

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

The New Fairfield Board of Education held a regular meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

### **MINUTES – November 6, 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, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Elementary School Principal Allyson Story, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Grades 6-12 STEM Curriculum Instructional Leader Jean Gephart, and BOF member John Arizzi

**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. October 16, 2025 - regular meeting - Approved by consensus.

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

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Maureen Kenny thanked everyone who ran for the BOE and congratulated the winners. She thanked everyone for volunteering their time. She noted that the play “Clue” at the high school was fantastic. She also spoke of safety concerns with the bus lot at the high school.

Jennifer Pappas spoke of receiving a phone call about walking around the high school during the Election Day voting hours.

Eileen Hacaj spoke of concerns with residents walking through the high school on Election Day without permission.

**VI. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS**

A. Chairman’s Report - Dominic Cipollone thanked the community for re-electing him and his fellow BOE members. He encouraged everyone to act civilly and in the best interests of the students.

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

- Thanked Dr. Woleck for organizing a great Professional Development Day held on Election Day.
- Veterans’ Day will be celebrated during school on Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>.
- There will be coffee and conversations for the book *The Anxious Generation* on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 a.m. at the Senior Center. - Open to the public
- Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at the high school - Open only to families of students.
- Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> 6:30 p.m. - Open to the public.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- The play “Clue” at the high school was very successful.
- November 11<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for seniors to submit their bios for the yearbook.
- November 12<sup>th</sup> is the last day for seniors to submit name changes for their diplomas.
- Family ads for the yearbook are due on January 9<sup>th</sup>.

- AP contracts are due by November 10<sup>th</sup>. There is a \$40 late fee if not submitted on time.
- The National Honor Society will hold a blood drive in the near future.
- The National Honor Society is offering peer tutoring by request.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- The National Honor Society inducted 33 students recently.
- The NFHS World Language and Beta Club held a Fall Vendor Craft fair on November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Information about the Junior Class trip to Washington, DC is forthcoming.
- DECA is hosting a food drive for the New Fairfield Food pantry.
- There will be a Powder Puff Football game between the Junior and Senior girls in memory of Alumni Thomas Ford to promote substance abuse awareness and to support a scholarship.
- The yearbooks will be on sale until January 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Greg Flanagan noted that this subcommittee met on November 6<sup>th</sup>. He noted that expenses are on track with the exception of the Special Education tuition expenses which has an overage of approximately \$800,000. He spoke of internal controls to monitor special education expenses. Dr. Craw noted that some of this overage is due to a slight uptick in out placements.
2. Curriculum - Dominic Cipollone spoke of how Artificial Intelligence affects curriculum and K-12 digital literacy tools. Sue Huwer spoke of the importance of teaching keyboarding in the district.
3. Policy - Samantha Mannion noted that two policies were tabled at the subcommittee meeting. Policy 1321.2 is on for tonight's meeting for First Reading.

#### E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOE had two subcommittee meetings recently: The Purchasing and Disbursement Subcommittee and the Medical subcommittee both met on Oct 20<sup>th</sup>. The BOF Regular monthly meeting was held on Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

##### Medical Update

The monthly budget for Medical is approximately \$697,000. The net claims and fees for July were slightly under budget at \$671,000. The net claims and fees for August and September were \$452,000 and \$431,000 respectively. It was noted that prescriptions, outpatient care, and office plans were higher than usual, but the rest of the report looked good.

Town Treasurer Terry Friedman explained the proposed policy for the Medical Reserve Fund to the subcommittee and noted that this proposed policy suggests that if the projected Medical Reserve Fund is expected to be below 20% of the current year's projected claims, at least 80% of the prior year's net remaining budget surplus, or the amount needed to fully restore the reserve to reach the 20% objective must be recommended by the Board of Finance to be allocated via appropriation from the Unassigned General Fund Balance to restore the Medical Reserve Fund. There was lengthy discussion among the BOF members about the goal of this draft policy and specifically the requirement of using 80% of the net budget surplus. A motion was made to adopt the Medical Reserve Fund policy as amended and to attach a Memorandum of Understanding to explain the implementation. This motion did not pass at the BOF meeting.

##### Purchasing and Procurement Policy Subcommittee

This subcommittee met on October 20<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the proposed policy draft and there were minor edits made at the meeting to make sure it was easily understood. Clarifications were made to the bid process. It was decided that the Finance Director will review and edit the document and then send to the BOE, BOS and ultimately to the BOF.

The BOF also discussed budget concerns for 2026-2027 and there were no updates at this time. The calendar for the 2026 meetings will be voted on at the next meeting on Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

2. Parks and Rec Commission - Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Parks and Rec Commission met on October 20<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following:

- The fence at Memorial Field was fixed.
  - There was a bid received for the irrigation system at Komlo Field.
  - Minimum wage will increase in January 2026 from \$16.35 to \$16.94 and will affect summer wages.
- It was decided to keep the same formula as last year regarding increases for returning employees.

- The boards at the docks are being replaced.
- There was a discussion of who is responsible for the upkeep of the snack shack at Marty Morgan Field.
- There will be a water ski show before the Boat Parade on July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Upcoming events include the Turkey Run on Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> and Santa's Workshop on Saturday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy noted that playground has been fixed and is now open. Sunshades that were donated by the PTO are being installed.

### B. K-12 Science Curriculum Renewal

Dr. Kris Woleck and Jean Gephart gave a brief presentation of the curriculum design and the guiding principles for Science for the entire district. They spoke of the framework for both teachers and students and how this model coincides with Next Generation Science Standards.

### C. NESDEC Enrollment Projections

Dr. Craw spoke of enrollment projections based on October 1<sup>st</sup> enrollment that help to guide the district with planning and budgeting. He noted that New England School Development Council is extremely accurate with predicting enrollment. It was noted that the estimate for kindergarten students for 2026-2027 is expected to increase for that particular year.

### D. Board of Education 2026 Regular Meeting Dates

The Board discussed the possibility of reducing the number of regular meeting dates for the year. The calendar will be voted on in the near future.

### E. Board of Education Policies (First Reading)

1. Policy 1321.2 - Public Videotaping of Educational Activity

## 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 October 29, 2025, as recommended by the administration. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion.

**IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

### B. New Fairfield Public Schools 2026-2027 Calendar

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the 2026-27 school calendar as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

### C. Board of Education Policies

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

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

D. Acceptance of Donation

1. New Fairfield Diamond Club

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield Baseball Club donation of \$1,500 to purchase clay for the varsity softball field. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

2. New Fairfield High School Class of 2025

**MOTION:** Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board to accept with gratitude the New Fairfield High School Class of 2025 donation of \$4,510 to purchase patio furniture for NF High School. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

E. 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

**IX. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** - None

**XI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Members of the Board congratulated newly elected members to all the Town Boards and Commissions. Samantha Mannion thanked the community for their votes.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING DOCUMENTS RELATED TO PARAEDUCATORS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. for the purpose of discussing documents related to paraeducators 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:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Greg Flanagan made a motion to come out of executive session at 8:48 p.m. Samantha Mannion seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**MOTION:** Ed Sbordone made a motion to recommend to the full Board to ratify 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, and to authorize Kimberly LaTourette to sign the agreement. Greg Flanagan seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Greg Flanagan, Sue Huwer, Amy Johnson, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, and Ed Sbordone

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Greg Flanagan 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