NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Ashby – Pepperell – Townsend, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES – January 29, 2026
Virtual via Zoom

PRESENT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Chairperson | Lisa Martin | Member, At-Large |
| | Kym Craven | Member, Townsend |
| | Qenan Francois | Member, Townsend ~ Left: 8:33PM |
| | Jacqueline (Jackie) White | Member, Pepperell |
| | Michael LaBossiere | Member, Pepperell |
| | Alexander (Alex) Bankuti | Member, Pepperell |
| | Randee Rusch | Member, At-Large |
| | Lisa Bloom | Member, At Large |
| | Carla Lima | Member, Ashby ~ Arrived: 6:05PM/Left: 8:39PM |

ALSO PRESENT

| | |
|---|---|
| Brad Morgan | Superintendent of Schools |
| Gary Burboa-Reese | Assistant Superintendent of Schools |
| Nancy Haines | Business Manager |
| Kevin Cormier | Asst. Business Manager |
| Robin Eibye | Recording Secretary |
| Jeremy Hamond | Director of Operations |

1. Chairperson, Lisa Martin, opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. and announced the meeting would be recorded.

| Roll Call: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | Yes |
| Qenan Francois | Yes | Lisa Bloom | Yes |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | - |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- *Qenan Francois motioned, and Lisa Bloom seconded to vote and approve the consent agenda as presented.*

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | Yes |
| Qenan Francois | Yes | Lisa Bloom | Yes |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | Yes |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 9/0/0.*

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## PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

1. Cathy Biliouris, 336 Erickson Road, Ashby expressed disappointment with the Pepperell Board of Selectmen's letter opposing reopening Ashby Elementary School. Ms. Biliouris questioned whether North Middlesex is behaving as a three-town district.
2. Chuck Walkovich, Pepperell Select Board, read into the record the Pepperell Select Board's January 22nd letter opposing to reopening Ashby Elementary School. Mr. Walkovich stated the opposition was reached after attending numerous School Committee, Finance Subcommittee, and Budget summit meetings over the past two years. Mr. Walkovich talked about advocating at the State House for additional funding for North Middlesex. Mr. Walkovich emphasized the current significant budget deficit and that reopening AES would require large ongoing expenditures. He argued Pepperell cannot afford these costs without a significant override or cutting essential services. Mr. Walkovich stated reopening AES was not a viable or responsible option.
3. Brad Hawn, 1 Brown Road, Townsend thanked Superintendent Morgan and the Committee for their work. Mr. Hawn said he analyzed the AES reopening from two lenses: student impact and fiscal responsibility. He stated he could not find a compelling reason on either front to reopen AES. Mr. Hawn referred to prior understanding that millions of dollars in repairs are needed at AES, and he questioned how those capital needs would be funded and the fairness to Townsend taxpayers bearing the major costs of an Ashby owned building. He argued that the budget crisis conditions make it unreasonable to consider reopening AES.
4. Cate Stepinski, Special Education teacher and President of the NM Teachers Association, acknowledged the stress and heartbreak among staff and the community from last year's closure and reconfiguration. Ms. Stepinski said staff are apprehensive about going through similar upheaval again. She emphasized the priority for educators is adding student-facing staff and reducing class sizes, increasing support services such as counselors, special education, psychologists, and paraprofessionals. She described current conditions with class sizes in the mid-20s to low-30s. Single classroom including student with IEPs, 504 plans, academic interventions, behavioral needs, gifted students, advanced readers/writers, and advanced math learners. Ms. Stepinski talked about kindergarten classes of 25-30 students calling them developmentally inappropriate and unsafe, with insufficient adult support. She asked the Committee to prioritize staffing and class size reduction over other uses of funds, nothing this is about aligning resources with actual student needs, not "extras".
5. Robin Eibye read a letter dated January 29, 2026 from Town of Ashby Select Board (see attached). The letter formally objected to any proposal to close Ashby Elementary School, alleged the Committee is not adhering to

its own policies, is not following required state procedures, and has not provided alternative budgets that do not assume AES closure. The letter also raised concerns about lack of process and transparency.

6. Robin Eibye read a letter dated January 29, 2026 from Dave Amari, Town of Ashby resident and 16-year NMRSD Buildings and Grounds employee. Mr. Amari described the scope of facility responsibilities as seven buildings with 730,000 sq. ft. interior space, 163 acres, 3,500 students and staff, with additional public after-hour use. He emphasized facility challenges stem from aging infrastructure and capital life-cycle, not neglect. He stressed pride in staff who maintain operations despite budget cuts and shortages. Mr. Amari talked about closing AES and acknowledged the move was difficult from both a taxpayer and facilities perspective. He noted the decision was to consolidate resources into buildings best positioned for the future. Mr. Amari pointed out the cost share for major future projects. He raised questions about ADA infrastructure and funding. He expressed concern that reopening AES would undo last year's difficult transition and put the system "back another year" as staff and students are now adapting and thriving in the new configurations.
7. Robin Eibye read a letter dated January 23, 2026 from Sumner Edmands, 20-year Town of Ashby resident. Mr. Edmands questioned the validity of the Town of Ashby's Facebook survey about AES and said he never received the survey as a resident and worried about multiple votes and lack of controls. Mr. Edmands suggested all three towns vote to close schools with clear cost options. He stated he would vote to close AES and let the town sell the building, potentially to attract a tax-paying business to offset taxes. Mr. Edmands encouraged residents to lobby state representatives for more state/federal funding rather than focusing energy solely on social media criticism. Mr. Edmands defended the Superintendent's compensation and 3% annual increases as consistent with standard labor market practice.
8. Robin Eibye read a letter dated January 24, 2026 from Dawn Priest, Town of Townsend resident. Ms. Priest thanked the Committee and administration for their work under difficult financial conditions. She criticized a January 13th presentation by a committee member as inaccurate and methodologically flawed, particularly where it claimed large student losses. She argued comparing current enrollment to 2019 is inappropriate given pandemic impacts. Ms. Priest noted key DESE data was missing and must be included to draw valid conclusions. She called the presentation a "Hail Mary" in support of reopening AES rather than neutral fact-finding. She express confusion about simultaneously claiming capacity issues and student loss. Ms. Priest said Townsend taxpayers should not be expected to shoulder capital costs for AES repairs that the Town of Ashby did not prioritize despite a one-year pause. Ms. Priest urged the committee to end the AES reopening discussion and work to reduce community division.
9. Robin Eibye read a letter dated January 29, 2026 from Kristen McLaughlin, 2nd grade teacher from VBES. Ms. McLaughlin expressed significant concern about current conditions at VBES, especially due to concentration of the district's special education programs. She noted that many SPED students require intensive support; behavioral staff are often in simultaneous crises with no one available to respond at times. She said students regularly witness dysregulated peers screaming, running in halls, being escorted, and physical incidents, including injury to her own child. Ms. McLaughlin stated class sizes of 25 in a building with heavy SPED programming are not equivalent to a 25-student class in a general-education-only setting. She raised equity and logistics concerns. Ms. McLaughlin stated she was opposed to reopening AES in the current financial environment, calling it unwise and detrimental to district financial security. She urged decision based on facts, not emotion, and invited committee members to visit VBES to see the daily realities.

**NEW BUSINESS/GENERAL DISCUSSION – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN**

1. Ashby Elementary School Building – L. Martin

Chair Lisa Martin acknowledged the difficulty of the upcoming discussion regarding Ashby Elementary School (AES). She emphasized the committee's responsibility to make decisions that guide the district's educational framework and set expectations for patience, respect, and grace among members. She also encouraged avoiding repetitive commentary to support productive progress. Chair Martin outlined a three-part process for the discussion: (1) a financial presentation with side-by-side budget scenarios by the Finance Chair and Superintendent, (2) Committee questions and clarifications, and (3) individual statements or reflections by members, if desired.

Finance Chair Kym Craven presented a previously distributed side-by-side budget comparison including the FY26 adopted budget (baseline); the FY27 administration request (3.06% increase); the towns' supported level (2.47% increase); an "optimum" budget (5.35% increase, reflecting the current configuration without reopening AES and intended to reduce class sizes, address operational issues, and restore some prior staffing reductions); and an AES reopening scenario (5.27% increase), which reflects reopening costs only and does not include the class size and operational improvements shown in the optimum scenario.

Compared to FY26, the administration request represents an approximate $2.0 million increase; the town-supported level approximately $1.6 million; the optimum scenario approximately $3.6 million; and the AES reopening scenario approximately $3.5 million.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) impacts were reviewed. The administration request reflects modest net FTE changes, primarily in special education. The town-supported scenario aligns staffing to meet the 2.47% cap without broad restoration. The optimum scenario includes approximately 19.85 additional FTEs to address district-wide class size and operational needs. The AES reopening scenario includes approximately 17.65 FTEs to staff AES, including classroom teachers for Grades 1–4, two special education teachers, a nurse, counselor, administrative assistant, and custodial staff. It was noted that AES staffing would be dedicated to AES and not distributed district-wide to reduce class sizes.

The administration's FY27 proposal includes approximately $2 million in Excess and Deficiency (E&D) funds. Kym Craven and Superintendent Morgan cautioned that using E&D for recurring costs may create structural deficits and potential bond rating concerns, noting the emerging policy preference to limit E&D use to one-time costs at lower annual levels.

On October 6th, leaders from all three towns requested that NMRSD keep budget and assessment increases below 3%. It was noted that even a near level-service budget cannot fully meet that target without significant E&D usage.

Regarding facilities, the current district footprint without AES retains some capacity for enrollment growth and internal reconfiguration. AES has a known ADA compliance issue under review, potential additional ADA or compliance risks, and unresolved questions related to a closed wing and long-term capital needs. An Ashby working group examined possible alternative uses for AES, including revenue-generating options, though full options were not formally presented to or acted upon by the full committee. The Finance Committee voted

only to forward the comparison document for discussion and did not endorse a single scenario. The AES reopening scenario presented reflects a full K–4 reopening as previously configured, not a partial model.

In response to a question from Jackie White regarding which scenario supports hiring educators to address class size concerns, Ms. Craven stated that only the optimum (5.35%) scenario clearly funds significant staffing additions, while the 3.06% and 2.47% scenarios do not restore teachers district-wide.

Chair Martin asked about the impact of reopening AES on SPED programming currently centralized in Pepperell (VBES) and whether programs could be distributed. Superintendent Morgan explained that special education programs were centralized earlier in his tenure to reduce transportation and fractional provider costs, resulting in approximately $300,000 in annual transportation savings and reduced lost instructional time. He noted that some programs now serve more Townsend and Ashby students and that future redistribution may be considered as programs grow. He further stated that reopening AES would still require servicing students with IEPs there, requiring provider travel and reintroducing inefficiencies and costs. He added that a K–2-only AES model would still require full nursing, counseling, administrative, and custodial coverage and could result in a very small and operationally inefficient school.

Superintendent Brad Morgan stated that his responsibility is to propose a budget that supports personnel, programs, and appropriate facilities, and that aligns with the district's core values of energized instruction, engaged learning, and innovation. He noted that the current state education funding formula is widely viewed as inadequate and said he continues to advocate for reform. He emphasized that the district's budget constraints are long-standing and not limited to the past two years.

He referenced the prior year's budget process, during which administration presented multiple options to reach a town-acceptable budget; the committee selected closure of Ashby Elementary School (AES) as one of several difficult measures, along with staffing and program reductions. He described the proposed FY27 budget as essentially level service while still relying on approximately $2.2 million in E&D/DN. He noted that the proposal does not resolve large class sizes, restore curriculum and technology reductions made for FY26, or address broader special education distribution concerns. He added that any additional funds resulting from the Governor's budget, such as increases in per-pupil aid beyond baseline assumptions, would likely be prioritized for class size reduction, rebalancing special education programs, and restoring curriculum and technology.

Randee Rusch stated that, in her understanding, the MSBA's one-year pause on closing Ashby Elementary School was granted to the district, not to the Town of Ashby, to determine other uses for the building. Carla Lima that there was a local Ashby working group, consisting of her and Kym Craven, which discussed potential alternative uses for the AES building during the pause. Carla stated that the options discussed in that working group were not fully brought forward to the full School Committee for consideration. She also noted that a survey about additional uses of the building was created at Ms. Craven's request as part of the working group's discussions, and not initiated independently by the Town of Ashby.

Over the course of the discussion, Randee Rusch raised concerns regarding long-range planning. She stated that, in her view, the committee has not sufficiently engaged in long-term planning related to district-wide capacity, enrollment trends and their relationship to state foundation enrollment and hold harmless status, or strategies to increase or regain student enrollment.

She noted that birth rates since 2008 and overall population across the three towns have remained relatively stable, while district enrollment has declined, particularly during the last two budget-challenged years. She stated that the district had been nearing the point of leaving hold harmless status, which could increase state aid, but that recent enrollment losses—approximately 80 students in one year and about 150 the next—changed that trajectory. She attributed enrollment declines in part to public communication regarding large class sizes and program cuts, as well as families choosing private, charter, or vocational options.

Ms. Rusch stated that, in her view, the district needs sufficient capacity to reduce class sizes, distribute special education programs more equitably, and accommodate potential growth from new housing developments, particularly in Pepperell. She noted that, without AES, future enrollment increases could require the use of modular classrooms, which she described as generally unpopular with staff and families, requiring additional site work and security measures, and best suited as temporary solutions. She further stated that significant future growth could lead to the need for new building projects that may be more costly and potentially ineligible for MSBA support if AES were permanently closed.

Ms. Rusch also stated that Ashby residents have not voted on a capital plan for AES in the same manner as other towns have for their schools and suggested that lower-cost AES configurations, such as partial grade levels or shared building use, may not have been fully explored in the scenarios presented.

Dr. Kevin Cormier reported that a preliminary analysis of student movement from October 1st of one year to October 1st of the next showed a net change of –17 students in one recent period, which he noted is not sufficient to eliminate a full teaching position. He explained that students leaving are distributed across grades and towns, resulting in reduced revenue without a corresponding reduction in staffing or other fixed costs. He added that he is developing more detailed data but must anonymize it to comply with small-cell privacy requirements.

Superintendent Morgan added that enrollment declines are generally consistent with statewide trends, with students choosing career and technical schools, charter schools, private schools, or homeschooling. He also noted that some families have left public schools due to disagreement with state-mandated curriculum, particularly related to social-emotional learning. He stated he is willing to conduct a deeper enrollment analysis if formally requested by the committee.

- *Following extended questions and answers, Qenan Francois motioned, and Jackie White seconded, to transition from budget-related questions to personal statements and reflections regarding AES.*

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | Yes |
| Qenan Francois | Yes | Lisa Bloom | Yes |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | Yes |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 9/0/0.*

- *Qenan Francois motioned, and Kym Craven seconded to vote to disallow follow-up questions to personal statements so they would remain individual statements rather than debates.*

A discussion ensued, and it was clarified that members should not disparage one another and that all are expected to act in good faith and with respect.

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | Yes |
| Qenan Francois | Yes | Lisa Bloom | Yes |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | Yes |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 9/0/0.*

Michael LaBossiere stated he reviewed correspondence and materials carefully as a newer member and acknowledged that all options involve trade-offs. He noted that some communications described students thriving after transitioning from AES to other schools and that some families indicated they would remain in their new schools even if AES reopened. He emphasized his responsibility to vote based on what he believes is best for students district-wide and noted that members may reach different conclusions in good faith.

Randee Rusch emphasized the Committee's responsibility for long-range planning beyond a one-year budget cycle. She reiterated concerns regarding foundation enrollment, hold harmless status, and the risk of over-capacity if AES remains closed while other schools absorb additional programs and staff. She stated the district needs AES capacity to distribute special education programs and accommodate potential housing growth. She expressed the view that the full reopening scenarios presented may overstate the cost of a phased approach and stated she would vote against permanent closure.

Jackie White thanked community members for their input and said she considers both emotional and practical perspectives in her decision-making. She noted she could not identify sufficient cuts to fully offset reopening costs. She referenced positive feedback about the current configuration. She said current priorities should include stabilizing the district, addressing class sizes, and maintaining financial viability. She also encouraged avoiding town-versus-town language and indicated she would support keeping AES closed at this time.

Alexander Bankuti stated he was conflicted and would prefer full funding and reopening AES but does not see a feasible funding path. He said he must be realistic about what the towns can support and, while advocating for strong school funding overall, indicated he would vote to close AES.

Qenan Francois referenced committee policy regarding representing town expectations while recognizing district-wide impact. He stated he has spent significant time learning budget details and found the administration responsive and transparent. He noted the issue has been debated for over two years and that not all interests can be satisfied. He stated continued indecision is challenging for the district and, citing limited funding solutions, indicated he would vote to close AES.

Carla Lima thanked residents for their feedback and spoke as both a parent and Ashby resident. She stated decisions should prioritize long-term student outcomes and said alternative configurations or shared-use models have not been fully explored. She noted some families chose Ashby specifically for its local school and stated she opposes permanent closure without further exploration of alternatives. She indicated she would vote against closure.

Kym Craven thanked the community, town officials, and administration for their input. She stated that, as Finance Chair, her role is to consider long-term financial sustainability and district-wide educational quality. After reviewing data on enrollment, utilization, capital needs, and multi-year budget pressures, she stated reopening AES would operate the building below capacity, benefit a limited number of classrooms, and create recurring costs amid other district needs. She acknowledged the value of neighborhood schools but noted evidence of positive transitions for students in other schools. She indicated she would support keeping AES closed.

Lisa Bloom stated agreement with Randee Rusch and Carla Lima. She expressed the view that Ashby voters should have that opportunity to vote on funding repairs or renovations, and stated she support keeping AES open.

Chair Lisa Martin stated her focus is on all students in the district. She emphasized that educational quality depends on people, programs, and resources rather than buildings alone. She stated the district must stabilize its budget and address class sizes, curriculum, technology, and special education needs before adding another under-capacity building. She concluded that difficult decisions are sometimes necessary and indicated she would vote to close AES.

- *Qenan Francois motioned, and Jackie White seconded to vote to permanently close Ashby Elementary School.*

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | No |
| Qenan Francois | Yes | Lisa Bloom | No |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | No |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The motion passed 6/3/0.*

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2. 2025-26 School Year Calendar Adjustment – G. Burboa-Reese

Dr. Burboa-Reese requested an update to the 2025-2026 School Year Calendar explaining currently incoming kindergarten screenings are held the first two days after April vacation, with current kindergarteners not in school those days. He explained teachers suggested moving screenings to June 3, 4, and 5, to provide more relevant data for September and include observation of social-emotional and behavioral skills. He noted current kindergarten students would not attend school on those three days instead of two in April.

- Qenan Francois left the meeting.

➢ *Following discussion, Alex Bankuti motioned, and Kym Craven seconded to vote to adjust the 2025-26 School Year calendar by moving kindergarten screening from April 27-28 to June 3-5 for this school year, with current kindergarteners off on those June days.*

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | No |
| Qenan Francois | - | Lisa Bloom | No |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | No |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The motion unanimously passed 8/0/0.*

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3. 2026-27 School Year Calendar – B. Morgan

Superintendent Morgan presented the draft 2026-2027 School Year Calendar and a brief discussion ensued. It was confirmed the calendar includes the June kindergarten screening model. A minor inconsistency between text and calendar graphic was identified and noted for correction.

➢ *Michael LaBossiere motioned, and Alexander Bankuti seconded to vote to approve the 2026-27 School Year calendar as presented, with clerical corrections.*

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | No |
| Qenan Francois | - | Lisa Bloom | No |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | No |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The m motion unanimously passed 8/0/0.*

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN**

1. Finance – K. Craven
   - FY27 Budget

     Kym Craven reported on the budget scenarios previously discussed. She clarified the Finance Subcommittee forwarded all scenarios to the full committee without endorsing a single version.

     Ms. Craven noted the next meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 6th at 8:00 a.m. to prepare for the FY27 Budget Hearing on February 9th. She also noted the Finance Subcommittee must now develop a recommendation for implementing the newly adopted Fiscal Reserves policy (DIB).

   - Carla Lima left the meeting.

2. Policy – R. Rusch

   - Randee Rusch provided a brief overview of the policies for adoption and noted she received no community feedback except from Business Manager, Nancy Haines regarding DIB Fiscal Reserves. Ms. Rusch talked about Ms. Haines recommendation on tying the $500,000 threshold to the end of Year Report. She noted the updated Fiscal Reserves policy (DIB) requires a decision on how quickly to reduce reliance on E&D. She also noted the Student Representative policy requires meeting with a group of students (e.g., Student Council), not just one student. It was agreed that Administration would coordinate.

     1. DIB Fiscal Reserves

        - *Randee Rusch motioned, and Lisa Bloom seconded, to vote the School Committee approve policy DIB Fiscal Reserves for adoption as amended to include tying the $500,000 threshold to the End of Year Report balance, triggering review for adjustments.*

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | No |
| Qenan Francois | - | Lisa Bloom | No |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | - |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The m motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

2. DIBA Revolving Funds
3. JJF Student Activity Accounts

4. JICJ (GBEF) Use of Cell Phones and Portable Communication Devices
5. GBEF (JICJ) Use of Cell Phones and Portable Communication Devices
6. JII Student Complaints and Grievances
7. JJ Co-Curricular Extracurricular Activities

- *Randee Rusch motioned, and Lisa Bloom seconded, to vote the School Committee approve policy DIBA Revolving Funds,* JJF Student Activity Accounts, JICJ (GBEF) Use of Cell Phones and Portable Communication Devices, GBEF (JICJ) Use of Cell Phones and Portable Communication Devices, JII Student Complaints and Grievances, and JJ Co-Curricular Extracurricular Activities for adoption as presented.

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | No |
| Qenan Francois | - | Lisa Bloom | No |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | - |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The m motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

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3. Legislative Advocacy – Q. Francois
   - None
4. SC Operations
   - None
5. Community Outreach & Town Liaisons
   - Ashby – C. Lima
   - Pepperell – L. Martin
   - Townsend – Q. Francois/R. Rusch
     Randee Rusch said she responded to Townsend Select Board questions about the budget hearing timeline and format. She updated the Board on the status of the Spaulding Memorial School lease, which is out of date and needs to be renegotiated and finalized. Ms. Rusch also noted the Regional Agreement update was ongoing.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

- *At 8:58 p.m., Michael LaBossiere moved, and Jackie White seconded to vote to meet in Executive Session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A Section 21(a) for the following purpose:*
  - *Purpose (2): To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Assistant Business Manager/Business Manager).*
  - *Purpose (7): To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid*

*requirements.*

1. *ES Minutes dated: December 16, 2025*
2. *ES Minutes dated: January 13, 2026.*

The Committee will not reconvene in an open session.

| Roll Call Vote: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Martin | Yes | Alexander Bankuti | Yes |
| Kym Craven | Yes | Randee Rusch | No |
| Qenan Francois | - | Lisa Bloom | No |
| Jackie White | Yes | Carla Lima | - |
| Michael LaBossiere | Yes | | |

*Vote: The m motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.*

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- See 2026-01-29 School Committee Meeting Minutes ES

*Documents Reviewed / Referred To*

- 2026 01-29 SC Agenda
- 2026 01-13 SC Minutes
- Warrants
- Donations
- 2026 01-23 Sumner Edmands Public Comment
- 2026 01-24 Dawn Priest Public Comment
- 2026 01-29 Town of Ashby Select Board Public Comment
- 2026 01-29 Kristen McLaughlin Public Comment
- 2026 01-29 Dave Amari Public Comment
- 2026 01-26 Town of Pepperell Select Board Public Comment
- 2025-2026 School District Calendar Updated
- Kindergarten Screening
- 2026-2027 School District Calendar Proposed
- Policies DIB, DIBA, JJF, JICJ, GBEF, JII and JJ

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

**APPROVED:** February 24, 2026

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