Ashland Library Advisory Panel
Meeting Agenda
August 14, 2025 | 6 PM

1. Call meeting to order
2. Review and approve August 7 Minutes
3. Finalize CoA #1
4. New Business: Course of Action #2
    a. Background
    b. Pros/Cons/Issues/Implications for the future (financial, operations, etc)
5. Finalize Survey tool for other libraries
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

Ashland Library Advisory Panel
Meeting Three—August 14, 2025

Work Week 3 for the Library Advisory Panel began by approving the minutes of the previous work session and reviewing a draft of an Executive Summary and Background Information as submitted by facilitator Kevin Bushey. This is a summary of information related to the history of the subsidy model for funding currently used for the Gladys J. Craig Memorial Library by the Town Council in Ashland. Included are a brief description of the recent history of the library funding activities, a copy of Assumptions related to the actions of the panel, and specific Courses of Action related to the current subsidy model identified as "CoA #1". Minor editing was suggested by members of the panel and the document will be revisited prior to submitting the entire Panel's report to the Town Manager on or before October 7, 2025. The topic of procedure related to updating/revising the list of library cardholders from Ashland, Portage, Nashville, Garfield, Masardis, and Oxbow was again briefly touched upon; without documentation of the procedure used to remove the names of library users who have died or moved, the Library Advisory Panel determined that this question would receive no review.

Members of the panel received a draft of a 2026 Discount Model as described by "Course of Action #2." The document includes a comparison of the Ashland library budget for 2025 with cost projections for 2026 in which each surrounding town provides subsidies at a 50% discount compared to the values of the 2025 budget. The document also includes financial information related to wages and benefits in 2025 for full time and part time municipal employees working in the library and a prorated projection for 2026. Pros and Cons related to CoA #2 were discussed; these included recognition and partial alleviation of the financial burden to other towns balanced against the need for the Town Council to deal with an ongoing budget deficit while maintaining the library's quality. There was general agreement among panel members that suggestions of means to address financial shortfall in 2026 and beyond was not part of the charge of the Ashland Library Advisory Panel. Questions regarding the role of a Library Advisory Board were raised.

Panel members suggested that a board made up of elected representatives from each town would provide taxpayers with a conduit for concerns related to the operation of the library, purchases of books and materials, and making financial recommendations prior to submission to the Ashland Town Council. It might also play a key role in fund-raising and development of programs. It was pointed out that the advisory board for the M & E Turner Memorial Library was made up of individuals appointed by the Presque Isle City Council rather than voted on by residents. Some boards imposed term limits on members. It was questioned if there might be a specific structure for an advisory board related to standing as an IRS non-profit 501 (c 3). This can be investigated as the panel considers Courses of Action #s 3 and 4.

A second draft of the survey questions introduced during Work Week 2 were provided to members of the panel. Editing suggestions and additional questions resulting from panel discussions were included. The Google survey will be sent to each panel member as an email link that will feed the information provided to the panel through Excel. This will provide a test of function before submitting the survey to librarians from 10 regional institutions using either non-profit or municipal/advisory governance models as identified by the Public Library Annual Report (PLAR) put out by the Maine State Library System. Two panel members agreed to contact each library by phone prior to Labor Day, the survey very shortly afterward sent by email, and responses requested by September 15th . This will assist the Library Advisory Panel in discussion of proposed Course of Action #3 (CoA #3) considering a funding model utilizing municipal control with IRS non-profit status for tax-deductible donations.

Recorder,

Anne Chase