

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 7:00 pm via zoom.

MINUTES – September 30, 2025

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

ABSENT: Stephanie Strazza

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, High School Principal James D’Amico, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, and Selectman Tom Perkins

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 16, 2025 - Special Meeting - Approved by consensus.

B. September 18, 2025 - Regular Meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA- Approved by consensus

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Bernadette Shade spoke of concerns with students vaping in the high school and asked for stricter consequences.

VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- Spoke of data and performance for students in the district and noted that New Fairfield students are doing well. He thanked the teachers, staff, and administrators for their hard work.
- Responded to the public comment regarding vaping and reminded everyone that it is the responsibility of every citizen in Town to keep kids safe.
- Thanked Samantha Mannion, Amy Johnson, and Ed Sbordone for representing the BOE at New Fairfield Day.
- Thanked Dr. Craw and the custodial team for being proactive regarding a recent incident.
- Noted that the Town Tribune will be interviewing the Student Representatives.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the following:

- Spoke of opportunities for the community to get together for a Community Read of *The Anxious Generation*.
- He spoke of lots of information in the most recent newsletter.
- Noted that Friday, October 3rd will be a Professional Development Day.
- Reminded everyone of the many awards and championships won by the many extracurricular activities in the district.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The Club Fair will be held on 9/30 and 10/1 during lunch waves.
- NEACAC College Fair Field Trip at the University of New Haven will be held on October 9th and is open to Juniors and Seniors.
- Yearbook pictures and bios for seniors are due by 10/11.
- There is no school on Monday, October 13th in observance of Columbus Day.
- College Financial Aid night will be held on October 14th.
- PSATs will be given on October 23rd.
- The fall play *Clue* will be performed from October 30th through November 2nd.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- No school Oct. 2 (Yom Kippur) and October 3 (Professional Development Day).
- Spirit week will be held from October 14th to 17th.
- The Pep Rally and Homecoming football game will be held on October 17th.
- The Homecoming dance will be held on October 18th.
- The Walk for Nicole by the Nicole Vengalli Foundation was very successful and raised over \$4,000.

D. Committee Reports

1. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone spoke of the great things happening with curriculum, especially Summer Reading.
2. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that there are three policies on tonight's agenda for first reading. Another policy was tabled pending more information.
3. Special Education Ad Hoc - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this committee met on September 30th. They discussed goals that PPS has for this school year, including efforts to enhance student inclusion and collaboration within the classrooms. Another goal is to improve the quality of IEPs.

Upcoming workshops for the school year include:

- ELC Information Night in November.
- Transition between buildings workshop.
- Parent "coffees" will be held in October, January and May in the PPS office and via zoom.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance

Ed Sbordone spoke of the Medical Subcommittee meeting on September 2nd.

- Tom Kowalchik from USI discussed claims and noted that there is nothing concerning at this time. He noted that prescription drug costs are slightly down and a rebate is expected. He noted that medical claims per member per month are down.
- An Additional Appropriation of \$950,000 was approved at a Town Meeting on August 28th and put into the Medical Fund.
- The subcommittee discussed a rough draft for a possible policy for funding for the Medical Reserve Fund. Town Treasurer Terry Friedman presented a final draft to the full Board of Finance at their September 24th regular meeting.
- The next subcommittee meeting will be held on Monday, October 20th at 3:30 pm.

The full BOF met on September 24th and discussed the following:

- USI Consultant Tom Kowalchik noted that claims are running much better than this time last year. Claims for June 2025 (fiscal year 2024-2025) were lower than expected.
- Town Treasurer Terry Friedman gave a presentation of a possible policy for the Medical Fund reserve. The main objective is to have a reserve that is at least 20% of yearly claims.
- The BOF spoke of the suggestions from the auditor and it was noted that 7 out of the 10 suggestions have been completed and the remaining three are in progress.

- The BOF discussed setting up a policy for Purchasing and Disbursements.
- The BOF discussed budget concerns for next year including:
 1. Motor Vehicle reimbursement from the State is not expected for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 due to the lower Mil Rate.
 2. Debt service for fiscal year 2027 will only decrease by approximately \$200,000.
 3. The Medical Fund will need to be funded significantly higher in order to outpace inflation.
 4. Capital projects will no longer be funded by ARPA funds.
- The BOF also discussed “Zero Based Budgeting.”
 2. Calendar Committee - Ed Sbordone noted that this committee met on September 29th with many groups represented. They reviewed the calendar for 2026-2027. It was proposed that August 24th will be the first day of school for teachers and August 27th will be the first day of school for students. The last day of school for 2027 is proposed to be June 10th. This proposed calendar will be presented to the BOE for a vote at a meeting in the near future.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that a letter was sent by the Town Attorney regarding the propane issue to O&G and they are awaiting a response. The playground is progressing well. There will be a meeting tomorrow to review the progress of the playground, and more information will be available in the near future.

B. Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Calendar

Carrie DePuy noted that the budget process has begun and will be released to the departments tomorrow. Dr. Craw noted that the budget assumptions will be brought to the BOE in November. He spoke of the process of “zero based” budgeting.

C. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Policy 5131.1 - Bus Conduct
2. Policy 5118.2 - Educational Opportunities for Military Children
3. Policy 5144.12 - Challenging Behavior Response Policy

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for September 25, 2025 as recommended by the administration. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

B. District Goals

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the District Goals as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone **OPPOSED:** Sue Huwer

C. Ratification of the Agreement between the New Fairfield Board of Education and the New Fairfield Paraeducators of CSEA, Chapter 141 SEIU Local 2001, CTW - July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2029

Dr. Craw noted that the association will be meeting soon to decide if they will ratify the contract. It is hopeful that this will be done by the next BOE meeting.

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jennifer Pappas asked to see the policy regarding videotaping in the school. She further asked about the policy for the completion of summer reading packets.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kimberly LaTourette thanked the mom that shared the comment about vaping in the school. She spoke of the responsibility of all adults to hold the students more accountable for bad decisions.

Ed Sbordone spoke further about the need to curtail vaping and other unsafe practices in the school. He further spoke of the upcoming election and noted that many Board of Finance members are up for reelection. He spoke of the need for BOF members to attend the BOE meetings and suggested that the BOF appoint a liaison to come to the BOE meetings. Dominic Cipollone will contact the BOF to ask that a liaison be appointed.

Sue Huwer asked for more information regarding the policy about disruptive behavior with students.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO PARAEDUCATORS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS - No Executive Session was necessary.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. Kimberly LaTourette 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