Regular School Committee Meeting
Minutes - November 10, 2026

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

Roll Call of Attendance Present: 6 ; Absent: 1

Citizen's Speak Time: - No one spoke at this time.

Highlights on Education: MASS Certificate of Academic Excellence Award
Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Salomao introduced this year's winner Fidan Danielle Ahmadov. She also explained that the award is given to a high school student who has distinguished themselves in the pursuit of excellence during their high school career. The criteria for this award include the students' 3-year cumulative average, their rank in class, and overall school citizenship. Presentations of this award are made at the beginning of the senior year to allow for the inclusion of this prestigious award in the student's credential package and counselor recommendation.

Fidan is a shining example of academic excellence, leadership, and service. She has consistently earned Honor Roll recognition throughout all her terms at Agawam High School enrolling in such classes as AP Calculus BC, Honors Chemistry, AP Physics, Calculus III, Linear Algebra and Differential Equations. She also took 1st place at the Beaver Works Summer Institute Drone Race at MIT in 2026. In addition to that she won numerous Robotic Awards in 2025 & 2026 for Innovation in Control, Creativity, Quality and was a District Championship Winner in 2025 and received a World Championship Qualification. Fidan also received an Outstanding Academic Achievement in a National Recognition program.

Throughout her time at AHS, Fidan has received numerous academic distinctions, including Stanford Pre-Collegiate Program, Intro to Engineering from Stanford University in CA- RSM Certificate of Honors in Calculus, Algebra 1 & 2, and Geometry - Advanced Python, Intermediate Python, Application Programming Interfaces, Mastering databases, User Interface Development and Interactive Web with JavaScript from Code WizardsHQ.

Fidan in involved with many clubs and organizations at the High School such as the Electrothon Club, As Schools Match Wits Club, Rosie Robotics Club which she was on the electrical team for the past few years, the Girls in Steam Club, Peer to peer tutoring, Chess Club and Chiefs. She served as the Peer-to-Peer club president from 2025 and she was the 2027 Class President from 2023 -2024. Beyond the classroom, Fidan was on the varsity swim team and varsity tennis team. She has been captain of the swimming team since 2025 and was a state championship qualifier for the tennis team. Fidan also played volleyball during her freshman year,

In addition to her academic and extracurricular commitments, Fidan is fluent in Russian, intermediate in Spanish and is beginning to learn Japanese. Fidan is a disciplined, organized, passionate, and a creative natural leader who embodies excellence in both academic and community involvement. Her achievements and character have left a lasting impact on the Agawam High School community.

Fidan Danielle Ahmadov- Thank you so much for the award and thank you to Mr. Blain for the nomination.

Questions/Discussions:

Mayor Johnson - On behalf of the community, this is one of the most outstanding resumes that I have heard in a while especially with all of the accomplishments. Great job!

Superintendent Notes: Presented by Assistant Superintendent, Cheryl Salomao

- Last Tuesday, on November 3rd, all Agawam educators participated in a professional development day focused on Universal Design for Learning (**UDL**) which is a research-based educational framework that guides the design of flexible learning environments to accommodate students.

- All schools will be closed tomorrow, Wednesday, November 11th, in observance of Veterans Day.

- A reminder that there is a scheduled, district-wide two-hour delayed opening on Thursday, 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*** - The ECC is participating in the Mayflower Marathon, collecting donations at both the Sapelli and Perry Lane locations to support the Open Pantry. The school is also hosting a Winter Clothing Swap, with bins outside Perry Lane for families to donate and pick up gently used winter clothing through November 30th. Thanksgiving Spirit Week will take place from November 16th through November 20th, focusing on togetherness, kindness, and thankfulness. The Fourth Annual Preschool Pep Rally will be held on November 24th, with staff and students wearing orange and brown in support of the high school's Thanksgiving football game.

- ***Granger*** - Students recently celebrated Wellness Day, with support from the PTO and NHS volunteers. Staff have been exploring new instructional strategies, with a focus on purposeful learning and encouraging students to take on meaningful challenges. The school is fully staffed and is currently interviewing for an interim art teacher while Mrs. Gamelli is on maternity leave. Granger is also continuing to improve cafeteria routines to give students more time to eat, while the fourth-grade Student Council continues to develop student leadership. Upcoming events include a friendship feast with Phelps on November 16th, involving the two Intensive Support Classrooms, and the annual Turkey Trot on November 25th, followed by an 11:50 a.m. dismissal.

- ***Clark*** - Spirit Week will take place from November 23rd through November 25th. November 23rd will be Lumberjack Monday, November 24th will be Twinsie Tuesday, and November 25th will be Loungewear Wednesday. Throughout November, students can also use their earned Wildcat Cash to enter the November Showcase Raffles for prizes and special experiences.

- ***Phelps*** - The Mayflower Marathon food collection will run from November 9th through November 23rd, with students and staff collecting non-perishable food items for the Springfield Food Bank. The school's goal is to collect 2,000 cans in order to earn a school-wide incentive. Phelps will also hold its first instructional round on November 10th, and Nicky's Pizza will host a giveback fundraiser for the school on November 12th.

- ***Sapelli*** - The Scholastic Book Fair will take place from November 30th through December 4th. The school is also currently hiring substitute crossing guards.

- ***Doering*** - The sixth-grade classrooms recently hosted student-led conferences for the first time in several years. Students reflected on their academic growth, shared examples of their work, and established goals for continued learning. More than 90% of sixth-grade students also participated in the Cultural Heritage Fair, showcasing their backgrounds through displays and artifacts. The school also held its annual Veterans Day ceremony, organized by Mrs. Kathy Jediny and hosted by Chris Pisano. The ceremony featured remarks from Mayor Johnson, Senator Velis, Representative Finn, and VFW Past State Commander Troy Henke.

- ***Junior High*** - The Washington D.C. 2027 Club will host a Community Craft and Vendor Fair on November 12th from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm in the cafeteria to help offset travel costs for students attending the trip in June 2027. AJHS will also hold Student-Led Conferences on November 12th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm Additionally, CTEC will host an open house on November 24th from 5:00pm to 7:00pm for interested eighth-grade students and their families.

- **High School** - The school is offering the community an opportunity to tour the current high school before demolition begins in mid-January. Tours will be available on November 14th and November 28th from noon to 4:00 pm, with visitors meeting in the high school cafeteria. AHS Spirit Week will also take place from November 16th through November 25th, ending with a pep rally on November 25th ahead of Thanksgiving break.

Unfinished Business:

- SCR 26-67 - Resolution Designating the Official Logos of the Agawam Public Schools
  - Approval of SCR 26-67 - Resolution Designating the Official Logos of the Agawam Public Schools
  - The Mayor read the resolution as asked by some School Committee members. The resolution says....

A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE OFFICIAL LOGOS
OF THE AGAWAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, the Town of Agawam derives its name from the local Native American tribe who originally inhabited the region, reflecting a deep historical tie and enduring bond between the community and its native heritage; and

WHEREAS, the image of a Native American in full headdress spelling the word "Agawam" has served as a logo of the Agawam Public Schools, representing the school district across athletic attire, campus signage, official publications and civic ceremonial displays; and

WHEREAS, the Native American Agawam headdress logo has historically held, and continues to hold, a place of distinct honor, respect, and deep pride for generations of students, alumni, staff, and community members throughout Agawam; and

WHEREAS, the Agawam Public Schools also recognizes the widespread identity, community recognition, and athletic tradition associated with the classic Collegiate "A" logo; and

WHEREAS, the Agawam School Committee seeks to establish clear, unified, and formal district guidelines regarding the official logos of the school system; and

WHEREAS, both designated logos are authorized for official use across the school department, including but

not limited to academic documents, digital platforms, athletic uniforms, band apparel and equipment, student club materials, facility signage, general school apparel, and official district communications; and

WHEREAS, the School Committee desires that both official logos be used interchangeably and equally throughout the district, with neither logo designated as primary or held as more prevalent than the other; and

WHEREAS, the authorization and official designation of these dual logos apply strictly to district-wide branding for Grades 7 through 12, whereas Elementary Schools and the Roberta G. Doering School are actively encouraged to support student-driven initiatives to create unique logos and insignia tailored specifically to their respective schools and grade levels; and

WHEREAS, external support organizations, including booster clubs, may select and utilize either official logo of their choosing on offered or donated items, free from outside influence or restrictions; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Agawam School Committee formally approves and designates both the Native American Agawam headdress logo and the Collegiate "A" logo as represented below as the official logos of the Agawam Public Schools for Grades 7 through 12.

- On a motion made by *Michael Perry* and seconded by *Wendy Rua* the committee via roll call, voted to approve the Resolution Designating the Official Logos of the Agawam Public Schools.
  - ***Vote 6 to 1 absent***

- SCR 26-68 - Acceptance of a Gift Donation - $200.00 from the Friends of the Agawam Public Library
  - Approval of SCR 26-68 - Acceptance of a Gift Donation - $200.00 from the Friends of the Agawam Public Library. On a motion made by *Shelley Reed* and seconded by *Wendy Rua & Heather Zielenski* the committee via roll call, voted to approve the Acceptance of a Gift Donation - $200.00 from the Friends of the Agawam Public Library.

    - ***Vote 6 to 1 absent***
    - *Mayor Johnson* - Congratulations to the William P. Sapelli school for being chosen to receive the $200.00 donation for their library. The Agawam Public Library chooses one school every year after the summer reading program has completed.

Business Meeting:

- **Routine Matters**
  - Approval of Minutes - On a motion made by *Dawn DeMatteo* and seconded by *Shelley Reed* the committee via roll call, voted to approve the October 27, 2026, regular meeting minutes.
    - ***Vote : 6 to 1 absent***

- **Warrants/Transfers**
  - On a motion made by *Dawn DeMatteo* and seconded by Heather Zielenski the committee via roll call, voted to approve the following warrants as read:
    - ***Vote : 6 to 1 absent***
  - SW 27-35 $78,500.36
  - SW 27-36 $4,947.00
  - SW 27-37 $386,875.45
  - SW 27-38 $86,580.59
  - SW 27-39 $35,121.93

- **Reports - Erin Walsh - Preparing Students for Life Beyond High School**
  - Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Salomao introduced Erin Walsh, Director of Special Education.
  - The focus of Special Services
    - When transition planning begins
    - Who receives transition services.
    - School and community based learning
    - STRIVE, college and community partnerships
  - Transition is a Process
    - Age 14 - Planning begins - Transition planning begins during the year a student turns 14.
    - Graduation - Typical pathway - For many students, transition planning concludes with high school graduation.
    - Up to Age 22 - Extended services - Eligible students may continue to receive special education services.
    - Transition planning is not a single program or a final year event.
  - Preparing for Life Beyond School
    - *Employment* - Practice workplace tasks and experience community job sites.
    - *Independence* - Develop daily living, safety and transportation skills.
    - *Community* - Builds relationships and participates in recreation and campus life.
    - Student-centered transition experiences support meaningful adult lives.
  - Strive - Ages 18-22
    - Currently have 18 students with 2 teachers and 10 support staff
  - Transition Services Across Settings
    - School -Based
    - Shared Skills
    - Community-Based
  - Community Job Sites - work experiences in Agawam and the wider Western Massachusetts Community.
    - Terra-Americana
    - DeCaro Garden Center
    - Soul Shine Consignment
    - Lorraine's Kitchen
    - Lydia's Closet
    - Storrs Library
    - St. Andrew's Church
    - Legacy Farm
  - College Partnerships
    - Students experience college environments, develop independence, and explore interest through partnerships with HCC and Westfield State University.
    - Examples of classes - photography, arts and radio broadcasting.
    - Students participate in classes, campus activities and college life.
    - Belonging on campus - learning through real experiences.
  - Transition Fairs - Connecting students and families with resources for adult life.
    - Exploration - Connections - Future planning
  - Transition Programs prepare students for life as young adults

<u>Questions/Discussion</u>

Shelley Reed - I think that you do a great job taking care of these kids and they will prosper from this. Thank you for what you do.

Mayor Johnson- Thank you for all your staff does and thank you to Mrs Murdock and Ms. Lingenberg.

New Business

- SCR 26-69 - Travel Abroad - Spain 2027-2028

All will move to unfinished business for the next meeting.

Policy Review - None

Any Other Items That May Legally come before the Committee

Dawn DeMatteo - Looking forward to the Thanksgiving football game.

Shelley Reed - Nothing tonight.

Wendy Rua - Nothing tonight.

Michael Perry - Congratulations to Matt Letellier! I was happy that I was able to attend the unified game last week - Happy Veterans's day!

Heather Zielenski - Congratulations to Fadan - Impressive Resume

Devin Soucy - I have been doing some research on mental health services in high school and vaping in middle school. I will be sharing my research once completed.

The Chair moved to adjourn the meeting on a motion made by *Shelley Reed* and seconded by *Michael Perry* 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 - 7:33pm

Respectfully submitted,
Collen DeGeorge
Executive Assistant to the School Committee

Wendy Rua
Committee Secretary