

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

MINUTES – March 5, 2026

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

ABSENT: Greg Flanagan

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, High School Principal James D’Amico, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, 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. February 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 spoke of Artificial Intelligence and how it affects education. He spoke of the negative effects of social media and referred to a recent derogatory post on social media. He assured everyone that this will not be tolerated in the district.

B. Superintendent’s Report - Dr. Kenneth Crow spoke of partnership within the district and thanked the BOE members for all their hard work volunteering on the board. He noted that Parent-Teacher conferences for Grades K-8 will be held next week.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The National Honor Society blood drive was held recently.
- SEE Panel signups will be held from March 16th to March 20th.
- Senior Prom will be held on May 16th.
- The New Fairfield Robotics Team was invited to State Championships in Wilton.
- Registration for Spring Sports has begun.
- Unified Spirit Week will conclude tomorrow.
- The High School Musical “The Addams Family” will be from March 19th to March 22nd.
- There will be an early dismissal on March 24th. Freshmen will take PSAT, Juniors will take the SATs and Seniors will have SEE Project panels.
- The Festival of Cultures will be held on March 28th.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- Junior College Planning Night was held on February 26th.

- The Junior trip to Washington, DC will be March 11th to March 13th.
- Juniors will take the SATs on March 24th.
- The Junior Prom tickets will go on sale on March 16th.
- The Band Jam will be held on March 25th.
- March 26th will be an early dismissal and the quarter will end on March 27th
- Undergraduates will meet with counselors to pick their courses for next year.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Ed Sbordone noted that this subcommittee met on February 19th via zoom. They discussed budget vs. actual and noted that there is still a spending freeze in effect. Carrie DePuy is keeping a watchful eye on contracted services and the amount spent is less than last year. There is a deficit in Special Education of approximately \$1.2 million but this may be mitigated by the Excess Cost Grant. The subcommittee discussed capital projects with the main focus being the Middle School. There was also a discussion of possible grants for the technology budget. The next meeting of this subcommittee will be March 19th.
2. Curriculum - Amy Johnson noted that this subcommittee met on February 23rd and spoke of the STEAM Curriculum for each school. They discussed the STEAM lab in the Middle School. She spoke of technology opportunities at the high school. It was noted that the State no longer requires Capstone projects so the curriculum for this will be adjusted.
3. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that this subcommittee met on February 25th. There were no action items at the subcommittee. They gave an update on the new cell phone policy and it is working well. There was an overview of issues with security with ‘Bring you own device.’”

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone spoke of the BOF meeting of February 25th. They discussed debt service which will decrease in 2026-2027. They discussed the Medical Reserve fund and the amount to be put in the reserve account. There was a discussion of the new depreciation schedule for motor vehicles and how it will affect the grand list.
The schedule for the BOF meeting is March 7th- BOE/BOS Public Hearing (9am), March 11th (BOE budget discussion), March 18th (BOS budget discussion), March 25th (Remaining budget topics and medical) and the final mark up on April 8th.
2. Parks and Recreation - The Parks and Rec meeting of February 23rd was cancelled. Their next meeting will be held on Monday, March 9th.

VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Carrie DePuy noted that the Zoning Commission cancelled their meeting of March 4th so they are still waiting on a final plan for the bus lot. She is also waiting for an update on the propane issue at the high school.

B. Anxious Generation

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck spoke of the Community Wide Read of *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt. This included the community read, community conversations, and discussion of emerging themes and action steps by the planning group. The goal for this group is to help students make the best use of technology. They will identify the skills that they want students to learn in a developmentally appropriate and well-paced curriculum. She spoke of conversations regarding rules and policies for the use of devices and cell phones during the school day. She spoke of the importance of unstructured time and screen-free opportunities at all school levels.

C. 2025-2026 District Calendar Update

Dr. Craw gave an update on the district calendar for 2025-2026. High School graduation will be held on Friday, June 12th. The Middle School moving up ceremony will be held on Friday, June 19th. The last day of school will be Monday, June 22nd. Friday, June 19th and Monday, June 22nd will be early dismissal days.

D. 2026-2027 Budget Update

The BOE will present their budget to the BOF on Saturday, March 7th at 9:00am. Dr. Craw spoke of the four areas of the total operating budget which includes Operating, Medical, Capital, and Debt service. The total requested budget for 2026-2027 is \$61,708,599 which represents an increase of \$2,554,891 over last year's budget which is a percentage increase of 4.32%.

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 February 26, 2026, as recommended by the administration. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policy

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck gave a brief description of the media program and Policy 6161.12.

1. Policy 6161.12- Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

MOTION: Samantha Mannion made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Board of Education Policy 6161.12 - Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy. Amy Johnson seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

C. Continuation of Health Benefits

MOTION: Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board approval to authorize the Superintendent to offer continuation of health insurance benefits for teachers who notify the intent to resign by Friday, April 24, 2026. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Sue Huwer asked for an update on how Chromebooks and technology are used in the schools.

XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Sue Huwer asked about "hot spots" on phones. High School Principal James D'Amico explained that hot spots allow students to access their own Wi-Fi on their own devices thus overriding the school Wi-Fi. The administration is looking into ways to prevent this.

Kimberly LaTourette encouraged everyone to attend the Budget meeting on March 7th and get involved in the process.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Kloos