

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

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

MINUTES – May 7, 2026

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

ABSENT: Greg Flanagan and Samantha Mannion

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth Crow, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Kristine Woleck, High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau, Middle School Principal Karen Gruetzner, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Monika Krepsztul, Director of Business and Operations Carrie DePuy, Middle School Social Studies Teacher Sarah Sheaffer, Middle School Science Teacher Rachel Wilson, and Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores

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. April 6, 2026 - Regular meeting - Approved by consensus.
- B. April 23, 2026 - Special meeting - Approved by consensus.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Approved by consensus

V. RECOGNITION ~ CABE STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Middle School Social Studies Teacher Sarah Sheaffer awarded 8th Grade student Shannon Ottush with the 2026 CABE Student Leadership Award for the Middle School.

Middle School Science Teacher Rachel Wilson awarded 8th Grade student Alex Mattiace with the 2026 CABE Student Leadership Award for the Middle School.

High School Assistant Principal Michael Chapleau awarded high school students Caylin Petzold and Daniel Sanchez with the 2026 CABE Student Leadership Award for the High School.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

VII. BOARD AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Chairman's Report

Dominic Cipollone spoke of the following:

- Noted that this week is Teacher Appreciation Week and Nurse Appreciation Week. He thanked all the teachers, staff, and nurses throughout the district.
- Spoke of the great news regarding funding for the bus lot.
- Wished students good luck with their exams.

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

- Thanked teachers, nurses and staff throughout the district for all their hard work, especially during Teacher Appreciation Week and Nurses Appreciation Week.
- Encouraged all taxpayers to vote at the budget referendum this Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

C. Student Representative Report

Senior Representative Ella Skogstrom spoke of the following:

- There was a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC on April 7th.
- A total of 79 students participated in the Music Department trip to Disney last month.
- The Spring Chorus was held on April 29th.
- The Senior Prom will be held on May 16th.
- The Senior Trip to Six Flags will be on May 28th.
- The Seniors will participate in "Grad Walk" on June 10th.
- High School Graduation will be held on Friday, June 12th.

Junior Representative Hailey Lafaro spoke of the following:

- Two students represented New Fairfield at the DECA Nationals in Atlanta.
- The Junior Prom was held on May 2nd.
- Junior Jump Start will be held on May 27th.
- The High School/Middle School Art Show will be held from May 19-21st.
- The Unified Theater Production will be held on May 15th.
- New Fairfield Unified Sports will host a Mobile Penguin pledge to support Special Olympics.
- The Music Department Banquet will be held on May 20th.
- The last day of school will be June 22nd.

D. Committee Reports

1. Business Operations/Resource Management - Kimberly LaTourette noted that this subcommittee met and reviewed the budget as of March 31st. There is a deficit of \$1,112,214. Once payments from the Excess Cost Grant is subtracted, the BOE will need to ask the Town for an Additional Appropriation of \$455,678. The primary reason for this deficit is necessary outplacement needs for Special Education students. Kimberly LaTourette noted that the Food Service fund at the Middle School had a surplus which was used to update the kitchen. It was noted that this surplus can only be used for this fund.

2. Curriculum - Amy Johnson noted that this subcommittee met on April 27th and discussed a potential international trip to Budapest, Krakow, and Prague for July 2027. The subcommittee also reviewed grading redos and assessments.

E. Liaison Reports

1. Board of Finance - Ed Sbordone noted that the BOF met on April 8th and voted on the final mark up for the 2026-2027 budget. The BOS budget was cut by \$80,000 and the BOE budget was cut by \$150,000. First Selectman Pat Del Monaco noted that this cut can come from Police Salaries. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Craw spoke of factors that contribute to how decisions are made regarding cuts. The BOF also voted to include advisory questions on the ballot and it was noted that the text of the questions is regulated by State Statute. The budget referendum will be held on Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

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

Carrie DePuy noted that:

- The propane vendor was on site to give a quote. This quote has not been received yet.
- The NEASC accreditation visit will be in two years.

- Additional funding has been secured on a State level for the bus lot. It is hopeful that the project will begin this summer. Carrie DePuy thanked the bus drivers for their hard work and patience with the temporary bus lot. Dr. Craw spoke of the enhanced safety that will be realized with the new bus lot.

B. New Fairfield Middle School Facilities Survey of Conditions

Carrie DePuy noted that a survey of facilities for the Middle School will be sent out soon. This will enable the district to figure out what exactly is needed. Responses should be back by mid-June.

C. Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Dr. Craw noted that the budget referendum will be held on Saturday, May 9th from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Absentee ballots will be available at Town Hall on Friday, May 8th from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

IX. ACTION ITEMS

A. Personnel Report

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Personnel Report for April 30, 2026, as recommended by the administration. Amy Johnson seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

B. Board of Education Policy

MOTION: Kathy Baker made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of Policy 5141.21-Administering Medication as presented. Kimberly LaTourette seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

C. Global Leadership Summit Student International Trip Proposal

There was a brief discussion of a proposed trip to Budapest, Krakow, and Prague for July 2027, specifically reviews of the company and the keynote speaker.

MOTION: Kimberly LaTourette made a motion to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Global Leadership Summit Student International Trip as presented. Kathy Baker seconded the motion.

IN FAVOR: Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone **OPPOSED:** Sue Huwer

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Registrar of Voters Elisa Beckett-Flores spoke of a proposed contest for high school students to design the “I Voted” stickers for the next election in honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Kathy Baker asked what the schools have planned to celebrate United States 250th.

Kathy Baker asked why eye screening is no longer being given to 2nd Graders.

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Kimberly LaTourette thanked teachers and nurses on behalf of Teachers Week and Nurses Week. She reminded residents to vote at the budget referendum this Saturday, May 9th.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Dominic Cipollone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. Kathy Baker seconded the motion. **IN FAVOR:** Kathy Baker, Dominic Cipollone, Amy Johnson, Sue Huwer, Peggy Katkocin, Kimberly LaTourette, and Ed Sbordone

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Kloos