and that some adjustment will be made to the district calendar based on the new 177 day allowance, so that more training can be done.
- Ms. DiCorpo said she and Mr. Rush are working on a demographic form that will capture an accurate count of parent choice for instruction. Regarding the parallel track, Ms. DiCorpo said

they are hearing an opt out form is coming from the State. She said the hope is to use live camera during whole group instruction. She said the State Learning Hub will be a resource only for family and will not be used for remote learning on the parallel track.

- She said parents considering home schooling would actually have to withdraw their children. She encouraged parents to choose the parallel track instead which affords more district oversight.
- Mrs. Nabozny asked what happens if a parent decides to stop remote instruction. Ms. DiCorpo said students may return to school at any point, but they are requesting a week's notice to set up transportation and assignment.
- Mrs. Nabozny asked about the reverse situation. Ms. DiCorpo said the hope is to assign students to a specific google classroom, whether they are in school or not. She said they need to dialogue with all involved.
- Ms. DiCorpo said the A and B cohorts will include all members of the same household in one cohort. Mr. Shugrue has been given a list to begin to assign cohorts which will then go to Dr. Longo and on down the line. She has been in contact with the Youth Agency about child care based on the different scenarios and they are ready and willing to help.
- Mrs. McInerney asked for clarification that special education students would not be tied to the hybrid system, since they need five days of in school instruction and support and are already cohorted.
- Mrs. Olson said they are using the term "priority access". The hybrid model doesn't work for a certain set of students not all of whom may be classified as special ed, but who may have significant needs, including ELL, medically fragile etc. Based on individual criteria, these "priority access" students will have support for all five days.
- Mrs. Nabozny asked about Art and Music instruction and supply use. Ms. DiCorpo said she will be looking to those area teachers for their input and for ideas for best practice.

- Mrs. Rella asked if they envision Music performances. Ms. DiCorpo said that will depend on the numbers allowed from the Governor; they are working through the procedures for those types of requests.
- Mrs. Faulenbach asked if the Facilities component of the plan would be discussed.
- Mr. Munrett said they too have been having discussions for months. He said it is a work in progress regarding concerns and supplies but he is confident they will deliver a high standard of cleaning based on state guidelines and occupancy. He said the staffing piece for this cannot be understated.
- Mrs. Nabozny asked about ventilation in air conditioned buildings. Mr. Munrett said it varies with each school but what is recommended is already done, so we are ahead of the game in this area.
- Mr. McCauley asked about the feasibility of six foot distancing. Dr. Parker said it will depend on the percentage of students who return to in school learning. If it is at 70% as the survey indicated, it will be much easier. She shared a picture of a room with socially distance desks of 10-12, but stressed they were not removing desks from a full classroom until they know the model. Dr. Parker said all desks will face front as recommended and they will do their best to maintain six feet, but she cannot say that will happen at all times.
- Mr. McCauley said he would like to see the vagueness about social distancing in the plan cleaned up.
- Mrs. McInerney asked that as they move forward with planning, they overcommunicate with families, perhaps several times a week, as any bit of information helps alleviate anxiety.
- Mr. McCauley suggested it would be helpful to have the August 5 Zoom forum separated out by level or grade for questions if possible.
- Mrs. Rella suggested this could be done by in follow up Zoom forums, as the school level committees begin meeting. She thanked administration for all their work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Faulenbach said that while she understood the goal was approval of the draft tonight, she wanted to be clear that it is a work in progress. Important conversations about transportation and other areas still need to take place. They need to continue to formulate more details and hear from parents. The community should not think that the plan is set in stone; they are in the planning process only.</li> <li>• Mr. Helmus said he thought there was wonderful communication tonight. He has confidence in Dr. Parker and the staff and thinks they are thinking about the right things.</li> <li>• Mrs. Nabozny said she would like to see the symptom indicator fleshed out more. Dr. Parker said they want the medical professionals to handle that as well as any follow up.</li> <li>• Mrs. Olson said they are working closely with the nurses and Dr. Hack. Dr. Hack is reviewing criteria and making suggestions. Mike Crespan, the Town Health Director, was part of the last committee meeting as well. There is lots of behind the scenes work taking place.</li> <li>• Mrs. Monaghan said she thought tonight’s conversation was helpful in putting more flesh on the bones of the plan. It provided important information.</li> <li>• Mr. McCauley said he would like to hear more about fall sports at a later time too. Dr. Parker said they are waiting on information.</li> </ul> <p><b>The motion passed unanimously.</b></p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Items For Information And Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Chastain said these are items of information only since the Board had authorized the Superintendent’s approval during summer months.</li> </ul> <p><b>A. Exhibit A: Personnel – Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence dated July 21, 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Items For Information And Discussion</b></p> <p><b>A. Exhibit A: Personnel – Certified, Non-Certified Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence dated July 21, 2020</b></p>

<b>B.</b>	<b>Monthly Reports</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Budget Position dated June 30, 2020</b></li><li><b>2. Purchase Resolution: D-736</b></li><li><b>3. Request for Budget Transfers</b></li></ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Giovannone said these reports were all discussed at Operations and included discussion of the year end balance.</li></ul>	<b>B. Monthly Reports</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Budget Position dated June 30, 2020</b></li><li><b>2. Purchase Resolution: D-736</b></li><li><b>3. Request for Budget Transfers</b></li></ol>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b> <p><b>Mrs. Monaghan moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:59 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Rella and passed unanimously.</b></p>	<b>Adjourn</b> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn at 10:59 p.m.</b></p>

Respectfully submitted:



Wendy Faulenbach  
Secretary  
New Milford Board of Education