PUBLIC HEARING
Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2026; 6:00 p.m.
Auditorium, Nonnewaug High School
5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, CT
OFFICIAL MINUTES – BOARD APPROVED – MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026

Present:
Chris Matta, Chairman
Alice Jones
Jim Crocker
Carol Ann Brown
Michael Carbonneau
Caren Lipinski
Bridget Calabrese

Absent:
Tikva Rose

Also Present:
Brian Murphy, Superintendent
Tina Tanguay, Director of Finance and Operations
Dina Ericson, Director of Student Services
Taryn Fernandez, Director of Teaching and Learning
Jamie McLaughlin, Moderator

Patricia Paige, Board Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order
Chairman Matta called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Introductions
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and acquaintances were made

III. Appointment of Moderator
Chairman Matta appointed Mr. Jamie McLaughlin as moderator of the meeting.

IV. Appointment of Meeting Clerk by the Moderator
Mr. McLaughlin appointed Patricia Paige as meeting clerk.

The Regional School District 14 Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, national/ethnic origin, age, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or disability in its programs, activities, and employment practices as set forth in compliance with the Office of Civil Rights, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. Any person having inquiries concerning Regional School District 14 Public Schools' compliance with Section 504, Title VI or Title IX should contact: Dina Ericson, Interim Director of Student Services, Regional School District 14, 5 Minortown Road, PO Box 469, Woodbury, CT 06798 (203) 263-0416

V. Call of the Meeting

Mr. McLaughlin read the Call of the Meeting:
To present and receive questions about the Regional School District 14 Superintendent's proposed budget for 2026-2027. Mr. McLaughlin deferred to Superintendent Brian Murphy to present the proposed budget.

VI. Presentation of the Superintendent's proposed Region 14 Budget for the 2026/2027 School Year

- Budget increase is 4.6% — below the state average of 5.1%
- Approximately 75% of the budget is salary (40%) and benefits (39%); health insurance alone is up 16%. Superintendent Murphy noted some districts are seeing 24–30% increases and one northwest CT district is up nearly 40%
- Key additions: full-time Spanish teacher for grades K–4, 0.5 FTE technology specialist (a shared services position with Region 14 and Town of Bethlehem); key reductions: 1 FTE 1st grade teacher at Mitchell Elementary
- Outplacement costs for 14 special ed students remain a significant and a growing driver
- 2 full-time social workers, previously funded by a federal grant that was cut, were retained after the district worked with state and federal delegations to recover over $200,000, a savings to the taxpayers

Agriscience funding advocacy

- The district formed a public an Agri-science funding committee in the fall, which includes board members, the state representative from Woodbury Karen Reddington-Huges, and stakeholders from both towns, to advocate for increased state funding
- Superintendent Murphy is a member of the State of Connecticut's Agriscience and Technology Committee working with the state Board of Education to increase state agriscience funding.

VII. Budget Comments and Questions by the Public

Gary Suslavich, Woodbury
Raised pointed questions about inflation figures, cost per pupil, class sizes, and the priority of adding an elementary school Spanish teacher

Stephanie Chapman, Woodbury
Supports the budget as proposed
Happy with work Superintendent Murphy is doing, feels like district is improving, thankful for Vo-ag program, no one immuned to inflation

Katy Aseltine, Woodbury
Supports the budget as proposed
Argued that elementary Spanish improves ELA and SAT scores by building Greek and Latin root knowledge

Mike Sturges, Woodbury
Supports the budget as proposed
Wants his daughter to take the new Spanish class

VIII. <u>Adjournment</u>
Hearing no further comments, Mr. McLaughlin adjourned the Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patricia Paige
Board Clerk

Recorded and filed subject to Board of Education approval by: Patricia Paige, Board Clerk