

Ashland Library Advisory Panel

Meeting Agenda

July 31, 2025

1. Call meeting to order
2. Introduce Panel members
3. Select Facilitator
4. Select Recorder
5. Discuss purpose and scope of work
 - a. Research/ recommendations/ deliverable
 - b. Meeting schedule (11 weeks) (*see Atch 1 sample schedule*)
6. Work breakdown/report format proposal (*see Atch 2 sample*)
 - a. Executive summary
 - b. Background/ current situation
 - c. Assumptions- (*see Atch 3 examples*)
 - d. Courses of Action (*see Atch 4 sample*)
 - e. Recommendations
 - f. Appendix
 - Interviews
 - Correspondence
 - Resources
 - Sample docs, templates, etc
7. Other business
8. Adjournment

Ashland Library Advisory Panel
Atch 2 - Report Format Proposal

Due to Town manager: October 7, 2025

Document format:

1. Cover page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. Background
5. Assumptions
6. Courses of Action (4?)
7. Panel Recommendations
8. Appendix
 - a. Interviews
 - b. Correspondence
 - c. Resources
 - d. Sample letters, templates, IRS filings, etc
 - e. Misc

Ashland Library Advisory Panel

Atch 1- Meeting Schedule Proposal

Weds or Thurs- 6 pm?

Week 1- July 31: Panel mission, work effort, project/report format, timeline, assumptions

Week 2- Aug 6/7: Courses of Action 1, 2

Week 3- Aug 13/14: Courses of Action 1, 2

Week 4- Aug 20/21: Course of Action 3

Week 5- Aug 27/28: Course of Action 3

Week 6- Sep 3/4: Course of Action 4

Week 7- Sep 10/11: Courses of Action 4

Week 8- Sep 17/18: First Draft Report

Week 9- Sep 24/25: Review Draft Report/Changes

Week 10- Oct 1/2: Finalize recommendations, review final draft

Week 11- Oct 7: Final Report to town manager

Report provided to council at the October 14 council meeting.

Ashland Library Advisory Panel

Atch 4- Sample Courses of Action and format

CoA #1: Current subsidy model

- Background
- Budget
- Pros/cons/issues

CoA #2: Discounted subsidy model currently being discussed for 2026

- Background
- Budget
- Pros/cons/issues

CoA #3: Municipal with IRS non-profit status for tax-deductible donations

- Background and other town examples
- Budget
- Pros/cons/issues
- Sources of funds
- Proposed transition plan

CoA #4: Municipal transfer to Private (non-profit 501 (c) 3 status)

- Background and other town examples
- Budget
- Pros/cons/issues
- Board of directors, bylaws, charter, etc
- Sources of funds
- Proposed transition plan

OTHER?

Ashland Library Advisory Panel

Atch 3 Proposed Assumptions

1. The library advisory panel is not reviewing the current library programs, operations and staffing.
2. The panel is focused on identifying multiple funding models to continue offering public library services to Ashland and surrounding towns' library patrons.
3. The panel will prepare and present its written findings and recommendations to the Ashland Town council at the October 14, 2025 council meeting.
4. The panel will conduct weekly meetings for a total of 11 meetings to accomplish its work.
5. Other?

Ashland Library Advisory Panel Meeting One- July 31, 2025

The first Library Advisory Panel meeting met for Work Week 1. It is planned to continue regular weekly meetings for the next 11 weeks. At the end of that time, a recommendation regarding a successful funding model will be presented, first to the town manager and then to the Ashland Town Council; the latter is currently scheduled for the October 14th council meeting. The Ashland Town Council will be making decisions related to the ongoing operation of the Gladys J. Craig Memorial Library prior to presentation of the 2026 town budget. Changes will ultimately go to a vote via public referendum. The intention of the panel and the town council is to identify the best way to continue to offer public library services to patrons in Ashland and surrounding towns.

The Ashland Library Advisory Panel is made up of representatives residing in 6 communities: Ashland, Garfield, Nashville, Portage, Masardis, and Oxbow. The first meeting was also attended by the Ashland Town Manager. Nominations for a panel facilitator and a meeting recorder were accepted and voted upon. Kevin Bushey of Ashland will facilitate the meetings and Catherine Chase of Ashland will prepare meeting minutes. It was the panel consensus that the meeting minutes after panel approval will be posted on the library website.

Each member of the panel was presented with copies of a meeting schedule proposal with a structured calendar leading to a finalized report to the Town Manager, a proposed format for the recommendation of the Ashland Library Advisory Panel, a list of proposal assumptions, 4 sample courses of action (listed below, budgeted and actual library expenses for 2024 and 2025, and a breakdown of subsidy payments for municipal services to surrounding towns, the County and North Maine Woods in 2024 and 2025. These items were briefly discussed and will be examined in more detail in coming weeks.

The advisory panel will research aspects of funding alternatives modeled by other library facilities in the state and other models that may become apparent as a result of completing this research. Suggested courses of action include:

1. Utililizing and/or “tweaking” the current subsidy model based on property valuation and possibly including a library board to assist with library management and communication with the town.
2. A discounted subsidy model based on a per capita rate of \$58/person with possible alterations to the current library budget so that all towns can use the library services at an acceptable subsidy rate.
3. Pursuing IRS non-profit 501c3 status under municipal including receiving tax-deductible donations and other non-profit funding. Discussed alternatives within this structure include a library board with a municipal employee to manage library operations or municipal control of all aspects of managing the library including budgeting and the hiring or firing of employees.
4. Transfer from municipal management to private management as a non-profit 501c3 with the library facility being leased to a separate managing body responsible for all fund raising to manage its budget.

Discussion of the first two proposals will take place in the 2nd session of the Library Advisory Panel. Representatives are charged with developing questions for a survey to be completed by other community libraries.

Recorder,

Catherine Chase