



## FAIRHAVEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 30, 2025

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK  
RCUD 2025 JUN 17 AM 8:35

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Veitch, Brian Monroe, Nicole Pacheco, Kelly Ochoa

STAFF PRESENT: Superintendent Tara Kohler, Assistant Superintendent Mark Balestracci, School Business Manager Nicole Potter

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Veitch at 4:39 pm

### ***Delegations, Visitors, Etc:***

Fairhaven Fire Chief, Todd Correia

### ***Approval of Minutes:***

Motion to approve regular session minutes from March 26, 2025 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved with one abstention of Ms. Ochoa (3-0).

Motion to approve executive session minutes from March 26, 2025, for content only, made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved with one abstention of Ms. Ochoa (3-0).

Motion to approve the reorganization, regular session, and budget hearing minutes from April 9, 2025 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved (4-0).

Motion to approve executive session minutes from April 9, 2025 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved (4-0).

Motion to approve the joint session minutes with the Finance Committee from April 10, 2025 made by Mrs. Pacheco, seconded by Ms. Ochoa, approved with one abstention of Mr. Monroe (3-0).

Motion to approve the joint session minutes with the Finance Committee from April 16, 2025 made by Mr. Monroe, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved with one abstention of Mr. Veitch (3-0).

### ***Report of the Student Advisory Committee:***

Student Advisory member Finley Reynolds updated the Committee on upcoming Fairhaven High School senior festivities, as well as updated them on athletics.

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to meet in Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A, section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Custodial and Secretarial Units and litigation (G.L. c 40A judicial review) as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining/litigating position of the Fairhaven School Committee and the Chair so declares, and the Committee will reconvene in Open Session, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, roll call vote, passed unanimously (4-0).

Meeting paused at 4:46 pm.

Meeting called back to order by Mr. Veitch at 5:06 pm.

### ***Reports and Recommendations of the Superintendent:***

#### ***Radio Antenna Installation at Fairhaven High School: Fire Chief Todd Correia***

Fairhaven Fire Chief, Todd Correia requested to install radio antennas and equipment in Fairhaven High School. Chief Correia explained why it will help reception, etc. in that particular area. He noted the work will take place in the Summer months so it will not disturb school while in session.

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to allow the Police and Fire Departments to install radio antenna and equipment in Fairhaven High School, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passed unanimously (4-0).

### ***NEASC Update:***

Superintendent Kohler presented the final NEASC report to the Committee (Attachment A). Stating if there are budget cuts the District will have to submit a Substantive Change Report to NEASC and could possibly be in danger of losing the Accreditation.

*Update on Outdoor Classrooms:*

Assistant Superintendent Balestracci confirmed to the Committee that the permits have been issued. Mr. Veitch asked when the project will be completed. Assistant Superintendent Balestracci will know more after his meeting tomorrow. Mr. Monroe reminded the Committee the money for the Outdoor Classrooms came from the Esser Grant. Superintendent Kohler stated the HVAC study is from the Esser Grant as well.

*Budget Update and vote to approve the FY26 Budget:*

Superintendent Kohler presented two budget options to the Committee (Attachment B). Version 1, \$25,777,688 and Version 2, \$25,656,166, saving money on transportation and salaries. Discussion ensued on which number to vote on. A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to wait to certify the FY26 Budget until the morning of Town Meeting, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved unanimously (4-0).

*Fairhaven High School Storage Facility Update:*

Superintendent Kohler updated the Committee on the Storage Facility, recapping them on a recent meeting she attended regarding occupancy. Mr. Monroe asked again about the total of the legal fees. Superintendent Kohler noted she will work on getting the information.

*Upcoming Events:*

The next School Committee Meeting will be held May 3, 2025, prior to the Town Meeting, with the Town Meeting being May 3, 2025 at 9:00am. There will be a School Committee Workshop on May 14, 2025 at 4:30 pm, followed by a School Committee meeting at 6:30 pm.

*New Business:*

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to ratify the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Custodial Unit Contract, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passed unanimously (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to ratify the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Secretarial Unit Contract, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passed unanimously (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to allow the Fairhaven High School PTO the use of the Turf Field for an Old Fashioned Field Day during Senior Week (May 27, 2025 - May 30, 2025), seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passed unanimously (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to accept a \$1,735 donation from the Elizabeth Hastings Middle School PTO for the 6th Grade Field Trip, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passed unanimously (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to accept a \$1,500 donation from the Elizabeth Hastings Middle School PTO for the 8th Grade Field Trip, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passes unanimously (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to accept a \$6,968 donation from the Elizabeth Hastings Middle School PTO from the 8th Walkathon for the 8th Grade Cruise, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, passes unanimously (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Monroe to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Pacheco, approved unanimously (4-0).

Adjourned at 5:43pm..

Sheri Souza  
Secretary to the Fairhaven School Committee

Approved, June 11, 2025





NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES  
Commission on Public Schools

Director for Accreditation and School Improvement

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April 11, 2025

Tara Kohler  
Superintendent  
Fairhaven Public Schools  
128 Washington Street  
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Dear Mrs. Kohler:

The Commission on Public Schools, at its March 9-10 meeting, reviewed the Initial District Accreditation Report from the recent visit to Fairhaven Public Schools, including Fairhaven High School, Elizabeth Hastings Middle School, East Fairhaven Elementary School, and LeRoy L. Wood Elementary School, and voted to award district accreditation in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Fairhaven Public Schools is the first fully accredited district in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Congratulations!

The Commission was impressed with the progress made on the Priority Areas for Growth and increased alignment with the Principles of Effective Practice since the time of the Collaborative Conference Visit and wishes to commend the following:

- the pride in the school community felt by staff, students, and parents
- the comprehensive school safety protocols in all schools
- the dedication toward meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of all students
- the mutually respectful and caring relationships between students and staff
- the opportunities for students to engage in civic activities
- the flexible grouping model for instruction that supports rigorous, personalized student learning
- the targeted instruction and flexible grouping model for supporting students at the elementary level (WIN block)
- the commitment to a team-building culture, student enthusiasm, and consistent instructional support that holds learners accountable
- the 1:1 technology used across all curricular areas and grade levels to support, enhance, and demonstrate student learning
- the structures for collaboration across the district and high level of collaboration among teachers
- the community partnerships between the high school and outside organizations
- the faculty's commitment to facilitating student success



Tara Kohler  
April 11, 2025  
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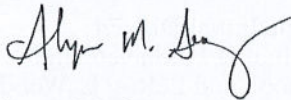
The Commission was pleased to note that all of the Foundational Elements in the Standards for Accreditation have been met by the district.

The Commission requests a First Report of Progress and Planning by February 1, 2026. This report will ask about the district's alignment to the Foundational Elements, request information about exemplary practices, and request a copy of the revised District Growth/Improvement Plan based on the Next Steps provided by the visiting team for each of the Priority Areas for Growth.

The Commission congratulates the district for completing the first two phases of the Accreditation Process: the Self-Reflection and the Accreditation visit. The next step will be the Follow-Up Process, during which the district will continue to implement a School Growth/Improvement Plan, based on the Priority Areas aligned with the Standards for Accreditation and report progress toward implementing those priorities. The Commission's Follow-Up Seminars should help the district develop a schedule for implementing your Growth/Improvement Plans. In addition, the Commission's website includes information on Follow-Up procedures.

The district's Accreditation status will be reviewed when the Commission considers the First Report of Progress and Planning. The district's First Report of Progress and Planning should be submitted through the Accreditation Portal by clicking on the green "Mark Progress Report Complete" button. Please notify the Commission office immediately of any changes in the names of any of the principals and/or superintendent, along with their corresponding e-mail addresses, by submitting this information electronically to [cpss-air@neasc.org](mailto:cpss-air@neasc.org).

Sincerely,



Alyson M. Geary

AMG/mms

cc: Andrew Kulak, Principal, Fairhaven High School  
Kyle Alves, Principal, Elizabeth Hastings Middle School  
Wendy Weidenfeller, Principal, East Fairhaven Elementary School  
Pamela Pacheco, Principal, LeRoy L. Wood Elementary School  
Colin Veitch, Chair, Fairhaven School Committee  
Kathleen A. Montagano, Chair of the Visiting Team  
Amy Cetner, Chair, Commission on Public Schools

# **SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**

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## **NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES Commission on Public Schools**

Principals of member schools must report to the Commission within sixty days of occurrence any substantive change in the school which has an impact on the school's ability to meet any of the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. The Report of Substantive Change must describe the change itself as well as detail the impact on the school's ability to meet the Standards. The following are potential areas where there might be negative substantive changes which must be reported:

- elimination of fine arts, practical arts, and student activities
- diminished upkeep and maintenance of facilities
- significantly decreased funding - cuts in the level of administrative and supervisory staffing
- cuts in the number of teachers and/or guidance counselors
- grade level responsibilities of the principal
- cuts in the number of support staff
- decreases in student services
- cuts in the educational media staffing
- increases in student enrollment that cannot be accommodated
- takeover by the state
- inordinate user fees
- changes in the student population that warrant program or staffing modification(s) that cannot be accommodated, e.g., the number of special needs students or vocational students or students with limited English proficiency



State Code		FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budgeted	FY26 Budgeted - V1	FY26 Budgeted - V2
1000	District Leadership & Administration	218,806	277,278	243,675	246,200	252,290	252,290
2210	School Leadership	34,642	34,642	58,125	65,225	65,225	65,225
2250	Tech/Maintenance Agreements	5,351	0	6,200	28,975	28,975	28,975
2357	Professional Development	62,782	42,349	87,473	147,951	147,951	147,951
2410	Textbooks	37,924	99,559	122,415	56,802	56,802	56,802
2430	Instructional Equip./General Supplies	174,140	204,340	289,861	188,363	188,363	188,363
2440	Other Instructional Services (Tutoring)	96,088	92,086	76,161	89,780	89,780	89,780
2450	Instructional Technology	470,370	454,956	358,276	219,549	219,549	219,549
2710	Guidance and Adjustment	329	0	6,512	18,000	18,000	18,000
2800	Psychological Services	13,617	12,740	12,364	9,000	9,000	9,000
	<b>TOTAL INSTRUCTION</b>	<b>895,243</b>	<b>940,672</b>	<b>1,017,387</b>	<b>823,645</b>	<b>823,645</b>	<b>823,645</b>
3200	Medical Health Services	11,802	18,195	5,967	9,866	9,866	9,866
3300	Transportation Services	1,642,392	1,713,425	1,836,410	1,875,506	1,875,506	1,814,984
3500	Athletics/Student Activities	233,894	233,894	303,894	383,691	383,691	383,691
3400	Food Service	42,952	0	14,478	1,200	1,200	1,200
3600	School Security	115,354	3,291	52,203	35,000	35,000	35,000
	<b>TOTAL STUDENT SERVICES</b>	<b>2,046,394</b>	<b>1,968,805</b>	<b>2,212,952</b>	<b>2,305,263</b>	<b>2,305,263</b>	<b>2,244,741</b>
4110	Custodial Services	1,600	1,726	2,440	1,500	1,500	1,500
4120	Heating of Buildings	218,094	247,399	286,226	240,000	240,000	240,000
4130	Utility Services	354,147	266,360	358,783	402,260	402,260	402,260
4200	Maintenance	895,111	991,286	938,519	321,925	321,925	321,925
4225	Building Security Equipment	2,280	3,657	64,834	30,882	30,882	30,882
4400	Networking and Telecommunications	12,648	1,840	7,447	2,500	2,500	2,500
	<b>TOTAL MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>1,483,880</b>	<b>1,512,268</b>	<b>1,658,249</b>	<b>999,067</b>	<b>999,067</b>	<b>999,067</b>
5260	Non-Employee Insurance	3,390	3,390	3,458	3,390	3,390	3,390
5300	Lease Agreements	51,943	46,352	30,701	28,950	28,950	28,950
9000	Out of District Tuitions	1,067,477	1,207,809	1,442,420	1,464,019	1,464,019	1,464,019
	OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES	5,922,201	5,956,574	6,608,842	5,870,534	5,876,624	5,816,102
	SALARY				18,949,679	19,901,064	19,840,064
	<b>TOTAL REQUEST</b>	<b>22,179,843</b>	<b>22,910,638</b>	<b>23,753,641</b>	<b>24,820,213</b>	<b>25,777,688</b>	<b>25,656,166</b>
	Required NSS	20,975,457	22,300,571	23,768,493	24,687,013	25,777,688	25,777,688
	ACTUAL NSS	23,535,014	23,409,914	24,311,242		957,475	
	\$ Amount +/- from Budget Request	1,355,171	1,109,343	557,601			-121,522
	% +/- NSS	12.20%	5%	2.3%		3.86%	

Year	Chapter 70 Funding	Actual Town Contribution	School Dept Budget Request as approved at town meeting	Required Net School Spending	Over/Under NSS	Actual NSS	NSS %
2015	7,383,635.00	11,467,703.00	18,348,083.00	18,754,655.00	(406,572.00)	18,851,338.00	0.52%
2016	7,428,260.00	11,584,389.00	18,737,194.00	19,025,420.00	(288,226.00)	19,012,649.00	-0.07%
2017	7,526,930.00	12,023,042.00	19,385,787.00	19,026,410.00	359,377.00	19,549,972.00	2.75%
2018	7,580,960.00	12,510,814.00	19,783,472.00	19,138,449.00	645,023.00	20,091,774.00	4.98%
2019	7,794,726.00	13,177,001.00	20,383,354.00	19,508,512.00	874,842.00	20,971,727.00	7.50%
2020	8,156,470.00	13,339,109.00	21,302,516.00	20,489,575.00	812,941.00	21,495,579.00	4.91%
2021	8,291,230.00	13,734,064.00	21,546,426.00	20,980,114.00	566,312.00	22,025,294.00	4.98%
2022	8,343,040.00	15,191,974.00	22,179,843.00	20,975,457.00	1,204,386.00	23,535,014.00	12.20%
2023	9,027,153.00	14,382,761.00	22,910,638.00	22,300,571.00	610,067.00	23,409,914.00	4.97%
2024	9,631,703.00	14,679,539.00	23,753,641.00	23,768,493.00	(14,852.00)	24,311,242.00	2.28%
2025	9,797,583.00	15,022,630.00	24,820,213.00	24,687,013.00	133,200.00		
2026	9,916,833.00	15,854,765.00	25,771,598.00	25,777,268.00	(5,670.00)		
2026	9,916,833.00	15,339,333.00	25,256,166.00	25,777,268.00	(521,102.00)		