

**Ashland School Committee Minutes  
January 8, 2025**

Ashland Town Hall  
101 Main Street  
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

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

**Agenda Review and adoption**

Ms. Tosti 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

Mr. Terry: Present and AYE

Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE

**Public Comment**

None

**Student Presentations: LAUNCH Program - January 2025 update**

Cassia Ashman, Lead Teacher of the LAUNCH program for students ages 18-22 presented an update of her students' recent activities. Sophia Rothkopf, one of Ms. Ashman's students, joined the meeting remotely to contribute.

The students have been attending the Hopkinton Center for the Arts for a weekly 1 hour art class with other transition programs from Hopkinton and Westborough. After the class, the students have an opportunity to have lunch together and chat.

Volunteer Wednesdays - students visit the local food pantry to stock shelves and help fulfill orders.

On Thursdays, the young adults have been going to the MetroWest YMCA in Framingham for an hour to exercise.

Friday Meet-ups - Students have been able to participate in social group gatherings. They have been apple picking, bowling, went on a hayride, had a Friendsgiving, and had a Natick Mall visit.

The LAUNCH students recently held their first fundraiser – Gift Wrap Service for staff at Ashland Middle School. It allowed the students to work on their customer service skills, money handling, reading order forms, and multi-step tasks.

Most recently, the students practiced taking public transportation together. They waited for the MWRTA Bus #5 near the Middle School, and took the bus to the MWRTA Building, where they were offered a tour. It was good practice for taking public transportation. Sophia noted that it was freezing when they waited for the bus to arrive.

Ms. Fitanides asked what the group is using for transportation for most of their outings. Cassia reported that the group is using the town-owned electric car, and Cassia is serving as the driver.

### **Warrant Approvals**

Between December 12, 2024 and January 11, 2025, Paul Kendall, authorized by his signature payables in the amount of \$ 713,225.29. This includes General Fund expenses of \$ 353,480.07, Revolving expenses of \$ 347,581.22, Grants expenses of \$ 12,101.74, and Meals Tax expenses of \$ 62.26.

### **Superintendent's Report: Superintendent James Adams**

Mr. Adams reports that there was mixed feedback on the length of the winter vacation. He visited an elementary classroom where the teacher had done a survey with the students – 50% of students thought two weeks of vacation was great and the other 50% of students felt the time off from school was too long.

The School Committee and administration will be meeting on Saturday, January 25 for a second Budget Workshop.

At the next School Committee meeting Mr. Adams and Dr. Caira will present more information on the Competency Determination and graduation requirements after the MCAS requirement was removed.

Mr. Terry asked Mr. Adams if he could circulate the current graduation policy so that school committee members could review.

### **Assistant Superintendent's Update: Dr. Michael Caira, Jr.**

Dr. Caira reported that there was a productive Educator Evaluation committee meeting today. The group is reviewing the Ashland teacher's evaluation rubric, and comparing it to the DESE model. He is pleased with the constructive conversations of the group as they work to assess Ashland's current evaluation rubric.

Open Architects is coming to meet with the Administrative team on January 12 to introduce the next portion of their program, called Student Companion. This component will house the MTSS intervention information for each student.

The mid-year assessment window for iReady is now open for K-8 students in ELA and Math.

### **Policies - Second Read**

### **DJA - Purchasing Authority**

Mr. Terry moves to approve the policy as presented, Ms. Culverwell seconded the motion. Vote:  
Ms. Culverwell: AYE  
Ms. Fitantes: AYE  
Mr. Kendall: AYE  
Mr. Terry: AYE  
Ms. Tosti: AYE

#### **DJE - Bidding Requirements**

Mr. Terry moves to approve the policy as presented, Ms. Culverwell seconded the motion. Vote:  
Ms. Culverwell: AYE  
Ms. Fitantes: AYE  
Mr. Kendall: AYE  
Mr. Terry: AYE  
Ms. Tosti: AYE

#### **BHE - Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members**

Mr. Terry moves to approve the policy as presented, Ms. Culverwell seconded the motion. Vote:  
Ms. Culverwell: AYE  
Ms. Fitantes: AYE  
Mr. Kendall: AYE  
Mr. Terry: AYE  
Ms. Tosti: AYE

#### **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Terry moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, Ms. Culverwell seconded the motion. Vote:  
Ms. Culverwell: AYE  
Ms. Fitantes: AYE  
Mr. Kendall: AYE  
Mr. Terry: AYE  
Ms. Tosti: AYE

#### **Reports of School Committee Members**

Abhishek reported that Mid-Term Exams are coming up for students at the high school and middle school.

Ms. Tosti attended a Warren School Site Council meeting this week.

The scheduled Executive Session will be postponed until further notice.

At 6:26pm, Mr. Terry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Culverwell seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen King

Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

**Documents used during the meeting**

LAUNCH update

Warrant Approvals - JANUARY 11, 2025

Copy of Red Line - DJA - PURCHASING AUTHORITY

Copy of Red-Line DJE - BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

Copy of RedLine BHE - USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

01/08/25 School Committee G&D Acceptance Log

Minutes - December 11, 2024