

NEW FAIRFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION NEW FAIRFIELD, CT

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Monday, April 6, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – April 6, 2026

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

ABSENT: Amy Johnson

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Craw, 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, Elementary School Assistant Principal Jennifer Hilderbrand, Elementary School Assistant Principal Alyce Misuraca, Elementary School Assistant Principal Rob Spino, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, and BOF member Rick Regan

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dominic Cipollone called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 5, 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 noted that next week is Spring Break. He encouraged both students and staff to finish the year strong.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Craw spoke of the many joyous events held recently in the district including Band Jam, Spring Musical, and Festival of Cultures. He wished everyone a wonderful Spring Break.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The Spring Musical and the Festival of Cultures were very successful.
- The top decile for Seniors was announced.
- SEE Projects will be in May and June.
- National College Decision Day is May 1st.
- Senior Prom will be held on May 16th.
- Rebels for Community sponsored an assembly today.
- The High School Band will go to Disney World from April 9th to April 13th.
- Spring Break will be held the week of April 13th.
- There is no school on Monday, May 25th for Memorial Day.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- Spoke of the Rebels for Community assembly.
- Junior Prom will be held on May 2nd.
- NGSS testing was completed recently.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on March 19th and discussed the monthly budgets. There is a deficit in Special Education and a freeze on Business Machines expenses. The first portion of the Excess Cost Grant was received. The next subcommittee meeting will be held on April 22nd at 6 p.m.

2. Curriculum - Kathy Baker noted that his subcommittee met on March 23rd and spoke of the waiver for Kindergarten for students that don't meet the age requirement. This will no longer be an option for children entering Kindergarten in the 2027-2028 school year. The subcommittee also discussed the Math curriculum.

3. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on March 25th. They discussed the Kindergarten age waiver and Policy 5141.21.

4. Special Education - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this subcommittee met on April 6th and received an update on the Bridge Program and the STRIDES Program.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met four times since the last BOE meeting: March 7th - BOE/BOS Public Hearing - Chairman Dominic Cipollone and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ken Crow presented the BOE budget to the BOF. Carrie DePuy spoke of needed capital projects especially at the Middle School. The BOS also presented their budget to the BOF.

March 11th

- The BOF voted to recommend to a Town Meeting the transfer of \$205,700 from the fiscal year 2024-2025 Unassigned General Fund Balance to the Medical Fund.
- The BOF discussed the cost of software and technology.
- The BOF discussed transportation.
- Discussed the enrollment and staffing and how it affects the budget.
- Capital projects, especially at the Middle School.

March 18th

- The BOF focused mostly on the BOS budget at this meeting.
- Discussed interest revenue and investments.
- Discussed salaries for Elected Officials.

March 25th

- Spoke of revenue for Sherman tuition.
- Approved an invoice for additional work from the auditors.
- Discussed medical claims and the amount to budget for next year's budget.
- Discussed the taxable Grand List and non-tax revenue.
- Vote on salaries for Elected Officials
- The BOF asked the BOE to cut \$150,000 from their budget and the BOS to cut \$80,000 from their budget.

The final mark up for the budget will be held on Wednesday, April 8th at the Community Room. BOE members were encouraged to attend.

2. Parks and Recreation - Greg Flanagan noted that the Parks and Rec Commission met on March 9th. The following events are planned:

- May 16th - Sip and Stroll
- Summer Concert Series: (Two will be held at the Gazebo and two at the Town Beach)
 - June 18th (rain date June 25th) - On the Road Again - Gazebo
 - July 10th (rain date July 11th) - Boat Parade at the Beach

- July 23rd (rain date July 30th) – Gazebo
- August 6th (rain date Aug 13th) - Beach
- New Fairfield Day - September 26th (rain date September 27th)
- Tricks and Treats Fest (date in October to be determined)
- Run for the Turkeys 5K - November 22nd
- Santa’s Workshop, Holiday Parade, and Tree Lighting - November 28th (rain date November 29th)

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Carrie DePuy noted that the Bus Lot location was approved by the Zoning Commission. There is no update on the propane issue at the High School.

B. New Fairfield Elementary School Leadership Structure and Support

Dr. Craw spoke of a change in structure and support for the Elementary School. He noted that New Fairfield Elementary School is one of the largest elementary schools in the state. He spoke of the current leadership structure of one principal and three assistant principals and spoke of advantages of changing the structure to having one lower house principal (PreK-2) and one upper house principal (3-5) with each having an assistant principal. He spoke of the future of the Elementary School and how this structure will affect development and learning. Beginning July 1, 2026, Allyson Story will be the Lower House Principal with Rob Spino as Assistant Principal and Jennifer Hilderbrand will be Upper House Principal with Alyce Misuraca as Assistant Principal. There was a brief discussion of this change by members of the BOE.

C. Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Dr. Craw spoke of a recommendation from the BOF to cut \$150,000 from the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget. He spoke of the guiding principles for cutting the budget. Suggested cuts would be \$80,000 from the Operating budget and \$70,000 from the Capital budget. There was a discussion of the risk of cutting the budget, especially the Special Education contingency. It was noted that the majority of the BOE members were against the \$150,000 worth of cuts.

D. Board of Education Policy (First Reading)

1. Policy 5141.21- Administering Medication

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 March 30, 2026, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.
IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

B. Non-Renewal of Long-Term Certified Substitute Educators

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval of the non-renewal of long-term certified substitute educators as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion.
IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

C. Healthy Food Certification

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion that Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the New Fairfield Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2026, through

June 30, 2027. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion that the New Fairfield Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

D. Acceptance of Donation

1. Nicole Vengalli Foundation c/o New Fairfield High School PTO

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the Nicole Vengalli Foundation c/o New Fairfield High School PTO donation of \$1,500 to be put towards the purchase of patio furniture. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

New Fairfield Elementary School Teacher Michelle Brown spoke in favor of the budget and noted that the teachers will come out and support the budget for the final markup.

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS - None

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Greg Flanagan spoke of the great Spring Musical "The Addams Family".
Dominic Cipollone thanked everyone for a great discussion regarding the budget.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos