

EASTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Eastford Elementary School
12 Westford Road
Eastford, CT 06242
March 12, 2026

Present: Lauren Barlow, Michael Bilica, Stephen Bowen, Robert Ellsworth, Adam Minor, Nancy Neff
Absent: Terry Cote
Also Present: Dr. Donna Leake, Superintendent; Carole McCombe, Principal; Charles Kernan, Director of Pupil Services

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bowen called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Bowen led those in attendance in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Citizen Participation

None.

IV. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: (Ellsworth/Barlow) To approve the Board of Education minutes of the Regular Meeting on February 12, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Correspondence, Communication

- Letter from Dr. Leake to First Selectman Deb Richards providing the Board of Education's 2026-2027 Budget and Long-Term Capital Improvement Plan
- Email from Hans Rhynhart, The Woodstock Academy's Chief Finance and Operating Officer, providing the 2026-2027 tuition rates
- Letter from Dr. Lawrence Filippelli, The Woodstock Academy's Head of School, regarding the appointment of Dr. Michael Harten as the next Principal
- Chart showing the D.R.I.P. funding Eastford will be receiving

Mr. Bilica spoke on the informational meeting he attended on March 1 where local school leaders and Board members gathered to address the need for additional resources.

VI. Committee Reports

- A. Executive/Personnel— None.
- B. Fiscal— None.
- C. Policy— None.
- D. Woodstock Academy – Mr. Ellsworth mentioned the new school principal and fiscal year 2027 costs.
- E. EastConn— Mrs. Neff stated there is more onboarding taking place and EastConn is encouraging members to work with Putnam Superintendent Steven Rioux to advocate for the unique needs of small school districts.
- F. Long Range Facilities— The Board received the minutes of the February 12, 2026 meeting.
- G. Transportation – None.
- H. Curriculum— None.

- I. Scholarship Steering Committee – None.
- J. School Safety Committee – None.

VII. Superintendent Report

Provided the BOE with updates including:

- Highlight of the Month – *Observing in numerous classrooms *Honoring the Board of Education members and their years of service
- Educational Leadership – *Moving away from 4:00 AM conference calls *Met with the leadership at E.O. Smith *Contacted superintendents from other WA sending schools
- Facilities - *Snow and ice dams on the roof from the weather *Roof inspection once weather settles
- Finances - *Invoices sent for 2023 security grant *Town budget meeting dates set
- Collaboration and Communication – *Attempting to collaborate with other districts *Small town advocacy *Town and school collaboration *Community Table meeting dates
- Comments on selected agenda items

VIII. Principal Report

The Board received the Principal’s report which discussed and/or provided the following information:

- Field Trips/ Virtual Field Trips
- Eastford Preschool Program/ Early Start CT and Local Governance Partnership (LGP)
- Data on Student Progress
- High School Information
- Professional Development
- Upcoming Events
- Special Thanks

IX. Director of Pupil Services Report

The Board received the March report, which shows no changes from the February report.

X. Unfinished Business

A. Long Term Capital Plan, Discussion and Possible Action

MOTION: (Bilica/Ellsworth) To accept the revisions to the Capital Improvement Plan as recommended by the Facilities Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

XI. New Business

A. Annual Healthy Food Certification

MOTION: (Ellsworth/Bilica)

1. Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Eastford 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. Yes X No _____
2. The Eastford 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. **Yes** **X** **No** _____
Motion passed unanimously.

XII. Financial Reports

- A. February 2026 Disbursements—sent to BOE via email
- B. Monthly Financial Summary, February 2026
The Board received and reviewed the monthly summary.
- C. Budget Transfers
None.

XIII. Citizen Participation

None.

XIV. Adjournment

MOTION: (Ellsworth/Minor) Motion to adjourn the Board of Education meeting at 6:36 PM.
Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kymerli A. Gaylor, Clerk