

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Special Meeting
Minutes for Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Select Board Chambers and
Via Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>**

6:00 p.m. Call to Order:
A Special 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.

6:02 p.m. Public Comment Period:

Zachary Wallack, 36 Wilshire Park, expressed his support for the Select Board to schedule a Special Town Meeting on February 24, 2025, following the recent Special Election. He commented that any attempt by the Select Board to support an increase in the Base Compliance Plan would be contrary to the will of the voters. Mr. Wallack emphasized that any effort to delay a vote on the Base Compliance Plan until May would be contrary to the expectations of the voters. He concluded by stating that the Base Compliance Plan already has near unanimous support from Town Meeting and that swiftly holding a Special Town Meeting would assist in healing the division of the Town.

Nathan Levin, 39 Lantern Lane, emphasized the need for the Town to endorse the Base Compliance Plan by holding a Special Town Meeting on February 24, 2025. He urged the Select Board to adopt this date. He concluded that to do otherwise would exacerbate the existing divisiveness.

Barbara MacDonald, 147 Pickering Street, expressed her support for a Special Town Meeting on February 24, 2025.

Catherine Spalding, 143 Lindbergh Ave, commented that delaying the vote on the Base Compliance Plan holds many risks, including potential loss of funding and increasing division that has created an atmosphere of anxiety.

Ed Saraiva, 34 Brackett Street, expressed that while he is not opposed to more housing in Town, he believes the Select Board should advance the vote on the Base Compliance Plan as soon as possible.

Gary Ajamian, 47 Meetinghouse Circle, expressed his concern about the division that this issue has caused in the Town. He urged the Select Board to schedule a Special Town Meeting on February 24, 2025. He emphasized that delaying this

vote until May Town Meeting may put the Town at risk against the compliance deadline, potential legal action, and potential loss of funding.

6:13 p.m. Town Manager Search – Approve Position Statement:
Presenter: Bernie Lynch, Community Paradigm Associates, LLC, Tatiana Swanson, Director of Human Resources

Mr. Lynch reviewed the process thus far regarding the Town Manager search process. Mr. Lynch and Ms. Swanson recommended that the Board vote to approve the Town Manager Search Position Statement and move forward with the job posting. Board members discussed the position statement and expressed their appreciation for the thorough and comprehensive nature of the writing process.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to approve the Town Manager Search Position Statement.

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

6:16 p.m. Joint Meeting with Town Manager Screening Committee:
Presenters: Town Manager Screening Committee, Bernie Lynch, Community Paradigm Associates, LLC

The Board conducted a joint meeting with the Town Manager Screening Committee to discuss the Committee's charge, planned work, and timeline. Town Manager Screening Committee members introduced themselves:

- Rita Vogel, Chair, Human Resources Advisory Committee
- Anna Giraldo-Kerr, former Library Trustee, Town Meeting Member
- Paul Alpert, Planning Board Representative
- Carol Fachetti, Chair, Finance Committee
- Heidi Frail, Vice Chair, Select Board
- Kevin Keane, Chair, Select Board

Elizabeth Lee, Chair, School Committee is also a member of the Town Manager Screening Committee, but was not in attendance.

Mr. Lynch provided an overview of the process and the role of the Screening Committee. He noted that there is an increase in turnover in Town Manager positions, and the field is very driven by geography. The position will be posted with the Massachusetts Municipal Association and the International City/County Management Association. The search will be nationwide, but most candidates will likely be from Massachusetts. Mr. Lynch emphasized that his team will make efforts to expand the search actively to include underrepresented groups, including women and people of color, in order to bring in as diverse and as large a group as possible. Discussion ensued regarding the next steps in the process:

- Resumes will be sent out to the Town Manager Screening Committee on February 14 or 15, 2025.

- Candidates will be tiered into three categories: qualified candidates, unqualified candidates, and candidates who may not have met all the criteria but should be considered. In this step, the team will aim to select 5 to 7 candidates.
- The Screening Committee will meet during the week of February 17, 2025 to review resumes. The goal will be to review resumes by the first week of March, conduct background checks, and present final candidates to the Select Board by mid-March.

Mr. Lynch outlined that the interviews will focus on candidates' careers up to this point, leadership style, financial management experience, personnel and management experiences, economic and community development, citizen and community engagement, and how they plan to become members of the community at-large. The goal of the Selection Committee is to present three candidates to the Select Board following this interview process. By law, the Selection Committee is required to present at least two candidates to the Select Board, at which point the process becomes public. Mr. Lynch noted that he anticipates March 18, 2025 to be the date that the final candidates are forwarded to the Select Board.

6:48 p.m. Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda:
Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda.
Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Nick Tatar	Tree Preservation Planning Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2026
2.	Curt Petrini	Tree Preservation Planning Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2026
3.	Erica Hitchings	Tree Preservation Planning Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2026
4.	Erica Bond	Tree Preservation Planning Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2026

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of December 3, 2024 and December 17, 2024
2.	Sign Renewal Certification for 2025 Alcohol Licenses
3.	Approve updated name, charge, and composition for the Needham Center Project Working Group (to be renamed Envision Needham Center Working Group).
4.	In accordance with Section 20B of the Town Charter, and upon the recommendation of the Town Manager, adopt a revised classification and compensation plan (Schedule A) for FY2025.
5.	Approve Human Resources Policy #109 Recruitment and Selection of Firefighters

6.	Approve Human Resources Policy #110 Promotion of Deputy Chief of Police & Chief of Police (Policy Numbering Change Only)
7.	Approve the following donation to the Needham Fire Department: \$250 grant from the Fidelity Charitable Donor-Advised Fund made at the recommendation of the Dinneen Family Charitable Fund
8.	Approve the following donation to the Needham Health Division: \$500 from Karen Walker for Needham’s Domestic Violence Action program
9.	Approve the following donations to the Needham Free Public Library: \$100,000 from Anonymous \$500 via Morgan Stanley Gift Fund \$250 from Ellen & Michael Knizeski \$45 from Florence Weener \$32.50 from Nancy Present-Van Broekhoven \$40 from Alexander Cullen \$120 from Hillary Hanson Bruel \$18 from Joyslin Bain
10.	Amend the final ARPA budget allocation to reflect a change order for the Stormwater and Water Supply Upgrade line item (Benington Street Water/Stormwater Project final sidewalk restoration) in the amount of \$4,813.30.

NOTICE OF APPROVED ONE-DAY SPECIAL ALCOHOL LICENSES

Hosting Organization	Event Title	Location	Event Date
Yes for Needham	Yes for Needham Gathering	Needham History Center 1147 Central Avenue	1/14/2025

6:48 p.m. MBTA Communities Act Zoning Action Plan:
Presenters: Katie King, Deputy Town Manager, Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager

Ms. Fitzpatrick presented to the Board that on January 14, 2025, the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) issued emergency regulations on multi-family zoning requirements for MBTA Communities. Also on January 14, Needham voters repealed the Multi-Family Overlay District Zoning adopted at the October 21, 2024 Special Town Meeting. EOHLC has confirmed the that Needham will be included in the category of “Commuter rail community that has not submitted a district compliance application by December 31, 2024.” As such, Ms. Fitzpatrick reported that Needham can achieve interim compliance status by filing an action plan by February 13 and a compliant application (with approved zoning) by July 14, 2025. Ms. Fitzpatrick and Ms. King recommended that the Town immediately submit an action plan for interim compliance to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, which shall consist of advancing the Base Compliance Plan to the 2025 Annual Town Meeting in May. Ms. King noted that EOHLC will consider Needham to be in compliance once the Town submits

the action plan and the State reviews and is satisfied with it. This will eliminate the risk of loss of funds.

Discussion ensued regarding the most effective and efficient next steps. Mr. Levy read a prepared statement providing a summary of events related to the Special Election thus far and called for the Select Board to hold a Special Town Meeting as soon as possible to ask that the Base Compliance Plan be enacted by Town Meeting. He also suggested that the Select Board conduct a review to develop specific practices of good governance in order to prevent similar controversies in the future. Ms. Dowd expressed that at this point, the only reasonable path forward is to go with the Base Compliance Plan, as it has already been accepted by Town Meeting and EOHLC has accepted it. Ms. Frail agreed that submitting the Base Compliance Plan by February 13, 2025 ensures that the Town is in compliance, and she does not see the need to schedule a Special Town Meeting given that submitting this plan ensures compliance. Ms. Cooley emphasized that no one is contesting the outcome of the election and expressed her support for ensuring compliance by February 13, 2025 and adoption by Annual Town Meeting in May. She further noted that calling a Special Town Meeting on relatively short notice may result in lower attendance, and that Town Meeting Members will be more likely to attend the Annual Town Meeting. Chair Keane also expressed his support for the Base Compliance Plan and the need for the Town to move methodically and steadily through the remainder of the process. Further discussion ensued regarding the timing of the vote. Mr. Levy raised again the concern that this issue will continue to build anxiety until the Annual Town Meeting. Other Board members agreed that publicly committing to the Base Compliance should be reassuring to the community and work towards healing any division.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Select Board support the submission of an action plan for interim compliance to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, which shall consist of advancing the Base Compliance Plan to the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

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

7:14 p.m. Board Discussion:

Ms. Frail reported that she attended the Chinese Friends of Needham Lunar New Year Celebration as well as the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration hosted by Needham Diversity Initiative.

7:16 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Select Board vote to adjourn the Select Board Special Meeting of Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

Second: Mr. Levy. 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 28, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of the January 21, 2025 Select Board Special Meeting can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Df1grtyU-KI&ab_channel=TownofNeedhamMA or at <https://www.needhamchannel.org/2025/01/needham-select-board-1-21-25/>.