Ashland School Committee Minutes
October 14, 2026

Ashland Town Hall
101 Main Street
Select Board Meeting Room

Hybrid meeting: recorded on Zoom

Present:	Marc Terry, Chair Paul Kendall, Vice-Chair Tina Fitanides, Secretary Chantal Kokaram James Adams, Superintendent, *attended remotely* Denny Conklin, Assistant Superintendent Chris Mathieu, Director of Finance Adhitya Karthik, School Committee Student Representative
Absent:	Marcy Culverwell

Call to Order
At 6:00 pm, Mr. Terry read the school district's mission statement, opened the meeting, and took attendance.

Public Comment
None.

AHS Student Advisory Committee
Cole Williams, a sophomore, gave an academic overview. Ashland Day was a club fundraising event held recently. The weather was great, with a good turnout and good community outreach. Community Service and PSAT Day also took place recently. He volunteered at the Mindess School. Abigail Ellis, a senior, reported on Career and Future Planning Day. Many seniors spent the day touring colleges or working on college applications. Spirit Week and Homecoming are coming up. In PowerSchool, she noted that students used to be able to see their GPA in class, and now they cannot. Adhitya Karthik reported that the Doorman app was implemented today. Some students had issues with it. Other students opted out of using the app and left their phones in the office for the day. Some students have a medical exemption – they need to keep their phones on them for medical reasons. Adhitya also reminded parents to register and pay for their students' AP tests by October 30. AP Tests are $115 each. Another PowerSchool request – in iPass, students used to be able to see the grading breakdown for each class (for example, tests are 70% of your grade, quizzes are 20%, and homework and participation are 10%). PowerSchool does not currently show this to students. Mr. Kendall suggested that the students write up the features/functionality requests that they may have for PowerSchool and send them to Mrs. St. Coeur.

MASC Conference Delegate
Mr. Terry stated that the Committee members will be attending a statewide conference in early November. At this conference, a delegation of committee members from across the state reviews and votes on resolutions. Chantal Kokaram offered to be a delegate for Ashland.

School Committee Policies Review
There is a list of 13 different policies to review during this meeting. Mr. Adams reports that 6 of these policies (H-M) have been recommended by the MASC for removal from School Committee handbooks, as their essence is covered by a different policy.

KI - Visitors to the Schools: Mr. Kendall moved to approve this policy; Ms. Fitanides seconded. Vote:
Ms. Kokaram: Aye
Ms. Fitanides: Aye
Mr. Kendall: Aye
Mr. Terry: Aye

ECAB - Access to Building and Grounds: MASC recommends that districts adopt this policy. This is the Committee's first read. It will need a second reading and a vote at the next meeting.

EEAEA: Bus Driver Exam and Training: Mr. Kendall moves to approve changes to this policy. Ms. Fitanides seconded the motion. Vote:
Ms. Kokaram: Aye
Ms. Fitanides: Aye
Mr. Kendall: Aye
Mr. Terry: Aye

Parent Advisory Council: Updated in 2026. Establishing an ELPAC in Ashland has been a challenge. Christy Arnold, Director of English Language Education, currently holds Family Days at Warren and Mindess Schools, and these events have met a similar need for parent outreach. This is a first read of this policy.

Policies H-M: Recommended by MASC to be removed. Mr. Kendall moved to remove these policies from the Policy Manual. Ms. Fitanides seconded the motion. Vote:
Ms. Kokaram: Aye
Ms. Fitanides: Aye
Mr. Kendall: Aye
Mr. Terry: Aye

Financial Update
Mr. Adams noted that, as one of the new School Committee goals, Chris Mathieu will present a Quarterly Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2027. Mr. Mathieu has prepared an End-of-Year Report for FY ‘25 and a DESE Financial Audit. In the Quarterly Financial Report, Ashland Public Schools have an Available Budget of $3.3 million.
Mr. Terry asked how this tracks to prior years. Mr. Mathieu reported that this is consistent with previous years.
Summary of Revolving Accounts
Encumbered expenses are committed expenses at this point in time, such as salaries. Pending expenses are items that will be adjusted in the future.
Revenue for the School Bus and Athletics is from fees paid by families. The School Bus payments are made to the vendor on a monthly basis (with a 10-month contract).
Field Operations start-up funding of $200,000. How to keep the two turf fields (at Ashland High School and Ashland Middle School) operable and safe for play. With the addition of a new

Assistant Athletic Director, Ron Dowd, the superintendent has not received any phone calls from Ashland Youth Sports reporting problems with field readiness or double-booking of field space.

Mr. Terry asked how long a turf field is expected to last after installation.
8-10 years, but it depends on usage. Mr. Adams noted that the state has issued guidelines on Astro-turf materials recommended for use at schools.

Extraordinary expenses
Pittaway boiler repair/replacement needed for hot water at the school= $50,000
Warren School needed a new hot water heater = $65,000
Middle School has a flood which caused electrical problems that need repair = $20,000
High School needed a new gym divider – one was replaced two years ago; the second needs replacement
Turf repair at AHS and AMS
The Facilities Department makes every effort to schedule these repairs when students are not in school to avoid disruption to teaching and learning.

Fall Town Meeting Budget Adjustment: The Fall Town Meeting is upcoming. There is a 70/30 split of any additional funds from the state.

Warrant Approvals
Between September 24, 2026, and October 14, 2026, Paul Kendall, authorized by his signature, payables in the amount of $1,874,904.09. This includes General Fund expenses of $1,050,667.58, Revolving expenses of $797,994.33, Grant expenses of $26,175.20, and Meals Tax expenses of $66.98. Finally, he authorized payroll for $ 4,943,709.92.

Superintendent's Report
Mr. Adams is currently attending the NEASS Conference of New England Superintendents. He will be presenting on the state of Massachusetts, the updated graduation requirements, cellphone legislation, AI use, and other topics.

Mr. Adams reported that overall, the use of PowerSchool was going really well. He added a shout-out to Gretchen King for her work on this implementation project. He also encouraged students to send him feature and functionality requests for follow-up. He has been working on the high school transcripts and making sure they are ready for the 12th graders' college applications due November 1st.

Assistant Superintendent's Report
Mr. Conklin reported that the first early release day for professional development took place on Friday, October 9. Many people may wonder, "What are teachers and staff working on during that time?" At Pittaway, curriculum vendors presented to the preschool staff. At Warren and Mindess, staff were looking at the format of the elementary school Report Cards. There will not be any changes this year, but they are evaluating them for the future. The ESP (Educator Support Personnel) had training sessions put together by Justin Cameron.

Consent Agenda
Mr. Kenall moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Fitanides seconded the motion. Vote:
Ms. Kokaram: Aye
Ms. Fitanides: Aye

Mr. Kendall: Aye
Mr. Terry: Aye

Reports of School Committee Members
Adhitya Karthik reported that the PowerSchool mobile app is great. Students can quickly check their schedules on their phones.
Ms. Kokaram reported that last week there were the Drama Club auditions at Ashland Middle School, and there was a great turnout.

Mr. Kendall reported attending the Mindess Site Council meeting. He heard feedback from parents around PowerSchool and noted an area of improvement. Parents of students in grades 3-5 were wondering what they should be able to see in PowerSchool. Can they see their students' grades, assignments, and attendance? This is an area for improvement in communication. Mr. Adams noted that we did not use iPass for our K-5 students in the past, so this tool is new for parents.

Ms. Fitanides noted that ASHPAC is holding its annual Lighting the Way ceremony on 10/27 to honor faculty and staff nominated for recognition of their contributions to teaching.

At 7:14 pm, Mr. Kendall moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Fitanides seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen King
Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Documents used during the meeting
10.14.26 FY 27 School Committee Acceptance Log
Ashland, MA FY25 EOY AUP Report - Final
Copy of File: IE - ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION
Copy of File: IGD - CURRICULUM ADOPTION
Copy of File: IHAI - OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION
Copy of File: IHBG-R - HOME SCHOOLING
Copy of File: IL - EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
Copy of File: IMA - TEACHING ACTIVITIES/PRESENTATIONS
Copy of File: KI - VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS
Copy of FILE: ECAB-MASC track-changes
Copy of FILE: EEAEA-MASC track-changes
FILE: MASC KBG-track-changes
FY27_Business_Office_Financial_Report
Minutes - September 23, 2026
School Committee Agenda October 14, 2026
School Policy Subcommittee Minutes - May 23, 2025
School Policy Subcommittee Minutes - November 5, 2025
School Policy Subcommittee Minutes - October 21, 2025
School Policy Subcommittee Minutes - September 24, 2025