

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, January 7, 2025
Select Board Chambers and
Via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>**

- 6:02 p.m. Call to Order:
A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Kevin Keane. Those present were Vice Chair Heidi Frail, Marianne Cooley, Cathy Dowd, Joshua Levy, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance, Katie King, Deputy Town Manager, and Susan Metropol, Recording Secretary, were also in attendance.
- 6:03 p.m. Public Comment Period:

Joe Matthews, 31 Rosemary Street, commented that at the October Town Meeting, the Finance Committee reported that they were awaiting the results of the contracted demographer McKibben regarding the effects of the Neighborhood Housing Plan on schools in Town. His report stated that even in the case of a full build out scenario, the plan would likely result in lower-than-current assumptions for future school population. Mr. Matthews expressed his opinion that it would be a mistake for Town officials to use potential extra students at some point in the future as an argument against the Neighborhood Housing Plan. He expressed that the Town has very few levers to pull to address housing costs and attracting businesses, and that zoning deregulation is one of the best ways to do this. He urged any undecided voters to vote “yes” for the Neighborhood Housing Plan on January 14.
- 6:07 p.m. Welcome State Representative Josh Tarsky:

The Board welcomed State Representative Josh Tarsky, who was sworn in as Needham’s Representative in the General Court on January 1, 2025. He met with House Counsel to discuss several bills he is hoping to file by January 17. Mr. Tarsky stated that he hopes to focus his work on transportation, education, housing, and healthcare. He emphasized his desire to be grounded in the district he is representing as he begins his work.
- 6:12 p.m. Director of Public Works Construction Update
Presenter: Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works, Shane Mark, Assistant Director of Public Works

Carys Lustig provided a recap of the 2024 construction season and a look forward to ongoing projects. She noted that this is was largest construction season the Town had engaged in with approximately \$20 million worth of projects funded by the Town, State, and ARPA funds. She highlighted both challenges and

accomplishments with regard to staffing. DPW hired 8 new staff and has 14 remaining vacancies, primarily in Water and Sewer. She then provided updates on DPW projects from the past year:

Recycling & Transfer Station:

- Ventilation upgrade
- Larger repairs will be necessary in the future

Engineering:

- 128 Interceptor Project: currently in process, anticipated to be complete in Summer 2025
- Reservoir Dredging: substantially complete, finishing site restoration and trail improvements
- Walker Pond Phase II Improvements: project complete
- Walker Pond Outfall: substantially complete, final site restoration Spring 2025
- South Street 16" Water Main: Phase 1, from Chestnut Street to Marrant Drive Complete; Phase 2 from Marrant Drive to Charles River Street Spring 2025
- Concord at Burnside Drainage Final Phase: substantially complete, final site restoration Spring 2025

Buildings:

- Needham High School Cupola: required more structural work than anticipated; expected to be completed in the next month
- Eliot RTU Upgrades: completed upgrade of Rooftop Unit System
- LED Lighting Upgrade Town Hall and PSAB: grant funding received for these projects

Parks & Forestry:

- Claxton Field: finished most site work; capping complete; construction of park in progress
- Walker Gordon Infield
- Asa Small Mini Renovation

Water, Sewer & Drains:

- Elizabeth Circle: water main and water services upgrade
- Townwide Lead Service Upgrades
- Tower Ave (Extension): water main and water services upgrade
- Pheasant Landing Road: twin drainage culvert replacements

Highway:

- Dedham Ave Roadway Improvements
- Guardrail replacements (Dedham Ave, Central Ave, Farley Pond Road)
- Webster Street Roadway Improvements
- Alden Road at Brewster Drive Intersection Redesign

- Micro-surfacing – West Street (Highland Ave to Webster Street); High Street (Webster Street to Bennington Street); Greendale Ave (Webster Street to High Street); Linden Street
- Micro-surfacing/Cape Seal – Country Way; Scott Road; Village Lane; Trout Pond Lane

Ms. Lustig also noted the roads which had received rubber chip, paving, sidewalk, and ramp improvements.

Discussion included what the next construction season will include and how the Board can support DPW in filling vacancies. Ms. Lustig added that this presentation did not include the regular maintenance work completed or work completed in response to emergencies. She also highlighted the regular monthly meetings that DPW holds with Eversource and a desire to expand this level of communication to other utilities with which DPW works closely and often.

6:40 p.m.

Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda:

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda.

Mr. Levy commented on the last-minute addition of the individual to the Human Rights Committee to the Appointment Calendar. Board members discussed that this was a technical correction and does not imply a political statement on behalf of the Board despite concern voiced by Mr. Levy that this may be perceived as a political action ahead of the Special Election following the Human Rights Committee taking a position on the election.

Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Anna Giraldo-Kerr	Town Manager Screening Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2025
2.	Albert Schram	Human Rights Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2026

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of December 3, 2024
2.	Approve the following donations made to the Needham Free Public Library: • \$10 from Miryana Radoslavova Mihaylova • \$30 from Peng Shen • \$100 from Chris Brand • \$100 from Joan Onofrey • 2 copies of <u>The Border Line</u> by Annie Dai, estimated value \$36, from Honglei Dai
3.	Approve the following donations made to the Needham Aging Services Division: • \$25 from Niki Pugach

	• A Precor Elliptical exercise bike and a Life Fitness leg press, estimated value \$7,000 from North Hill Retirement Community
4.	Approve the following donations made to the Needham Youth and Family Services Division: • Two (2) grants of \$7,500 each from the MetroWest Health Foundation to be used to support clinical interns
5.	Approve the following donations made to the Needham Public Health Division: • \$300 from Anne MacFate for Needham's Traveling Meals program • \$200 from Anne MacFate for Needham's Gift of Warmth program • \$100 from Lynda Coburn for Needham's Gift of Warmth program • \$100 from Lynda Coburn for Needham's Domestic Violence Action program • \$100 from Anne MacFate for Needham's Domestic Violence Action program
6.	Approve updated charges and compositions for the: • Town Financed Community Housing Oversight Committee • Tree Preservation Planning Committee
7.	Approve changes to vehicle expense reimbursement rates.
8.	Approve revision to the Board's FY2025-2026 goal statement.
9.	Approve revision of policy: Promotion of Deputy Chief of Police & Chief of Police by renumbering from 433 to 110.

6:48 p.m. Overview of HotSpot Parking Payment Application:
 Presenter: J.P. Cacciaglia, Economic Development Manager

Staff discussed required changes to the Town Parking Rules and Regulations prior to the launch of a paid parking application. The proposed changes will add the option of electronic payment and electronic timing of parking spaces. The timeline and brief overview of the app's launch process was also discussed alongside proposed signage changes. J.P. Cacciaglia provided an overview of the effort thus far to create a parking app following feedback from residents and a parking study. He also presented the various design options for new signage to be added informing users of the parking application.

The plan for operations includes a target launch in mid-April 2025. This will begin with implementation of the mobile payment application and use real-time occupancy data for future planning. There will also be a designated HotSpot Training Lead who will offer training tailored to each role, with additional training for software updates and new employees. He noted that coins would still be accepted as payment for metered parking even with the new application in place.

Questions from Board members included how long data collection would take place before implementation; future goals regarding parking in Town; and design of the stickers to be placed on meters.

7:00 p.m. Town Manager:

Open 2025 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Board opened the Warrant for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting. The Warrant is scheduled to be closed on February 11, 2025. Ms. Fitzpatrick highlighted several Warrant Articles including:

- Opioid Programming
- Climate Action Planning Committee
- Parks & Forestry
- Other: Citizens' Petitions

Mr. Levy asked about the land jurisdiction for Stephen Palmer. Ms. Fitzpatrick explained that the property is currently declared to be surplus until the end of the current use. She will bring the Board a proposal to establish a committee to examine the redevelopment of the property.

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to open the warrant for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Preliminary FY2026 Budget Update

Staff updated the Board on the Town Manager's FY2026 budget that will be presented on January 28, 2025. Ms. Fitzpatrick noted that the revenue estimates will not be able to support all requests that have been submitted. Ms. Fitzpatrick added that the Town is partnering with the Town of Dedham to investigate health insurance offerings and evaluate the impact for individual subscribers if certain changes are made. Board members asked about state and local shortfalls in revenue and increasing costs across industries.

Town Manager Report

- Needham Power Choice Informational Sessions
- Eversource Dover to Needham Underground Cable Modernization Project Informational Sessions
- MWRA Community Meeting
- Needham Center Working Group ("Envision Needham Center") Walking Audits and Open House
- Upcoming RTS Study and Survey

7:20 p.m. Board Discussion:

Town Manager Search Process

Board members discussed the status of the search process. Ms. Frail reported that the Town Manager Screening Committee had completed interviews with many distinguished Town Meeting Members who sought to serve on the Committee, and that the Board had appointed Anna Giraldo-Kerr earlier as part of the Appointment Calendar.

Committee Reports

Ms. Cooley reported that the Large House Review Study Committee met and continues to make progress on the remit after two meetings. Several decisions were made about the topic of the upcoming meeting regarding non-conforming lots and certain building situations on these lots. She reported that the Committee will report to Spring Town Meeting with the hope of something to bring to Fall Town Meeting.

Ms. Frail reported that the Tree Preservation Planning Committee is almost fully composed; she is excited about the individuals comprising the Committee.

Mr. Keane reported that the Needham Center Project Working Group will conduct walking audits and an open house for the public to contribute their input.

Mr. Levy reported that the Stormwater Bylaw Working Group will discuss the new regulations that the EPA is considering implementing for commercial properties with at least 1 acre of impervious surfaces. This would affect approximately 119 properties in Town.

Ms. Fitzpatrick reported that the General Bylaw Review Committee is searching for Town Meeting Member applicants.

7:27 p.m.

Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board meeting of Tuesday, January 7, 2025.

Second: Ms. Frail. Unanimously approved 5-0.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:

<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID>

The next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of the January 7, 2025 Select Board meeting can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozbKGNDJOyQ&ab_channel=TownofNeedhamMA or at <https://www.needhamchannel.org/2025/01/needham-select-board-1-7-25/>.