EASTFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Eastford Elementary School
12 Westford Road
Eastford, CT 06242
October 8, 2026

Present: Lauren Barlow, Michael Bilica, Stephen Bowen, Terry Cote, Robert Ellsworth, Adam Minor, Michele Palulis

Also Present: Dr. Donna Leake, Superintendent; Carole McCombe, Principal; Dana Mutch, Director of Special Programs

I. Call to Order

Mr. Bowen called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

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

III. Woodstock Academy presentation

The Woodstock Academy Head of School Dr. Lawrence Filippelli, Principal Michael Harten, Assistant Head of Schools Amanda Soave-Curi, Associate Principal Jennifer Lachina and Director of Student Support Shannon VanderSwaagh presented a PowerPoint to the Board which highlighted the school's offerings. They answered questions from the Board and citizens in attendance.

Questions were asked of The Academy staff present. Speakers included Board Members Michael Bilica and Robert Ellsworth and Citizens Stephanie Bulan and Mary DeGostin.

IV. Citizen Participation

The Board received comments from numerous citizens regarding the designated high school proposal. Speakers included Holly Singleton, Zach Reiner, Mary DeGostin, Stephanie Bulan and Kristin Haynes.

V. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: (Bilica/Palulis) To approve the Board of Education minutes of the Regular Meeting on September 10, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Correspondence, Communication

- Agenda for the October 8, 2026 Curriculum Committee Meeting
- Letter from the Wheels to Learning Transportation Fund
- Minutes of September 10, 2026 Ad Hoc High School Committee meeting
- Letter to the Board of Education from Eastford resident Allan Platt
- Letter from EastConn, requesting a representative be appointed to the EastConn Board of Directors
- Letter from First Selectman Deb Richards regarding the 2027-2028 budget requests

VII. Committee Reports

A. Executive/Personnel— The Executive Committee met for teacher negotiations.
B. Fiscal— None.
C. Policy— None.
D. Woodstock Academy – None.
E. EastConn— None.

F. Long Range Facilities— None.
G. Transportation – None.
H. Curriculum– The Board received the agenda for the meeting held prior to this one.
I. Scholarship Steering Committee – None.
J. School Safety Committee – None.

VIII. Superintendent Report

Provided the BOE with updates including:

- Highlight of the Month - *Attending the Author presentation by Jonathan Miller
- Educational Leadership - *Ongoing support for DSP *Regular administrative team meetings *Worked on teacher contract negotiations *Submitted State Facilities Survey *Continued LGP participation *Open office hours
- Finances - *Met regularly to review status of current budget *No Title I this year *Working with EastConn on transportation quotes
- Collaboration - *Continue reaching out to area superintendents *Setting up meeting with Ashford regarding possible shared transportation *Attend meetings with area superintendents *Setting up a meeting with State Senator Jeff Gordon
- Comments on selected agenda items
- October 1 Student Count

IX. 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
- School Climate Survey and Progress Toward Goals
- 2026 Fall Sports Update
- High School Information
- Upcoming events

X. Director of Special Programs Report

The Board received the October report, which showed changes from the September report.

XI. Unfinished Business

A. Discussion from Ad Hoc High School Committee

Ms. Cote provided a summary of key points she personally took away from the Community Conversation held on September 24. She noted that the community truly wants what is best for their high school students, as does the Board. Those who attended desired transparency in the decision-making process and felt there should be as much student choice as possible. There were questions raised as to tuition and transportation.

Mr. Bowen stated that the Board is looking to obtain answers related to the questions on tuition and transportation, and answers will be researched and shared.

XII. New Business

A. 2027 Board of Education Meeting Dates

MOTION: (Bilica/Minor) To approve the 2027 Board of Education Meeting Dates. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Review and Possible Action: School Safety and Security Plan

MOTION: (Bilica/Barlow) To approve the submission of the School Safety and Security Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Update on the Area Board Chair Meetings
The Board received an email from Putnam Schools Superintendent Steven Rioux summarizing the September 20, 2026 Area Board Chair meeting. They also received an email from EastConn Director Eric Protulis which contained a letter which was sent to Governor Ned Lamont, members of the Connecticut Legislature and Commission Members, signed by the members of the Area Board Chair committee.

Mr. Bilica has attended the Area Board Chair meetings. The group is trying to advocate for a rural equity proposal and to fix the hold harmless provision. The equity formula is broken, and there does not appear to be a remedy forthcoming. The area districts hope to work together to look for opportunities to share services and avoid duplication of costs and programs.

D. Review and Possible Action: Ratification of the 2027-2030 ETA Contract
MOTION: (Cote/Bilica) To approve ratification of the 2027 – 2030 ETA Contract. Motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Additional Agenda Items

MOTION: (Minor/Bilica) To add to the Agenda New Business, XII. E. Acceptance of new supplemental reading material for Grade 4. Motion passed unanimously.

XII. New Business (cont.)

E. Acceptance of new supplemental reading material for Grade 4
MOTION: (Minor/Bilica) To accept the new supplemental reading material for Grade 4. Motion passed unanimously.

XIV. Financial Reports

A. September 2026 Disbursements–sent to BOE via email
B. Monthly Financial Summary, September 2026
The Board received and reviewed the monthly summary.
C. Budget Transfers
MOTION: (Bilica/Barlow) To authorize the proposed transfers in the FY 2027 budget:

Amount	Account From	Account To
$52,118.00	100.2190.3.111.00.5 (Behavioral Analyst, BCBA)	100.1200.3.111.00.5 (Salary, Teachers, SE)
$5,530.03	100.1000.1.111.00.5 (Salary, Teachers, Reg Ed)	100.1200.3.111.00.5 (Salary, Teachers, SE)
$1,573.08	100.2130.1.112.00.5 (Salary, Nursing)	100.1200.3.111.00.5 (Salary, Teachers, SE)
$7,000.00	100.1200.3.330.00.5 (Purchased Service, SE Certified)	100.2190.3.323.03.5 (Purchased Services, BCBA)
$2,000.00	100.1200.3.569.00.5 (Tuition, SE Summer Camp)	100.2190.3.323.03.5 (Purchased Services, BCBA)

Motion passed unanimously.

XV. Citizen Participation

The Board received comments from numerous citizens regarding the designated high school proposal. Speakers included Ashlyn Ellsworth, Natale Sciolino, Megan Pacheco, Holly Singleton, Kathy Trowbridge, Kristin Haynes and The Woodstock Academy's Principal, Michael Harten. A complete audio recording of public statements is available by request.

XVI. Adjournment

MOTION: (Ellsworth/Palulis) Motion to adjourn the Board of Education meeting at 7:33 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kymberli A. Gaylor, Clerk