# Ashland School Committee Minutes
## February 25, 2026

Ashland Town Hall
101 Main Street
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

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

**Agenda Review and adoption**
Ms. Tosti opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda and took attendance
Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: Present and AYE
Ms. Fitanides: Present and AYE
Mr. Kendall: Present and AYE
Mr. Terry: Arrived late.
Ms. Tosti: Present and AYE

**Public Comment**
None.

**AHS Student Advisory Council Update**
Zoha Syed-Ali presented an update on upcoming events at the high school in March. Spirit Week scheduled for the week of St. Patrick's Day. Flag Day scheduled for March. Flag Day is a school-wide assembly where students can present a flag that they are affiliated with. It showcases the wide diversity of the students as Ashland High School. Winter sports are finishing up this week. Spring sports registration is now open. MCAS will be happening for 10th graders in March and the Seal of Bi-literacy tests will be going on for 11th and 12th graders.

Yash Bhide presented some additional academic deadlines that are upcoming. Course selection for students for next school year will be due on Friday, March 6. Students need to select their courses and electives. The Theatrical Society will be performing their spring production of Theory of Relativity this weekend. All are invited to attend.

Sophia Warnetski offered a club update. The National Honor Society will host a talent show in March. Members recently made valentine cards for senior citizens, and have been collecting food to donate to the Ashland Food Pantry. The Student Council recently held their annual Pancake Breakfast. They will also be hosting a student Voter Registration drive during lunch for eligible students. The Make-a-Wish Club hosted a Jump-a-Thon fundraiser and raised $4,000.

**Warrant Approvals**
Between January 28, 2026, and February 25, 2026, Paul Kendall authorized by his signature, payables in the amount of $1,206,835.36. This includes General Fund expenses of $943,222.82, Revolving expenses of $255,445.54, Grants expenses of $8,092.96, and Meals Tax expenses of $74.04. Finally, he authorized payroll in the amount of $1,501,178.62.

**Superintendent Report: FY 2027 Budget Update**
The next Tri-Board meeting will be scheduled for March 10. By law, the School District will need to hold a public hearing to present the Fiscal Year 2027 School Budget. It has been a challenging budget cycle. The use of one-time funds has been reviewed carefully. Mr. Adams has put together a series of info graphics to try to show what the proposed budget will look like for FY2027, and what cuts may need to be made. The School Committee members discussed the budget proposals and a possible tax override proposal for the town.

Ms. Tosti requested that the School Committee members send suggestions to Mr. Adams on how they may be able to narrow the focus of the next upcoming Tri-Board meeting, scheduled for March 10.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report - Dr. Michael Caira**
**Professional Development**
Next week staff from Mendon/Upton Regional School District will visit as a part of the Year 2 and Year 3 program. The Ashland PTO is hosting the Clocker Classic fundraiser tomorrow night at the high school.

**Consent Agenda**
Mr. Terry moves to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Kendall seconds the motion. Vote:
Ms. Culverwell: AYE
Ms. Fitanides: AYE
Mr. Kendall: AYE
Mr. Terry: AYE
Ms. Tosti: AYE

**Stipend Adjustments - Chris Mathieu**
As a follow up item from the December 5 School Committee meeting, Chris Mathieu reported that a couple of stipends were left off the list by mistake.
For example: Mentor Coordinator stipends, Intramural Sports stipend, Literary Magazine, Rainbow Club, and the Dual Certified Teacher stipends. Mr. Mathieu would like the School Committee to approve to add these to the original list of stipends. Mr. Kendall moves to approve the stipend adjustments, Mr. Terry seconds the motion.

**Report of School Committee Members**
None.

At 7:23pm, Ms. Tosti moved to enter into Executive Session to review Executive Sessions minutes, not to return to open session. Mr. Kendall seconded.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen King
Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

**Documents used during the meeting**
FY 26 02.25.26 School Committee G&D Acceptance Log
Minutes - January 28, 2026
School Committee 2.25.26 (2)
School Committee Agenda February 25, 2026
Stipend Adjustments
Warrant Approvals 02/25/26