SELECT BOARD

MINUTES

January 14, 2026

Board met in HYBRID session at 7:00 p.m. at Abbot Hall, 188 Washington Street, Select Board Meeting 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 Wednesday, January 14, 2026, to order. This meeting is being recorded.

PUBLIC COMMENT. None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UDPATE. The Town Administrator provided a consolidated summary of key ongoing projects, operational updates, and upcoming initiatives currently underway across town departments.

Technology Modernization and Customer Service Improvements – OpenGov Platform
As part of the Town's ongoing technology modernization and customer service improvement efforts, the Procurement Office has fully transitioned to a paperless, online bidding process using the OpenGov platform. This system modernizes how the Town conducts procurement by providing vendors with a single login, mobile-friendly access, and real-time notifications, making it easier for businesses of all sizes to identify and respond to bid opportunities. For residents and vendors alike, the platform improves transparency by offering clear, timely access to procurement information and bid status updates.

The adoption of OpenGov also supports more efficient internal operations by reducing manual paperwork, shortening processing times, and improving compliance with public procurement requirements. These efficiencies allow staff to focus more time on service delivery and oversight while ensuring procurement processes remain fair, competitive, and accountable.

Beyond procurement, the Town uses OpenGov as a centralized platform for all permit applications, further enhancing the customer experience. Residents and businesses can submit applications online, track progress, receive updates, and communicate with Town staff without needing in-person visits or paper submissions. This integrated approach creates a more consistent, predictable, and accessible interface for interacting with Town government.

Together, these improvements represent a meaningful step forward in leveraging technology to deliver faster, more transparent, and more customer-focused municipal services, while expanding access to Town processes for residents, vendors, and the broader business community.

Village Street Bridge (Harold B. Breare Bridge) – TIP Application Submission
The Harold B Breare Bridge project, commonly known as the Village Street Bridge, has been officially submitted to the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for inclusion in the FFY 2027–2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The application seeks construction funding based on an estimated construction cost of $5.25 million, which includes a 10 percent contingency. Staff from multiple departments contributed technical input, coordination, review, and supporting documentation to advance the funding submission.

The project scope includes full replacement of the Village Street Bridge, associated roadway and sidewalk improvements, and construction of an ADA-compliant pedestrian access path connecting Village Street to the Rail Trail below. The project is currently at the 25 percent design stage, which is required for TIP eligibility, and is undergoing technical review by MassDOT. The project team will continue to monitor communications from the MPO and provide updates as the project advances through both the TIP programming process and subsequent design milestones.

Picket House – Exterior Improvements
Exterior improvements at the Picket House continue to progress. Siding and trim replacement has been completed on three sides of the building. A new composite gutter has been ordered and will be installed upon arrival. In addition, all windows have been measured, and the Town is awaiting a quotation from Harvey Windows. Once pricing is received, window orders will be placed.

Franklin Street Fire Station – Building Envelope and Mechanical Upgrades
Work at the Franklin Street Fire Station has included the completion of siding replacement on two sides of the building, as well as the replacement of rotted trim along the front façade. Measurements have been taken for all remaining windows, and a quotation has been received. Window orders are scheduled to be placed this week.
In addition to exterior improvements, a new heating system boiler has been ordered to replace the existing 30-year-old unit. As part of this upgrade, a SuperStor hot water storage tank will be installed in conjunction with the new boiler. All components are expected to arrive this week, and installation work will begin shortly thereafter.

Abbot Hall – Historic Door Restoration
At Abbot Hall, one set of front doors is scheduled to be removed this week for off-site refinishing. Once that set is completed, anticipated in approximately five weeks, it will be reinstalled, and the second set of front doors will be sent out for refinishing. This phased approach allows continued access to the building while preserving the historic doors.

PUBLIC SHADE TREE HEARING. 2 Thomas Circle. The Chair opened the public hearing on the application from Wren Sooy and Kristin Horgan, 2 Thomas Circle, to remove a public shade tree. Wren Sooy presented her application to the Board. Jon Fobert, Tree Warden, Certified Arborist, addressed the Board stating he felt the tree in question was in good health and that this may be more a sidewalk issue with the tree roots and noted that should the Board approve this application the cost to the applicant would be approximately $6,000, or planting 12 trees, in accordance with the Town of Marblehead's Shade Tree Policy. The Board received 2 letters on file opposed to the application. Bob Sooy spoke in favor of the application. The Chair closed the public hearing. The Board reviewed the application and stated support for Tree Warden and the Town's Shade Tree Policy. After discussion a motion was made and seconded to deny the application from Wren Sooy and Kristin Horgan for the removal of a public shade tree at 2 Thomas Circle. All in favor.

PUBLIC SHADE TREE HEARING. 7 Widger Road. The Chair opened the public hearing on the application from Stephen Cummings, Building Commissioner, to remove three public shade trees located at 7 Widger Road. The Building Commissioner presented the application to the Board. There are two main concerns for requesting removal of the trees: 1. The Town's Fiber Loop (main hub) goes through the canopy of one of the trees and 2. damage that will occur to the new roof due to the proximity of the trees to the building and the amount of pinecones that fall onto the roof which could puncture the new material as well as the sap from the pinecones causing damage. Jon Fobert, Tree Warden, Certified Arborist, addressed the Board and reviewed work that has been done on the trees and potential work that could be done to mitigate some of the concerns. Wren Sooy spoke opposed to this application. The Board received two letters in opposition to the application and placed them on file. Al Jordon spoke in favor of the application. The Chair closed the public hearing.

The Board had a lengthy discussion with the Building Commissioner and Tree Warden reviewing possible options including a pruning plan that could reduce damage to the Fiber Loop and roof as well as implementing more advantageous maintenance of the roofs. The Board felt it was a large request to remove three public shade trees and asked the Building Commissioner and Tree Warden to work together to try and find other solutions. The Board will continue the public hearing. Motion made and seconded to continue the public shade tree hearing until March 25, 2026. All in favor.

FINANCE COMMITTEE. Interview. Appointment. Ramon Garcia appeared before the Board seeking appointment to the Finance Committee. After discussion a motion was made and seconded to appoint Ramon Garci to the Finance Committee with a term to expire in June 2028. All in favor.

CULTURAL COUNCIL. Interview. Appointment. Susan Wood appeared before the Board seeking appointment to the Cultural Council. After discussion a motion was made and seconded to appoint Susan Wood to the Finance Committee with a term to expire in June 2028. All in favor.

DONATION. Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Motion made and seconded to accept a donation from "Yes for Marblehead Ballot Question Committee" in the amount of $5,809.04 and deposit the donation in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. All in favor. Motion made and seconded to send a letter of appreciation to the Committee. All in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS, GENERAL Motion made to except the following Consent Agenda Items except those put on hold:

MINUTES of December 2, 2025, December 10, 2025, and January 7, 2026.

Miles for Mary 5K Run/Walk to support Brain Cancer research, on Saturday, October 17, 2026, subject to approval from Recreation and Parks, receipt of the required Certificate of Liability and police details as needed. No permanent markings are allowed on the public way and all temporary markings must be removed at the conclusion of the event

Abbot Hall, Marblehead Community Charter Public School Graduation, June 17, 2026, subject to the usual rules, regulations, fees and receipt of the required Certificate of Insurance.

Abbot Hall, Marblehead Little Theatre, September 19, 2026, subject to the usual rules, regulations, fees and receipt of the required Certificate of Insurance.

Abbot Hall, Marblehead Festival of Arts, Friday, February 6, 2026, subject to the usual rules, regulations, fees and receipt of the required Certificate of Insurance.

B&S Fitness Black Cat 10 or 20 Miler, Sunday, March 29, 2026, subject to approval from Recreation and Parks, receipt of the required Certificate of Liability and police details as needed. No permanent markings are allowed on the public way and all temporary markings must be removed at the conclusion of the event

BELL RINGING. Washington's Birthday - that the bells of Abbot Hall and all the churches in Marblehead be rung on Washington's Birthday, Sunday, February 22, 2026, at the usual holiday hours from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.; 12 noon to 12:30 p.m.; 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. as has been custom in the past.

All in favor.

2025 ANNUAL COMPENSATION COMMITTEE REPORT. The Town Administrator provided the Board with the 2025 Annual Compensation Committee Report, as required under the bylaw.

LICENSING. One Day Liquor License(s). Marblehead Festival of Arts / Marblehead Arts Association / The New England Yankees. Motion made to approve the requests for the following One Day Liquor License(s) from:

Marblehead Festival of Arts, Abbot Hall, February 6, 2026, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., **beer and wine only**

Marblehead Arts Association, 8 Hooper Street, **from 6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. on the following dates**

- February 19, 2026
- March 19, 2026
- April 11, 2026
- April 23, 2026
- May 21, 2026
- June 25, 2026
- July 16, 2026
- August 20, 2026
- September 17, 2026
- October 15, 2026
- November 19, 2026

The New England Yankees, Abbot Hall, February 14, 2026, beer and wine only, 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

subject to the following conditions:

- Delivery of and receipt by the Licensing Authority of the required fee ($50 each).
- Delivery of and receipt by the Licensing Authority of Proof that the alcohol will be purchased from an authorized source.
- Proof that the applicant can receive proper delivery; provide proper storage and disposal of all alcoholic beverages purchased all in accordance with the requirements of G. L. c. 138.
- Liquor Liability Insurance.
- No alcohol is allowed to be stored on premises overnight.
- Alcohol will be purchased from Kappys Importing & Distributing Co. and Martignetti's

Moved by Mr. Grader, seconded by Mrs Noonan. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mr. Zisson, in favor; Mr. Grader, in favor; Mrs. Noonan, in favor; Mrs. Singer, in favor; Mr. Fox, in favor.

CEMETERY COMMISSION. Retirement. The Board received notice that Jerry Tucker has resigned from the Cemetery Commission. The Board will receive letters of interest to fill the vacant seat on the Cemetery Commission. Deadline to apply is February 6, 2026, with interviews on February 11, 2026. The Chair will coordinate with the Cemetery Commission as well.

SELECT BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS. The Board expressed appreciation to the Building Commissioner for being proactive in his care for the public buildings in Town.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 8:37 p.m. All in favor.

Kyle A. Wiley

Kyle A. Wiley
Administrative Aide

List of documents used: Town Administrator update / application public shade tree, 2 Thomas Circle / application public shade tree, Widger Road / Resume: Ramon Garcia, Susan Wood / ltr from YES Marblehead / draft minutes / Miles for Mary 5 K Request / Abbot Hall, Charter School request / Abbot Hall FoArts request / B&S Fitness request Black Cat / Bell ringing / 2025 Annual Compensation Committee Report / 1 day liquor license requests: FoArts, Marblehead Arts, New England Yankees / Retirement letter, Jerry Tucker..