Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
February 21, 2026
Special Meeting Minutes

Also Present: D. Angersola; V. Belles; M. Callahan; W. Denya; S. Denya; B. O'Mara; T. Pelton; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Gelston called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. 2026-2027 General Budget Review Workshop

   A. Public Works

      1. General Highways – There was a $41,182.00 (2.84%) increase in the Public Works General Highways Operating budget. Mr. Angersola noted that the increase was due primarily to a negotiated salary increase in the union contracts and an increase in the cost of electricity.

         In response to a question from Mr. Dill, Mr. Gelston advised that a new Road Foreman had been hired and will begin work in March. He stated that a decision has not yet been made about whether a Public Works Director will be necessary. It was also noted that the salary line for Temporary Employees had been cut by $10k. There was a general discussion about how to handle the salary lines for the Director's position and Temporary Employees but no changes were made at this meeting.

         Mr. Angersola and the Selectmen discussed the increase in the cost of electricity and Mr. Angersola agreed to track the Town's cost of electricity over a 5-year period.

      2. Snow Removal – There was a $10.7k (3.76%) increase in the Snow & Ice Removal Operating budget. Mr. Dill noted that it cost the Town approximately $65k in FY26-27 to plow the selected private roads in Town.

      3. Transfer Station – There was a reduction of $1,310.00 (-0.14%) in the Transfer Station Operating budget. Mr. Angersola stated that the reduction was mainly due to eliminating several pieces of equipment.

         Mr. Angersola noted that the hopper building had been inspected by an engineer who determined it has a remaining life of 3-years before it will have to be repaired or, more likely, replaced. Mr. Angersola estimated the cost for replacing the building at $1M and the Selectman agreed that the Town should begin setting aside funds in Capital for this project.

4. Tree Care & Removal –There was an increase of $3,500.00 (1.24%) in this Operating budget due to paying for the professional services of a tree warden.

5. Public Works/Transfer Station Capital – The following FY2026-2027 Capital requests were discussed:

   - Road Reclamation - $2.5M (Scheduled Replacement)
   - F550 Plow Truck – $187k FY27 (New Request)
   - Road Improvements Materials – $400k (Scheduled Replacement)

   There was a general discussion about the following additional Capital items: covers for the demolition dumpsters, a scheduled replacement of Truck 5 in FY28 ($290k), and the Bashan Road culvert.

B. Town Office Building Operating – The Town Office Building Operating budget stayed flat at $5,900.00. Mr. Angersola advised that new exterior lights had been installed last year.

C. Town Meeting Hall Operating- The Town Meeting Hall Operating budget stayed flat at $3,350.00. Mr. Angersola advised that the entire building had been painted last year.

D. River House/Annex Operating – The River House/Annex Operating budget stayed flat at $2,200.00. Mr. Angersola discussed the rapidly deteriorating condition of the Annex. He stated that it will cost $165k to demolish the building, excluding the foundation, and he would like to schedule the demolition for next summer. Ms. Zemienieski stated she would like to apply for a STEAP grant for the project.

E. Grange Hall Operating – There is an increase of $2,630.00 (15.44%) in the Grange Hall Operating budget, in the Building Maintenance line, to repair a damaged wire from the building to the outside pole lights. Mr. Angersola responded to questions from the Board about the condition of the Grange Hall.

F. Millington School House Operating – The FY27-28 Operating budget for the Millington School House was reduced 88.71% from the previous fiscal year. Mr. Angersola advised that the outside of the building will be painted this spring along with replacement of some cracked clapboards.

G. Municipal Office Complex/Central Services Operating/Capital – There was a $55,613.00 (13.72%) increase in the MOC Operating budget. Ms. Zemienieski reported that the increase is mainly due to the increase in the cost of electricity and the fee to join the River Valley Transit bus service.

   Mr. Angersola advised that, during an inspection, it was discovered that two HVAC motors in the MOC had been running constantly since the building was first opened. He

stated that they have been turned off and maintenance is working on re-balancing the building management system.

Ms. Zemienieski reviewed the following MOC Capital requests:

- MOC LED sign - $10k FY27 (Update to Existing Capital Plan).
- Phone System Upgrades for Offsite Locations - $15k FY27 (Update to Existing Capital Plan).
- Video Conference System Replacements & Upgrades - $15k FY27 (Update to Existing Capital Plan).
- MOC Parking Lot Resealing - $27k FY26 (Scheduled Replacement).
- MOC Wireless Network Access Points - $40k FY29 (Scheduled Replacement).
- Network Switches – $60k FY33 (Scheduled Replacement).

H. Fire Marshal Operating – There is an increase in this Operating budget of $455.00 (1.55%).

I. Cemeteries Maintenance Operating – There is an increase in the Cemeteries Maintenance Operating budget of $15k (88.24%). Mr. Angersola advised that the increase in the Lawn Care line item is for tree care/removal. This was requested in the FY26 budget but was reduced due to budget cuts.

J. Town Greens, Grounds and Fields Operating/Capital – There is a $8,321.00 (4.07%) increase in this Operating budget. Mr. Angersola advised that the increase is mainly due to adjusting overtime pay to match what other Town employees are receiving, an increase in the Repairs & Maintenance line, and the rising cost of electricity.

Mr. Angersola reviewed the following Capital requests:

- Grounds Mower #1 - $14,180.00 FY27 (Scheduled Replacement). Mr. Angersola noted that there is an option to acquire the mower through a 5-year lease.
- Ventrac Tractor - $21,500.00 FY27 (Scheduled Replacement).
- Service Truck 24EM - $80k FY29 (New Request).

Mr. Angersola advised that the 2014 vehicle the Building Official has been using has 151,000 miles on it, is in disrepair, and the mechanic does not recommend repairing it. Mr. Angersola stated he has quotes for a new Ford Explorer ($39k) and a F150 truck ($41.8k). There was a general discussion about the potential for sharing the vehicle with another department.

K. Regional Probate Court Operating – There is a $137 (.69%) decrease in this Operating budget. Ms. Zemienieski stated that each town's share of this budget is based on the value of the town's Grand List.

L. Selectmen Operating – There was a $5,573.24 (2.85%) increase in this budget, mainly due to a 2.5% increase in Salaries & Wages and a small increase in the Advertising and Conferences budget lines.

M. Legal Services Operating – The Legal Services Operating budget was flat over FY25-26. Ms. Zemienieski stated that there are two union contracts coming up for negotiation in June 2026.

N. Insurance (Risk Management) Operating – There was an $8k (3.14%) increase in this Operating budget. Ms. Zemienieski stated that she estimated the increases since she has yet to receive the premium notices from CIRMA with the actual rate percentage increases.

O. Paramedic Services Operating – There was a $74.00 (0.82%) increase in this Operating budget. Ms. Zemienieski confirmed that the Middlesex Hospital's charge for providing paramedic services to the Town is a per-capita fee.

P. Resident State Trooper Operating – There is a $4,200.00 (2.90%) increase in this Operating budget.

Q. Chatham Health District Operating – There is a $2,612.00 (2.01%) increase in the Chatham Health District Operating budget due to the increase in the Town's population.

R. Human Services Operating – There was no change in this Operating budget over the FY25-26 budget.

S. Board of Finance Operating – Review of the Board of Finance Operating budget was postponed.

T. Finance Office Operating – Ms. Belles advised that the Postage and Cell Phone lines were not registering in the Finance Office's FY2026-2027 budget on ClearGov; however, they should have reflected $1,000.00 and $200.00 respectively. Further discussion of this budget was postponed.

U. Fringe Benefit Operating – Review of this Operating budget was postponed.

V. Debt Service - Review of this budget was postponed.

W. Interfund Transfers - Review of this budget was postponed

The meeting broke for lunch at 12:00 noon and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

X. Lakes Association Operating

- BashanLake – Ms. Stephanie Denya reviewed a list of FY25-26 accomplishments, including treatment of invasive aquatic plants and a successful petition for an ordinance prohibiting wake boats from the lake. She reviewed the Association's planned FY26-27 budget, which totals $33,586.00, and requested the Town share in 50% of any monies expended by the Association to a maximum of $16,793.00. Ms. Denya responded to questions from the Board.

- Lake Hayward – Mr. Timothy Pelton reviewed the FY27 Lake Hayward Association's budget, totaling $17,250.00, and reviewed the Association's FY27 goals and objectives. He stated that they have been monitoring the detention basin and are working with an engineer to improve its effectiveness. Mr. Pelton advised that the refurbishment of the Lake's dam is a major capital expense planned for FY27 and stated that they have gone out to bid for the project.

  In response to a question from Mr. Pelton, Mr. Gelson recommended he speak with Land Use Administrator Ventres to try to determine whether the Town or the Association owns the dam. Ms. Belles confirmed that the Town has $108k in reserves for this capital project. Mr. Pelton advised that the RFQ deadline is March 2nd and, in response to a request from Ms. Belles, he agreed to keep her informed about the quotes they receive.

- Moodus Reservoir – Ms. Brittany O'Mara noted that Moodus Reservoir does not have an association but rather a group of volunteers that work on and with the Moodus Reservoir Preservation Group (MRPG), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to the environmental well-being, quality, health, and enjoyment of the lake. She discussed their efforts at controlling invasive aquatic weeds with the use of an Eco-Harvester that was purchased a few years ago and stated that they have also investigated several alternatives to aquatic weed control that do not involve adding chemicals to the lake; however, DEEP has not sanctioned any of the alternatives that MRPG has come up with. Ms. O'Mara responded to several questions from the Board members.

Mr. Dill advised that, due to a close personal involvement having to do with Moodus Reservoir, he would recuse himself from any discussions about, or votes on, allocating any funds to that lake.

Y. State Budget Review

Ms. Belles reviewed State of Connecticut revenue that the Town is projected to receive in FY26-27. She noted that there are small reductions in the state's payments for Adult Education, LOCIP, and PILOT. She stated that she expects the new Special Education Expansion and Development (SEED) grant will go into the BOE budget but she has not been able to confirm that with the state yet.

Z. Other Operating/Capital Budget Discussion

There was a discussion regarding other revenues the Town receives and Ms. Belles stated she will add the BOS Revenue budget to a future budget meeting. Ms. Belles provided a brief overview of other miscellaneous revenues the Town receives and stated she will provide the Selectmen with a detailed print out.

Ms. Belles advised that Liberty Bank had changed their fee structure resulting in more fees attached to the Town's accounts; however, the bank is now paying interest on the Town's checking accounts which more than offsets the additional fees.

Mr. Gelston noted the challenges in developing a zero-increase budget without cutting services and/or programs.

3. Public Comment: There was no public comment raised at the meeting.

4. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to adjourn the meeting at 2:12 p.m. .

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary