

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 7:00 pm via zoom.

**MINUTES – May 21, 2026**

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

**ABSENT:** Kathy Baker

**ALSO PRESENT:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, High School Principal James D’Amico, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy

**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. May 7, 2026 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** - Approved by consensus

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report

Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- Thanked the Post Grad committee for their amazing fundraising that substantially reduced the amount that each student needed to pay to attend the party at Quassy on graduation night.
- He thanked all town volunteers and encouraged residents to get involved.
- Thanked the BOF, BOS, and Finance Department for the seamless budget process.

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

- Thanked the community for supporting the budget and passing it on the first referendum.
- Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> and the last two days of school will be early dismissal days.
- Spoke of the many “end of year” activities and wished everyone well.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- AP Exams were held from May 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Senior Prom was held on May 16<sup>th</sup>.
- The Art Show was held from May 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Seniors began their SEE Project which will go until June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The Senior trip to Six Flags will be on May 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Scholars Night will be held on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- High School Graduation will be Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- The Art Show was held from May 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Spring Sports playoffs have begun.
- “Junior Jump Start” will be held on May 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Junior Award Ceremony will be held on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### D. Committee Reports

##### 1. Business Operations/Resource Management

Greg Flanagan noted that this committee met on May 21<sup>st</sup> and reviewed the budget and spoke of the deficit in Special Ed. He noted that money from the Excess Cost grand and turnover savings will help with the balancing of the budget. He further noted that the bids for the Facilities Study at the Middle School have gone out and are due back by June 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met for a special meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> and addressed a request for an additional appropriation for the BOE budget for Special Education needs and discussed the process. At this meeting, the BOF approved bringing to a town meeting the appropriation of \$276,637 from General Fund Education ECS and \$179,041 from General Fund Interest Income for a total of \$455,678 to General Fund-Education Operating A/P for allocation as needed to Out of District Tuition SPED and Transportation SPED.

Dr. Craw and Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy spoke at the BOF meeting of mitigating strategies that were applied to address this shortfall, including implementation of a budget freeze, expending all special education contingency funds, applying \$65,225 from prior year unexpended funds, actively pursuing Excess Cost grants, expanding continuum of in-district supports, and restructuring efforts to decrease reliance on contracted services. BOE Chairman Dominic Cipollone noted that any money left over after these expenses will be returned to the Town.

The BOF also noted that both budgets passed at the referendum on May 9<sup>th</sup> and they approved the Mil Rate. BOF Chairman noted that since the final markup, Governor Lamont and the State Legislators voted to increase money given to individual towns. New Fairfield’s share is \$181,938 (\$139,244 for the BOE and \$42,694 for the Town) which once applied, will reduce the 2026/2027 Mill Rate from 4.86 to 4.60.

The next meeting of the BOF will be on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.

##### 2. Parks and Recreation

Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec committee met on May 11<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- The possible creation of a policy regarding outside “for profit” teams using the fields. This will be discussed further at the Field Fees committee.
- The Commission spoke of whether or not it was advantageous to purchase a used light tower for events.
- They approved an expenditure for tree removal at the Town Beach.
- The Sip and Stroll will be held this Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> starting at 4:00pm.
- The Boat parade will be held on Friday, July 10<sup>th</sup> (rain date Saturday, July 11<sup>th</sup>)
- The next meeting of the Parks and Rec Commission will be Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

## VII. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### A. Strategic Plan EOY Update

Dr. Craw noted that there will be three presentations regarding the Strategic Plan in future meetings.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck gave a presentation regarding the Strategic Plan. She noted that this plan was developed two years ago and since then, the district has accomplished all goals in the plan. She spoke of how the Strategic Plan affects Curriculum, Instruction, and Wellness and discussed action steps. She spoke of the development of the next iteration of the plan. She

spoke of the Vision of a Learner and how AI has affected education. There was a brief discussion of how to teach students to responsibly use AI. Members of the Board asked questions of Dr. Woleck.

#### B. Central Office Project Update

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy spoke of the plans to move Central Office to the Middle School and showed pictures of the plans. She spoke of the advantages of having everyone in one space. The move is expected to be completed by July 1<sup>st</sup>. She thanked all the tradesmen and vendors for finding many project efficiencies. The new address is 70 Gillotti Road, New Fairfield.

#### C. Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Update

Dr. Craw spoke of the need to finalize the reduction list resulting for the BOF request for a \$150,000 reduction for 2026-2027. This is broken up as \$80,000 from the Operating Budget and \$70,000 from capital. The Board will vote on this list at the next regular meeting.

### **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 May 14, 2026, as recommended by the administration. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

#### B. Fiscal Year 2026 Supplemental Appropriation for Special Education Unanticipated Costs

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board that any portion of the supplemental appropriation not expended by the end of fiscal year 2026 shall be returned to the Town of New Fairfield. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

#### C. Non-Union Salaries and Benefits and Contracts - Executive Session

### **IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION- None**

### **X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There was a request to put a discussion of the Hall of Fame at the high school on the agenda for a future meeting. It was decided that this will be first discussed at the Policy Subcommittee meeting and then decided if it should go to the full board.

### **XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Sue Huwer spoke of her disappointment that the physical plaques and trophies on the Hall of Fame were taken down and asked that this can be discussed in the future.

### **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Dominic Cipollone made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:04 p.m. for the purpose of discussing non-union contract negotiations and to invite Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Craw and Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy into the Executive Session. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Dominic Cipollone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:38 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Kim LaTourette made a motion to table the approval of the non-union salaries and benefits for the 2026-2027 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Kim LaTourette made a motion to table the approval of the Assistant Superintendent's contract for the 2026-2027 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Kim LaTourette made a motion to table the approval of the Director of Business and Operations' contract for the 2026-2027 school year as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Kloos