Ashland School Committee Minutes
September 25, 2024

Ashland Town Hall
101 Main Street
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

Present:	Laurie Tosti, Chair Tina Fitanides, Secretary Paul Kendall, Member Marcy Culverwell, Member James Adams, Superintendent Michael Caira, Assistant Superintendent
Absent:	Marc Terry, Vice Chair Chris Mathieu, Director of Finance Abhishek Karthik, student representative, Ashland High School

Agenda Review and adoption
Ms. Tosti then reviewed the agenda items for the meeting. She took roll call and asked the School Committee members to approve the agenda as presented.
Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: Present and AYE
Ms. Fitanides: Present and AYE
Mr. Kendall: Present and AYE
Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE

Public Comment
None

New Staff Introductions
Superintendent Adams reported that we have over 40 new faculty and staff members joining Ashland Public Schools this year. The Principals of each school, including Erica Linares, Assistant Superintendent of Warren School and the Director of the preschool introduced their new staff by name. Several new hires were in attendance at the meeting to meet the School Committee members in person.

Student Presentations: Mindess School, Mindess Morning News
Jenna Larrenaga and Carolyn Breault, Computer teacher, joined three students to present the Mindess Morning News. This is a daily announcement project for fifth grade students that is filmed at Mindess using a green-screen, table and microphone to mimic an actual news desk. Lexi Jablonski, Tess Rosa and Emma Carroll, fifth grade students showed samples of the Mindess Morning News and answered questions from the School Committee members.

Ashland High School Boys Basketball Overnight Travel: 12/7/24 - 12/8/24
Coach Mike Normant, Variety Boys Basketball coach, is proposing to do an overnight trip with this team to the Craigville Retreat Center in Centerville, MA for leadership training and team

building. He has hosted a similar trip in the past, and it has been successful. Coach Normant was unable to attend the school committee meeting, so Dr. Caira presented the trip proposal in his place. Ms. Fitanides moved to approve the trip as presented, Ms. Culver seconded the motion. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

Warrant Approvals
Between September 12, 2024 and September 25, 2024, Paul Kendall, authorized by his signature payables in the amount of $ 168,123.53. This includes General Fund expenses of $ 51,153.97, Revolving expenses of $ 116,960.20, and Meals Tax expenses of $9.36.

Superintendent's Report
Superintendent Adams reports that students and teachers have been in school every day in September with no breaks (aside from Labor Day at the beginning of the month) and we've gotten into a good rhythm and routine. There have been a few curious and unusual circumstances – for example, there was a coyote spotted recently near the Mindess School. School administrators were able to work in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency and the APS to keep the students safe, and able to play in the playground, while maintaining a "coyote watch".

Bussing and school transportation has been mostly issue free. This week, bus drivers are checking student's bus passes to confirm that all those students who are riding the bus have registered and paid to ride.

Mr. Adams met with Police Chief Rossi this week. They discussed future staffing of the police to have a full-time Student Resource Officer at the high school, and ultimately, one at the middle school, too.

Assistant Superintendent's Update
Dr. Caira reported that teachers have started using iReady to do assessments with students. MCAS data has been released by the state. He is working to finalize professional development plans for November 5, 2024.

Action Items / Discussion
Fiscal Year 2025 School Choice Allocations
Mr. Adams reviewed the allocation of an additional $153K to schools and departments across the district. Mr. Kendall moves to accept the School Choice allocations has presented. Ms. Fitanides seconded the motion. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

International Students/Foreign Exchange Students: School Year 2025-2026
Mr. Kendall moves to approve the 2025-2026 International Student tuition rate of $15,100 with an additional $2,000 for students requiring ELL, 504, or IEP services. Ms. Fitanides seconds the

motion. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

Policies
ACAB - Sex-Based Discrimination and Harassment
No changes were requested by the school committee members to the updates of this policy. Ms. Fitanides moves to accept the updated policy as presented. Ms. Culverwell seconds. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

ADF - Wellness
No changes were requested by the school committee members to the updates of this policy. Ms. Fitanides moves to accept the updated policy as presented. Ms. Culverwell seconds. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

JLCED - Guidelines for Management of Life-Threatening Allergies
Jen Taylor updated the language under “Parent’s Responsibilities”. Mr. Adams will share the edit with the committee, and it was agreed they would vote on the updated policy during the next School Committee meeting.

Consent Agenda
Mr. Kendall moved to approve the Consent Agenda items. Ms. Fitanides seconds the motion. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

Reports of School Committee Members
Ms. Culverwell reported that she attended Back to School Nights at most of the schools and they were all very well done. She was especially impressed with a Spanish teacher at the high school and her positive attitude. Ms. Fitanides also attended the High School Back to School Night at the high school and reported that several teachers commented on the positive impact of the new cell phone policy, where students have to store them away at the beginning of each class session. Ms. Fitanides also attended a recent ASHPAC meeting. ASHPAC will be hosting their annual Lighting the Way awards on October 8th. There will also be an Easter Seals presentation scheduled for November 5.

An Open House for the new Launch program (18-22 year old students) will be held on Friday, 9/27 in the afternoon.

Mr. Kendall reports that he also attended the Back to School Night at the high school. He also attended a policy sub-committee meeting.

At 6:52 pm, Mr. Kendall moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Terry seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen King
Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents used during the meeting
3B - Mindess News
3C - Boys Basketball, 12/7-12/8 - Overnight and Out of State Travel
4A - FY25 School Choice allocations
4B - Foreign Exchange/International Students: SY 2025-2026
4C 3 - Clean Copy of JLCED-R Guidelines
5A - Minutes - September 11, 2024
5B - 2024-25 Clocker Club Purchases
5B - Gifts and Donations 9.25.24 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING.docx
ADF-Wellness
Policy ACAB