MINUTES
THOMASTON BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. Thomaston Town Hall - Meeting Room One

This meeting can be attended in-person by the public or viewed live/recorded on the Board of Education YouTube Channel.

(Bylaws of the Board 9322 - Public and Executive Sessions and Bylaws of the Board 9326.1 - Taping/Recording Board Meetings)

Mission Statement:

In a partnership of family, school and community, our mission is to educate, challenge and inspire each individual to excel and become a contributing member of society.

2026-2027 Board of Education Goals:

1. By June 2027, the Thomaston Board of Education will adopt a districtwide curriculum alignment policy requiring that all English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum documents in grades PreK–12 explicitly identify connections to the Portrait of a Graduate (POG) competencies, as evidenced by formally approved curriculum maps that include POG indicators and a documented review process.
2. By June 2027, the Thomaston Board of Education will adopt a family-school communication policy that streamlines districtwide messaging practices as evidenced by published protocols and parent school climate survey results.

Members:

Nathan Vieira, Chairperson	Sarah Ethier, Vice Chairperson	Tanya Galpin, Secretary
Cara Files	Francine Coss, Superintendent	Marissa McGee Treasurer
Amy Sedgwick	Zachary Brostek, Student Representative	Roxy Fainer
Larry Duffany	Dustin Galpin, Student Representative	Matthew Van Ormer

1. Establishment of a Quorum and Call to Order

(Bylaws of the Board 9325.1-Quorum)

1.1. **Chairperson Nathan Vieira** called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m

1.2. Board Members in Attendance: **Chairperson Nathan Vieira, Vice Chairperson Sarah Ethier, Treasurer Marissa McGee, Secretary Tanya Galpin, Roxy Fainer, Amy Sedgwick, Larry Duffany, Matthew VanOrmer**

1.3. Board Member in Virtual Attendance: **Cara Files**

1.4. Ex Officio Member in Virtual Attendance: **Superintendent Francine Coss**

1.5. Student Representatives Absent: **Dustin Galpin, Zachary Brostek** *(the student representatives were not required to attend this meeting)*

1.6. Others in Attendance: First Selectman Rich Sileo, Luke Freimuth, Chip Quinn, Allan Olivero, Robert Galpin, Nancy Galpin, Bert Galpin,Tracy Decker, Michelina Stanley

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Participation ▲▲▲ *(to be read aloud by the Board Chairperson prior to soliciting public comment)* - None

(Bylaws of the Board 9325 – Meeting Conduct) and *Community Relations 1120 - Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings*

The Board welcomes public participation in accordance with the rules of common courtesy and the Bylaws of the Board 9325 – Meeting Conduct:

- *TIME LIMITS: Five minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of twenty minutes to each subject matter, unless modified by the Chairperson to ensure fairness or to accommodate significant public interest.*
- *ORDER and DISRUPTION: Conduct that materially disrupts the orderly conduct of the meeting shall not be permitted. A speaker who persists in materially disruptive conduct after warning may have their privilege of address terminated by the Chairperson solely to restore order. If necessary to restore order, the Chairperson may take reasonable steps consistent with constitutional standards to allow the Board to continue the meeting.*
- *STUDENTS and PERSONNEL MATTERS: Consistent with Policy 1120, oral presentations shall not be used to address confidential student matters or confidential personnel matters. Comments involving such matters may be redirected to appropriate administrative or statutory processes in order to protect privacy, due process, and legal obligations. This provision shall be applied in a viewpoint-neutral manner.*
- *CIVILITY and LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY: Speakers shall conduct themselves in a manner that does not materially disrupt the meeting. Speech shall not be restricted based on viewpoint, criticism, tone, or disagreement with the Board, its members, or its policies. While the Board does not seek to stifle public comment, speakers remain legally responsible for their own statements. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as prior restraint or as a determination by the Board regarding the legality of any comment.*
- *LIMITED BOARD RESPONSE:*
  - *1) Chair-Only Response - The Board Chairperson may, at their discretion, provide a brief and limited response following public comment.*
  - *2) Permitted Scope of Response - Any response shall be limited to one or more of the following purposes:*
    - *Acknowledging the speaker's comments.*
    - *Clarifying Board policy or procedure.*
    - *Correcting clear factual inaccuracies related to publicly available information.*
    - *Explaining the appropriate process for addressing a concern.*
    - *Indicating that a matter may be considered for inclusion on a future agenda.*
  - *3) Informational Nature - Responses are informational only and shall not constitute debate, deliberation, or Board action.*
  - *4) No Dialogue - Public participation shall not be used as a forum for dialogue. Speakers shall not engage in rebuttal or follow-up during the public comment period.*
  - *5) Discretion Not to Respond - The Board Chairperson is not required to respond to every comment at the meeting. The absence of a response shall not be construed as agreement or disagreement.*

4. Discussion on Budget Deficit Estimated for 2025-2026 and Budget Deficit Projected for 2026-2027

Chairperson Nathan Vieira's Detailed Discussion can be heard here.

Summary:
Chairperson Vieira discussed the Spending Freeze memorandum that was sent out earlier in the week by **Superintendent Francine Coss**. A copy of the memorandum was made available at the meeting and can be viewed here.

Chairperson Vieira stated that outstanding purchase orders are being reviewed as well as contacting vendors to determine which orders can be closed. Approximately $127,000 in purchase orders are currently being reviewed, although some cannot be closed due to required expenditures, such as mandated school inspections.

The Board also reviewed the 2025–2026 budget overage, which totaled approximately $476,000. Available funds, including approximately $65,000 in DRIP funds, $42,000 in the 2% lapsing account, and approximately $34,500 designated for HVAC repairs, could offset approximately $141,500 of the overage. This would reduce the projected overage to approximately $334,000. The final amount will be adjusted based on the purchase orders that can be closed. The Board will continue reviewing the numbers and available offsets in preparation for the upcoming Board of Finance meeting.

Chairperson Vieira stated that a request was made for authorization to contact the Town to request an audit to review the financial numbers and processes, identify areas for improvement, and establish stronger financial reporting practices moving forward. **Chairperson Vieira** asked for approval from the board to reach out to the town and request an audit to review financial numbers, identify areas for improvement and establish stronger financial reporting practices moving forward.

Sarah Ethier *motioned that the board authorize* ***Nathan Vieira*** *to request on behalf of the board that the town conduct an independent audit of board of education expenditures and revenues for the 2025-26 fiscal year to determine the scope and cause of any over expenditures of funds by the board of education last year as well as to review and comment on projected expenditures and revenues for the 26-27 fiscal year and* ***Tanya Galpin*** *seconded.*

Discussion Link
Opposed: None
Abstain: None
Motion Carried: 9-0-0

Sarah Ethier *motioned that the board direct superintendent and all school district staff retain any and all records related to the board expenditures and revenues for the last fiscal year and the current fiscal year and to cooperate fully with any audit conducted in the direction of the town and* ***Larry Duffany*** *seconded.*

Discussion: None
Opposed: None
Abstain: None
Motion Carried: 9-0-0

Chairperson Vieira provided a brief overview of the documents that were discussed at the Board of Finance meeting and shared at this Board of Education Meeting .

BOE Budget Analysis - 2025-2026 and 2026-2027

Board of Finance Chairperson Luke Freimuth provided a detailed explanation of the BOE Budget Analysis, which he authored. Chairperson Luke Freimuth's discussion can be heard here.

5. Adjournment

***Tanya Galpin** motioned and **Larry Duffany** seconded to adjourn.*
Discussion: None
Opposed: None
Abstain: None
Motion Carried: 9-0-0
***Chairpersonon Nathan Vieira** adjourned the meeting at 7:52p.m.*