

SELECT BOARD

MINUTES

July 18, 2025



Board met in session at 8:00 a.m. at the Marblehead Municipal Light Office, 80 Commercial Street, Conference Room.

The following Board members were present constituting a quorum:

Dan Fox, Chair
M. C. Moses Grader
Erin M. Noonan
Alexa J. Singer
James R. Zisson

Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator

The Chair called the meeting of July 18, 2025 to order.

Select Board 2025 RETREAT. The following is a comprehensive summary of the 2025 Marblehead Select Board Annual Retreat.

The 2025 Select Board Annual Retreat served as a strategic forum for discussing key municipal priorities, reviewing progress on finance and organizational reform, and establishing action items to guide the upcoming fiscal year. A primary focus of the retreat was the Town's continued transition from legacy financial systems to the fully integrated **Tyler Munis ERP system**; a major undertaking aimed at modernizing and streamlining financial operations. The Town Administrator and CFO outlined the phased implementation plan, which includes a transition to the general ledger module effective July 1, 2025, payroll integration by January 2026, and full revenue and assessing integration by July 1, 2026. The FY27 budget will be the first developed entirely within the Munis system.

The retreat emphasized the importance of timely **free cash certification** and completion of the annual **independent audit**, both of which are vital for ensuring financial stability and transparency. The Finance Director reported that free cash will be targeted for certification by January 2026 (well ahead of the state's March deadline), and efforts are underway to close the books more efficiently this year. The Board acknowledged the need to prepare a presentation by the new auditor to the public, once the remaining single audit work is finalized.

A major achievement highlighted during the retreat was the **restructuring of the Finance Department** to address longstanding issues, such as a lack of succession planning and operational redundancy. The new organizational design adds an Assistant

Town Accountant position and proposes splitting the assistant Treasurer/Collector role into two specialized assistant positions, enabling internal advancement and long-term stability. The Finance Director and Select Board discussed the importance of this change to mitigate single points of failure and to professionalize municipal financial operations. In addition to staffing, the retreat addressed **resource gaps**, particularly in IT and Assessing. The CFO identified the need for an additional IT support staff and a dedicated field assessor to reduce reliance on contractors and ensure timely property reviews. The Board acknowledged that while budget constraints may limit immediate hiring, documenting these needs is important for long-term planning and public transparency. The **discussion of financial transparency tools** also received significant attention. While ClearGov will remain active for now, the Town plans to adopt Munis's public-facing budget and financial tracking modules once a full year of data is available, ensuring continuous transparency. The Board supported the idea of a public-facing presentation to showcase progress and educate residents on the town's evolving financial systems.

Another key issue discussed was the **potential financial risk associated with non-compliance with MBTA 3A zoning requirements**. Brendan Callahan, Director, Community Development and Planning, joined the Board in this discussion. The Board expressed concern that grants already awarded or in process could be revoked as a result of MBTA Zoning non-compliance. Staff has committed to tracking and publicly sharing a list of at-risk grants and expenditures to ensure transparency and enable contingency planning.

On budget strategy, the Town Administrator confirmed that both a **level-funded** and a **Proposition 2½ override budget** will be developed for FY27, reflecting a disciplined approach to budgeting under uncertain fiscal conditions. Department heads will be asked to submit needs-based requests, which will inform a transparent decision-making process about what the Town can fund within existing revenues and what may require additional voter support.

Finally, the Board reviewed the progress made against **previous year goals** and reaffirmed its commitment to structured **capital planning**, enhanced **interdepartmental collaboration**, **organizational risk identification**, and ongoing **employee development**. The retreat concluded with consensus around the need for strategic investments in personnel, technology, and communication infrastructure to sustain operational improvements and ensure service delivery meets community expectations.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 11:50 a.m. All in favor.



Kyle A. Wiley
Administrative Aide

List of documents used: Finance Presentation FY26 / 2024 Select Board goals.