

ALPHA BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

CALL TO ORDER:

President, Christopher McGee called the meeting to order at 7:00 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
Craig Dunwell
Danielle Lopazanski
Brian Williams

Absent

Vice-President, Jennifer Pettinelli
Lindsey Culcasi
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 and Lori Walker recognized the Honor Roll recipients.

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026 regular meeting.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

Christopher McGee said that he reached out to Patricia Babcock, the Pohatcong Township Board of Education President, regarding exploring the possibility of consolidating districts. Mrs. Babcock responded she would discuss with the Pohatcong Board at its next meeting. Mr. Merryman reviewed the process each Board would have to take should they both agree to move forward.

VI. MONTHLY REPORTS OF BOARD SECRETARY AND TREASURER

Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the acceptance of the monthly financial reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer for the month of **January 2026** and further that, in compliance with NJAC 6A:23A-16.10c3, the Board of Education certifies that as of **January 31, 2026**, 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.

VII. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS/LIST OF BILLS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the January 21, 2026 through February 18, 2026 current expense bill list for check numbers 22387 to 22442 totaling \$627,906.23.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

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Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve budget transfers in the amount of \$2,588 as presented for the period January 21, 2026 through February 18, 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. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Craig Dunwell, to adopt the following resolution to enter into executive session at 7:23 p.m. This executive session is expected to last about 30 minutes. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is Personnel, Negotiations, Student Issues, and/or Legal Matters.

It is anticipated that action pursuant to this executive session will not be taken.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Alpha Borough Board of Education, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter.
2. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public upon resolution of all information discussed.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

X. RECONVENE

Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Brian Williams, to reconvene the meeting to public session at 7:42 p.m.

Motion carried by unanimous voice vote

XI. CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cohen told the Board that PEOSH requested various building documents which the district supplied. The final report is forthcoming.

Mr. Cohen reviewed the tentative FY27 budget.

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Mr. Cohen congratulated the Alpha students selected to participate in the Honor Band performance held tomorrow at Phillipsburg High School. Mr. Cohen also congratulated Kiley Fechtman for being Alpha's "Unsung Hero".

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: BOARD AFFAIRS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the following board affairs agenda item **1.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

1.1 Be it resolved that the Alpha Board of Education approves the filing of a waiver to exempt the Alpha School District's participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) due to the fact that the district projects an enrollment of less than 40 Medicaid eligible students.

Consent Agenda Motion: BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Motion made by Craig Dunwell, seconded by Brian Williams, to approve the following business affairs agenda item **2.1**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

2.1 To approve a joint transportation agreement with the Warren County Special Services School District for the 2026-2027 school year with an Administrative Fee of 5%.

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Craig Dunwell, to amend the agenda to include motion 3.5 under Personnel Affairs.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Consent Agenda Motion: PERSONNEL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the following personnel affairs agenda items **3.1** through **3.5**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

3.1 To accept Kimberly Gilles notice of retirement effective 7/1/26.

3.2 To accept Kimberee Weiss notice of retirement effective 7/1/26.

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- 3.3** To approve Steffi Castro to perform 10 hours of classroom observation during the 2025-26 school year.
- 3.4** To approve Will Santowasso to perform 5 hours of classroom observation during the 2025-26 school year.
- 3.5** To approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the ALPHA BOARD OF EDUCATION (hereinafter the “Board”) approves the Memorandum of Agreement (“MOA”) between the Board and the ALPHA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (hereinafter the “Association”) setting forth the terms for a new collective negotiations agreement between the parties with a term from September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2029.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Board further authorizes the Board President, Board Secretary and Negotiations Committee Chairperson to execute a final written collective negotiations agreement, between the parties, once prepared, that incorporates all of the agreed upon terms.

Consent Agenda Motion: SCHOOL AFFAIRS

Motion made by Brian Williams, seconded by Danielle Lopazanski, to approve the following school affairs agenda items **4.1** through **4.3**.

Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

4.1 To approve the following fundraiser requests:

- PTO to have a Frank’s Trattoria fund raiser on 3/4/26 to raise money for the general fund.
- 8th grade to sell hot chocolate baskets and spaghetti baskets from 2/5/26 to 2/12/26 to raise money for the 8th grade trip.
- 8th grade to have a donation jar during the 5th – 8th grade concerts on 12/17/25 to raise money for graduation.

4.2 To approve the following building use requests:

- i. 8th grade on 1/28/26 from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm in the cafeteria for a mid-year parent meeting.

4.3 To approve Kristine McGrath to the “The Art & Science of Teaching Reading” seminar on 3/27/26 in Hackettstown, NJ. Cost is \$99 registration fee and mileage.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Brian Williams inquired about the graduation date and building use for Eagle Escapades.

Craig Dunwell asked when the Board would further discuss the building upgrade plan. Mr. Cohen said this would take place at the March work session.

XIII. PUBLIC INPUT

None

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XIV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 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