

Pine Plains Central School District
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amie Fredericks, President
Fred Couse, Jr. , Vice President
Claire Copley-Eisenberg
James Griffin
Heidi Johnson
Joseph Kiernan
Jean Stapf

ALSO PRESENT:

Brian Timm, Superintendent of Schools
Laura Rafferty, Business Manager
Julia W. Tomaine, District Clerk
Hailey Lamping, Student BOE Member

OPEN MEETING

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Mrs. Amie Fredericks, Board President. She then led the Pledge of Allegiance. She read the Mission and Vision Statements:

Mission Statement:

We develop the whole child to be a lifelong learner and a productive member of the global community.

Vision Statement:

We are a district of choice offering exceptional opportunities to engage and excite our entire school community.

REPORT OF BOARD AND STANDING COMMITTEES

The Audit – Financial Planning Committee met this evening before the scheduled Board meeting at 5:00 pm.

The Audit-Financial Planning Committee shared information on current financial issues that impacts the budget and the budget planning process.

Mr. Couse suggested that the Board take more time before voting on the recommended resolution to close Cold Spring Early Learning Center under new business.

Mr. Kiernan moved and Mr. Griffin seconded the motion to table the resolution.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-167)

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS WISHING TO SPEAK

For the allotted thirty minutes of public comment multiple members of the community commented on the topic of closing an elementary school.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

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Mrs. Laura Rafferty, Business Official, conducted a Budget Workshop to present a comprehensive overview of the district's budget development process for the 2026-27 fiscal year. The workshop outlined the timeline, revenue sources, expense projections, and tax cap implications that guide the district's financial planning.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Madilyn Shiels, Chris Macri and Eliza Baden, students from the DCC Stats class gave a presentation to the Board of Education on "Does the phone ban have an effect on productivity in school?"
2. Dr. Timm shared with the Board of education that BOCES was taking nominations for two vacancies for the next school year.
3. Dr. Timm shared the Administrators' reports.

STUDENT BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Hailey Lamping shared the following information:

1. Seymour Playground Golf Event
2. Valentine's Day Dance
3. FFA STEAM Convention

OLD BUSINESS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Griffin moved and Mr. Couse seconded a motion to walk on a proposal from Terracon Consultants – NYT, Inc.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-168)

Mr. Griffin moved and Mrs. Stapf seconded a motion to amend the current consent agenda to include the following resolution: Approve the following resolution: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby accepts the letter proposal from Terracon Consultants – NYT, Inc. ("Terracon"), dated January 6, 2026, as presented to the Board at this meeting, for Geotechnical Engineering Services in connection with the Stissing Mountain Jr.-Sr. High School Improvements Capital Project, at a base fee of between \$19,500 and \$22,300, and authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to execute the Agreement for Services with Terracon, which Proposal and Agreement for Services are incorporated by reference within the minutes of this meeting.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-169)

Mr. Kiernan moved and Mr. Griffin seconded a motion to approve consent items 1-10:

1. To accept the minutes from January 8, 2026.

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2. To approve the attached Financial Reports:
 - Treasurer's Report (December 2025)
 - Appropriations Report (December 2025)
 - Revenue Status Report (December 2025)
 - Extra-Classroom Report (December 2025)
 - Cafeteria Report (December 2025)
 - Claims Auditor's Reports and Cash Disbursements – Warrants
3. To acknowledge a budget transfer in the amount of \$54,673.41.
4. To approve the attached recommendations of the Committee on Special Education and authorize the funds to implement special education programs and services consistent with such recommendations noting that these are confidential.
5. To approve the following resolution: Resolved, that the Board of Education authorizes its attorneys, Shaw, Perelson, May & Lambert, LLP to execute a Consent Judgment in a tax certiorari proceeding captioned NE Family Holdings LLC v. Town of Northeast and Pine Plains Central School District; AND IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes the refund of taxes as required by the terms of the Consent Judgment.
6. To approve the Single Audit Plan for year ending June 30, 2025.
7. To accept the Single Audit Corrective Action Plan year ending June 30, 2025.
8. To approve the amended 2025-26 District Safety Plan.
9. To approve an overnight field trip:
 - State Leaders Experience, S. Rhoades
10. To approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby accepts the letter proposal from Terracon Consultants – NYT, Inc. (“Terracon”), dated January 6, 2026, as presented to the Board at this meeting, for Geotechnical Engineering Services in connection with the Stissing Mountain Jr.-Sr. High School Improvements Capital Project, at a base fee of between \$19,500 and \$22,300, and authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to execute the Agreement for Services with Terracon, which Proposal and Agreement for Services are incorporated by reference within the minutes of this meeting.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-170)

NEW BUSINESS- PERSONNEL

Mr. Kiernan moved and Mr. Griffin seconded a motion to appoint Emily Hughes to the position of Special Education Teacher as a long-term substitute, effective January 29, 2026 through June 30, 2026, to serve at the pleasure of the Board at a rate of A1 of the PPFE 2025-26 Salary Schedule.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-171)

Mr. Couse moved and Mrs. Stapf seconded a motion to grant Employee #2025-26-7, an extended sick leave, according to Article 6.1.2.2.1 - 6.1.2.2.5 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and the Pine Plains Federation of Educators, Inc. effective on or about April 13, 2026 pending documentation.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-172)

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Mr. Griffin moved and Mr. Couse seconded a motion to grant 2025-26-8, an extended sick leave, according to Article 6.1.2.2.1 - 6.1.2.2.5 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and the Pine Plains Federation of Educators, Inc. effective on or about May 18, 2026 pending documentation.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-173)

Mrs. Stapf moved and Mr. Griffin seconded a motion to approve Employee #2025-26-9 request for an extended sick leave according to Article XIV (2 - 2.2.5) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the District and the Pine Plains School Related Personnel beginning January 23, 2026 per the documentation from the employee's physician.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-174)

Mr. Couse moved and Mr. Griffin seconded a motion to appoint the following substitutes for the 2025-26 school year, pending completion of all requirements:

-Matthew Damon, Teacher

-Nia Cassinelli, RN

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-175)

NEW BUSINESS – OTHER

Mr. Griffin moved and Mr. Couse seconded a motion to table the following resolution until the February 3, 2026 regular Board of Education meeting:

WHEREAS, due to declining enrollment in the District's schools, the Board of Education has been exploring the feasibility of consolidating its three (3) school buildings into two (2) school buildings and reorganizing the grade levels in the remaining school buildings to develop a responsible and viable economic and educational plan for the District into the future that maintains programmatic offerings; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of the consideration of consolidation of the District's schools, the District engaged the services of Dr. Ross Haber, who conducted an Enrollment Projection and Facility Analysis in February of 2025, that was presented to the public at the March 5, 2025 Board of Education meeting and subsequently discussed in open meeting at the March 19, 2025 Board of Education meeting; and

WHEREAS, wherein Dr. Haber concluded in his analysis that due to the significant decline in enrollment (almost 50% over the past 20 years), that the District could consolidate the three (3) schools to two (2) schools, with Seymour Smith Intermediate Learning Center serving grades pre-kindergarten through five, and Stissing Mountain Jr./Sr. High School continuing to serve students in grades six through twelve, without impacting the delivery of services or programmatic opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, following the receipt of a five year fiscal plan analysis during July of 2024, Dr. Timm began discussing enrollment trends and foundation aid with the Board of Education in August of 2024, followed by a workshop on enrollment trends and instructional staffing in November of 2024, as well as two workshops in March of 2025 regarding enrollment projections and facilities analysis and a facilities utilization; and further explored the concept of consolidation, and reorganization at five (5) Town Board meetings and three (3) community and staff forums between August and through November of 2025, and has presented this to the Board

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of Education; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the above, the District also undertook a community survey collected from the forums and emailed to the residents served by the District, and in December of 2025, Dr. Timm and the Board of Education began discussing survey results and the feedback received from the community; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Timm reviewed for the members of the public all efforts undertaken by the District since the summer of 2024 in connection with the possible consolidation of schools at the January 8, 2026 Board meeting, recommending that the matter be put to a Board vote at the January 20, 2026 Board meeting, after community engagement through public community fora; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools have engaged the community in the discussions of merging three (3) school buildings into two (2) school buildings, to solicit and hear public comment and to answer questions; and

WHEREAS, these matters have been publicly discussed and deliberated at numerous meetings since the summer of 2024, and the public has had the opportunity to be heard at open meetings of the Pine Plains Central School District, at Town Board meetings, and at community and staff forums; and

WHEREAS, consideration of the environmental impact, if any, is a matter to be resolved before taking action such as the closing of a school building; and

WHEREAS, a school closing is a Type II activity within the meaning of the New York State Environmental Quality Act (SEQRA) and its implementing regulations at Section 617.5(c)(10), wherein “routine activities of educational institutions, including expansion of existing facilities by less than 10,000 square feet of gross floor area and school closings, but not changes in use related to such closings” are designated as Type II actions under SEQRA;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education as the only lead agency, hereby declares itself lead agency for the determination of the environmental impact, if any, of the closing of the Cold Spring Early Learning Center, and determines such action to constitute a Type II activity within the meaning of Section 617.5(c)(10) of the SEQRA Regulations; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, after discussion and deliberation, hereby determines that it is in the best financial and other interests of the Pine Plains Central School District to approve Dr. Timm’s recommendation, to move grades pre-K through 1 to the Seymour Smith Intermediate Learning Center, as presented to the Board of Education at the January 8, 2026 meeting, commencing with the 2026-27 school year.

VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-176)

PUBLIC COMMENT

BOARD COMMENT

Mrs. Fredericks commented on the upcoming important dates:

ADJOURN

Mr. Couse moved and Mr. Kiernan seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:51 pm.

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VOTE: Motion passed unanimously. (Motion #2025/26-177)

Respectfully submitted,

Julia W. Tomaine,
District Clerk