SELECT BOARD

MINUTES

January 28, 2026

Board met in HYBRID session at 6:00 p.m. at Abbot Hall, 188 Washington Street, Select Board Meeting Room

By a roll call vote the following Board members were present constituting a quorum:

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

Thatcher W. Kezer III, Town Administrator

The Chair called the meeting of Wednesday, January 28, 2026, to order. This meeting is being recorded.

FY2027 STATE OF THE TOWN. Thatcher Kezer**,** Town Administrator, made the FY2027 State of the Town presentation, reviewing the preparations currently underway for developing the Fiscal Year 27 Budget, the organization of the town, its core municipal services and resource management. Aleesha Benjamin, CFO, participated remotely.

Kezer highlighted the recent successes along with the biggest challenges the Town is facing with a significant gap in the budget. Projected revenues and expenses were presented. The main cost drivers are health insurance rates, new trash contract and Pension costs. A balanced budget will require staff reductions, limiting services to the most critical public safety and operational functions, reductions in quality-of-life services, deferring maintenance on Town owned and historic buildings and additional cuts to absorb unemployment benefit costs resulting from layoffs. An override to restore some or all the eliminated services and staffing is an option the Town may want to consider after the voters have had the opportunity for community engagement to determine what services and staff get restored. The Board commented on the presentation, asked questions and discussed adding a standing item to future meetings to review and discuss budget assumptions and address public comment. The Board requested the Town Administrator and CFO prepare a clear timeline and roadmap of key budget process dates and outline key decision points for the budget and an override process as well as an update to include departmental budget reviews for their January 28th meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

Public comments and questions that were addressed by the Board included:

- Should an override approach be a 1 year or multi-year solution and what are those numbers;
- Are we adhering to Select Board and Finance Committee policies;
- School enrollment numbers declining;
- Concerns with too many jobs, contracts negotiated, underutilized facilities and unnecessary expenses (bottled water);
- Questions regarding debt and the Town's cost related to pensions;
- Will Town implement a hiring freeze?

The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and being invested in the town and stated that the Board is always happy to answer questions and have discussions with residents and to reach out to them via their emails through the Town's website.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Moved by Mr. Grader, seconded by Mrs. Singer. On a polled vote the Board voted as follows: Mr. Noonan, in favor; Mr. Zisson, in favor; Mrs. Singer, in favor; Mr. Grader, in favor; Mr. Fox, in favor.

Kyle A. Wiley

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Administrative Aide

List of documents used: FY27 State of the Town PowerPoint