

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Approved February 17, 2026

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

President, Christopher McGee called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and asked everyone to please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and a subsequent moment of silence.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT:

Christopher McGee read the following statement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is either discussed or acted upon. The Board has fully complied with the notice requirements by advertising in The Express Times and The Star- Ledger posting publicly and by notifying the Municipal Clerk of the date, time and place of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present

President, Christopher McGee
Vice-President, Jennifer Pettinelli
Lindsey Culcasi
Craig Dunwell
Danielle Lopazanski
Brian Williams

Absent

Loretta Reed

Others Present

Seth Cohen, Chief School Administrator
Tim Mantz, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Robert Merryman, Board Attorney

Flag Salute – Pledge of Allegiance

Silent Meditation

President, Christopher McGee read the District Mission Statement:

The mission of the Alpha Public School is to provide every student with the opportunity to receive a high quality education, in a small, personal, caring, safe and positive environment in which all students at all grade levels achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In partnership with the parents and the community, a competent and dedicated staff guides students to develop confidence and become productive and contributing members of a constantly changing society.

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II. PRESENTATION

Mr. Cohen presented on the budget process and the effects of special education costs on the budget

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2025 regular meeting.

Motion carried by voice vote with Craig Dunwell abstaining.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2025 executive session.

Motion carried by voice vote with Craig Dunwell abstaining.

Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2026 reorganization meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen provided the building upgrade plan as prepared by the architects and asked the Board to review for further discussion at the February work session.

VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the acceptance of the monthly financial reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer for the month of **December 2025** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c3, the Board of Education certifies that as of **December 31, 2025**, after review of the secretary's monthly financial report and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials no major account has been over expended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c4 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Jennifer Pettinelli, to approve the December 17, 2025 through January 20, 2026 current expense bill list for check numbers 22340 to 22386 totaling \$698,859.20.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$7,499.39 as presented for the period December 17, 2025 through January 20, 2026 noting that Commissioner approval was not required as the year to date transfers on a cumulative basis do exceed 10% pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8.1.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

None

IX. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cohen commended a former Alpha student currently at the Phillipsburg High School whose essay was featured in the NY Times.

Mr. Cohen explained the reasoning behind motion 4.3.

Mr. Cohen discussed the cell phone initiative in schools recently signed into place by the Governor. Once the state releases guidance, the district will move forward accordingly.

ACTION ITEMS: Upon the recommendation of the Chief School Administrator

CONSENT AGENDA: Matters listed within the consent agenda have been referred to members of the Board of Education and/or its standing committees, for reading and study, are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion.

Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Lindsey Culcasi, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda items **3.1** through **3.2**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

3.1 To approve Cecelia Plante as a substitute teacher for the 2025-26 school year.

3.2 To approve extending Yuney Lio-Gonzalez unpaid leave of absence from through 6/30/26.

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Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Jennifer Pettinelli, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the following school affairs agenda items **4.1** through **4.5**.

Motion carried by unanime roll call vote.

- 4.1** To approve the placement of the identified student in the Hunterdon County Vocational School District for the 2025-26 school year at an annual tuition cost of \$8,076.
- 4.2** To accept a donation in the amount of \$300 to be used for 8th grade activities.
- 4.3** To approve the 2025-26 QSAC District Improvement Plan.
- 4.4** To approve the following fundraiser requests:
 - PTO to sell Valentine’s Day Candy Grams from 1/22/26 through 2/5/26 to raise money for the general fund.
 - 8th grade class to host a spaghetti dinner at the Alpha Firehouse on 1/18/26 from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm to raise money for the 8th grade trip and graduation.
- 4.5** To approve the following field trips:
 - 1st grade to the Lehigh Valley Zoo in Schnecksville, PA on 5/13/26.
 - 7th grade to Camp Ladore in Waymart, PA in May, 2026 or early June, 2026.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Craig Dunwell suggested that a letter be sent to all local businesses for donations to aid the 8th grade fund raising committee. Mr. Merryman said that, while this could be done, it should not be on district letterhead as Boards of Education are not allowed to solicit money. Mr. Cohen said that a different letterhead could be used reflecting that any requests were being made by the 8th grade advisors.

Craig Dunwell asked if the district had a LRFP in place. Mr. Cohen said it didn’t but one would be put in place.

XI. PUBLIC INPUT

None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. on a motion by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Brian Williams.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Mantz
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary