Regular School Committee Meeting
Minutes - October 27, 2026

Mayor Chris Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Agawam Junior High School Auditorium.

Mayor Johnson opened the meeting by honoring Anthony Bonivita, who recently passed away. Mr. Bonivita served the community in several major capacities over the years, including as Agawam Town Solicitor, City Council member, and School Committee member.

Roll Call of Attendance Present: 6; Absent: 1

Citizen's Speak Time: - One person spoke this evening.

Catherine McDougal - 22 Vagnais Street - Agawam, MA
Thank you for bringing the "American Indian Head" logo forward as a topic for discussion on a new resolution. For the sake of time I will refer to the American Indian head as the "Chief" logo. She began by referencing SCR 17-11, a previous resolution approving the Native American image as the official logo for Agawam Public Schools. Named after a local Native American tribe, Agawam has long viewed the "Chief" logo as a symbol of honor, pride, and heritage, rather than something that denigrates the community. She emphasized that honoring Indigenous people and acknowledging the native land is a respectful practice, noting that local tribes such as the Nipmuc and Wampanoag are still present today. Both nations actively preserve their cultural heritage, languages, and tribal governance while remaining an integral part of the community. She proposed reaching out to these local Indigenous communities to form a meaningful partnership—seeking their direct input on the "Chief" design rather than relying solely on non-Indigenous opinions for or against it.

If I can have another quick 30 seconds, I was able to attend the Football Senior night last week. What a great turnout, and great win! Both the cheerleaders and band performances were energetic along with the student support. It was great to be a part of.

Highlights on Education: Write On! Conference - Presented by Dom Costanzi & students
Mr. Costanzi and three of his students came to present tonight. These 3 students were of more than 60 students to attend the conference in Grades 6,7,8. The Western MA Writing Project (WMWP) was a free event that was held on Friday, October 23rd at Westfield State University. This event was to support aspiring writers. The students chose which topic they would like to write about. The students get to come together to deepen their experience as writers. The WMWP shares their knowledge and expertise. The students would receive feedback on their writing. The day gave them a great opportunity and experience. The three students that were presenting from Doering tonight were - Katie, Pola and Victoria.

Katie Carmona - Thank you for this opportunity to share about my experience - When I grow up I want to be a famous writer and author. This conference changed the type of writing that I wanted to do. I learned how to write short stories. My story is called "The Letter."

Pola Maj - She read us her story titled "Grief of a Leave" which was about a leaf that left a tree and how sad it was feeling.

Victoria Papadoulias- She wrote a story about Immigration. She was writing about her great grandmother moving from Greece to the United States. She wrote about the reasons she moved and talked about traditions. Her grandmother is in her 90s and she still speaks mostly Greek. She is also trying to teach her how to speak Greek.

Questions/Discussions:

Mayor Johnson - Excellent presentations by all three of you. All of you are well on your way to become published authors.

Shelley Reed - Great job! I don't know if you know, but you are on TV and you did a great job presenting to us.

Michael Perry - Great job! He told Victoria that he had an experience similar to hers with his grandmother. His grandmother was from Portugal. He wished he learned how to speak Portuguese.

Mayor Johnson - Victoria, make sure you get all of the family recipes. All 3 of you did a phenomenal job.

Superintendent Notes:

- Congratulations to our Director of Food Services, Liz Moulton who recently received the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts Advocacy Award. This award is presented annually during the organization's awards ceremony at its Annual Conference in Worcester.

- Please note that there will be no school for students on Tuesday, November 3rd, while educators participate in professional development. Additionally, all schools will be closed on Wednesday, November 11th, in observance of Veterans Day.

- A reminder that there is a scheduled, district-wide two-hour delayed opening on Wednesday, November 12th. Each school will participate in school safety drills, with a focus on reunification. The schedule will follow our standard two-hour delay process, similar to a weather delay. This update was added to the district school calendar on June 23, 2026. Thank you for your support as we prioritize school safety, and please plan your schedules accordingly.

Student Advisory Committee Representative Update: - Devin Soucy

- ***Early Childhood Center*** - Book Character Day will be held on October 29th. The ECC will also participate in a food drive for the Mayflower Marathon from November 1st through November 24th. Spirit Week will take place from November 16th through November 20th, followed by the PreK Pep Rally on November 24th.

- ***Granger*** - October has been a busy month centered around the school's "Better Together" theme. The school celebrated its MCAS achievements and DESE School of Recognition honor, including a special staff recognition lunch. The Book Fair and parent-teacher conferences were also successful, with National Honor Society students providing activities for students during conferences. Staff continue using academic data and instructional rounds to guide instruction and provide targeted student support, while PBIS efforts continue to reinforce positive choices. Granger has also implemented new cafeteria traffic patterns to improve transitions and maximize students' time to eat. Three new team members, including a lunch monitor, Intensive Support paraprofessional, and nighttime custodian, have joined the school community. Looking ahead, Wellness Day will be held on October 30th and will include a PBIS assembly and Pie in the Face contest, followed by the Veterans Day Breakfast on November 10th.

- ***Clark*** - Trunk or Treat will be held on October 29th from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. The next PTO meeting will be held on November 16th from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm.

- ***Phelps*** - Fall Spirit Week is taking place this week from October 26th through October 30th, with students and staff celebrating the fall season together. Trunk or Treat will be held on October 28th from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm in the Phelps parking lot. Beginning November 9th, Phelps will also participate in the Mayflower Marathon by collecting non-perishable food items for the Springfield Food Pantry.

- ***Sapelli*** - The school recently celebrated its annual Fall Fling, where students participated in fall-themed STEAM, art, PE, and music activities. The October Students of the Month are **Ella Young from first grade, Jacob Bruyette from second grade, Olivia Favolise from third grade, Lauren Oriser from fourth grade, and Nathan Bruyette from Room 21. The kindergarten recognition is still to come.

- ***Doering*** - None

- ***Junior High*** - Friday, October 30th will be PJ and Hat Day for a Cause. Students and staff can donate $1 to support the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund, which helps pediatric cancer patients. AJHS will also begin its annual Jammie Jingle collection on November 2nd, continuing through December 4th. The school is collecting new pajamas with tags in sizes infant through 3X to be donated to Shriners Children's Hospital, DCG, and the Ronald McDonald House. Donation bins will be located in the school cafeteria.

- **High School** - The PSAT will be administered to selected 10th and 11th grade students on October 28th. The Fall Drama Production, "Night of the Living Dead," will be performed on October 29th and 30th. The Child Development Boo Bash will take place on October 30th during periods 6 and 7. The Fall Concert will be held on November 4th at 7:00 pm.

Unfinished Business:

- **SCR 26-65** - Approval of MOU - COTA - Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant - Special Services
  - On a motion made by *AJ Christopher* and seconded by *Shelley Reed* the committee via roll call, voted for the approval of MOU - COTA - Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant - Special Service.
    - ***Vote 6 to 1 absent***
- **SCR 26-66** - Approval of new job description - Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)
  - On a motion made by *Michael Perry* and seconded by *Shelley Reed* the committee via roll call, voted for the approval of the new job description - Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA).
    - ***Vote 6 to 1 absent***

Business Meeting:

- **Routine Matters**
  - Approval of Minutes - On a motion made by *AJ Christopher* and seconded by *Dawn DeMatteo* the committee via roll call, voted to approve the **October 13, 2026,** regular meeting minutes.
    - ***Vote: 6 to 1 absent***

- **Warrants/Transfers**
  - On a motion made by *Dawn DeMatteo* and seconded by AJ *Christopher* the committee via roll call, voted to approve the following warrants as read:
    - ***Vote: 6 to 1 absent***
  - ***SW 27-24*** ***$ 5,132.00***
  - ***SW 27-25*** ***$ 103,819.13***

- ***SW 27-26*** ***$73,643.67***
- ***SW 27-27*** ***$48,341.26***
- ***SW 27-28*** ***$206,345.87***
- ***SW 27-29*** ***$7,937.34***
- ***SW 27-30*** ***$4,512.37***
- ***SW 27-31*** ***$99,859.27***
- ***SW 27-32*** ***$3,012.40***
- ***SW 27-33*** ***$22,506.04***
- ***SW 27-34*** ***$10,743.05***
- ***PW 27-04*** ***$3,617,086.67***

- **Reports - Liz Moulton - Food Service Report - Update and Financial Review**
  - An overview of the report - Participation & Financial Health, Flavor Station Rollout, Scratch Cooking Transition & Local Sourcing & Upgrades.
  - Breakfast & Lunch Participation across the district.
    - High School - breakfast - 11% and lunch - 62%
    - Junior High - breakfast - 17% and lunch - 56%
    - Doering - breakfast - 23% and lunch - 67%
    - Granger - breakfast - 36% and lunch - 67%
    - Sapelli - breakfast - 28% and lunch - 53%
    - Phelps - breakfast - 28% and lunch - 54%
    - Clark - breakfast - 53% and lunch - 62%
    - District Summary - Overall average - breakfast - 28% and lunch - 61%
  - Fresh, Local and Speed Scratch Cooking
    - Fresh Whole ingredients from local businesses. We are replacing ultra-processed food items with whole grains, fresh raw produce and clean proteins across the lunch lines.
    - Try it Tuesdays - Partnering with Project Bread & Commonwealth Kitchen to manufacture custom, scratch-made marinara & tikka masala sauces using locally MA produced.
    - Local Sourcing Partners - such as Southern New England Spice Co (Chicopee), Marty's Local (South Deerfield) and The North Elm Butcher Block (Westfield).
  - Flavor Stations, Gluten Free and Halal rollout across all 7 schools - empowering student palates.
    - Custom spice blends
    - Low-Sodium & Healthy - promotes flavor exploration without adding extra sodium to student meals.
    - Full District Scale - deployed across all 7 schools - elementary, middle, Junior High and High School.
  - Farm to School, Local Spotlight, Terrific Tray Competition
    - Features local spotlight on our district website and Facebook page
    - Terrific Tray Competition - A monthly statewide recognition program celebrating nutrition programs that serve visually appealing scratch-made and culturally relevant meals using local MA farm produce.
      - Requires 5 reimbursable components & 2 + local ingredients
      - Zero plastic wrapping on trays with unflavored milk
      - $2,500 prize for the school kitchen that wins
  - Financial Performance & Budget Balance
    - Projected to have lower cost percentages for the 2026-2027 School Year
  - Forward Outlook: Priorities for 2026-2027

        - Expand local sourcing
        - Student Culinary Tastings
        - Equipment Grants
    - Summary Takeaways for School Committee
        - Financial Health & Growth - The food services maintains a balanced, positive fund balance while continuously elevating meal quality and ingredient standards.
        - District-Wide Customization - Flavor stations successfully deployed across 7 locations, empowering students to personalize meals with healthy seasonings.
        - Community & Local Impact - Strong local partnerships with Massachusetts growers and local businesses directly enrich meal quality and support regional agriculture.

Questions/Discussion

AJ Christopher - Great job! This is one of the presentations that I look forward to. Completely for myself - When is the fresh sauce day you said November 11th, that is Veterans Day.

Liz Moulton - Corrected herself and said that is the Wednesday after.

AJ Christopher - Great to see you are using local farms.

Shelley Reed - I really appreciate the food service team! Next time you make it, I'm definitely grabbing a piece of the Wacky Cake. Why do you think we're seeing an increase in breakfast and lunch participation?

Liz Mouton - The food is tasting better with the fresh ingredients and we are trying different things.

Shelley Reed - Back in the day there was a food service director that would have us for lunch.

Liz Moulton - I would invite you in for lunch.

Michael Perry -Love this! It's great to see these numbers going up. A big reason for the rise in breakfast counts is bringing it directly to the classrooms. I volunteered with Clark last year, and your team ran like a well-oiled machine. It's no surprise participation is up when breakfast is delivered right to the students! .

Liz Moulton - The junior high is delivering breakfast every day now too.

Michael Perry - It really comes down to age—the younger kids are actually hungry to eat, while for the older ones, it's more about socializing! By the way, I loved hearing about the seasonings. As someone who loves to cook, I actually make my own taco seasoning without any flour, and it's super easy. One of my high schoolers requested ground beef over potatoes recently; I tried making it and it was a huge hit! Maybe a suggestion for a new meal. Fantastic job overall—it's wonderful to see you collaborating with local farms and bringing the community into our schools.

Mayor Johnson - Congratulations on your award! Thank you for your help with the new kitchen at the high school.

Devin Soucy - I heard students asking for more broccoli today. I have never heard that before.

Mayor Johnson - Thank you for the excellent job that you and your staff are doing.

Subcommittee Updates - None

New Business

- SCR 26-67 - Resolution Designating the Official Logos of the Agawam Public Schools
- SCR 26-68 - Acceptance of a Gift Donation - $200.00 from the Friends of the Agawam Public Library

All will move to unfinished business for the next meeting.

Policy Review - None

Any Other Items That May Legally come before the Committee

AJ Christopher - Great student support at the senior games - students are very enthusiastic. Great energy - Seniors enjoy all of your activities.

Michael Perry - I echo AJ - and like Mrs. McDougal said the Senior Night football game was great. Fellow classmates coming to support classmates - a lot of school spirit this year.

Shelley Reed - Nothing really tonight - My condolence to the Bonivita family.

Dawn DeMatteo - I don't have much tonight - looking forward to having my husband cook with this seasoning.

Heather Zielenski - Looking forward to the truck and treats this week. Thank you to the PTO's for organizing these.

Devin Soucy - Just to echo the school sports - this year has been great with school spirit with the class of 2027. Different giveback nights for students at the games such as 50/50 raffles. - Happy Halloween to anyone who celebrates it.

Mayor Johnson- Going to have a workshop on the Protect Act. I just have to coordinate a time with our attorney.

The Chair moved to adjourn the meeting on a motion made by *Shelley Reed* and seconded by AJ Christopher without a vote "All those in favour say yea" and "All those opposed say nay.
Vote: Yea 6 to 1 absent.

The meeting concluded at - 7:44 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Collen DeGeorge
Executive Assistant to the School Committee

Wendy Rua
Committee Secretary