Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, August 12, 2025
Select Board Chambers and
Via ZOOM
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046

6:03 p.m. Call to Order

A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Heidi Frail. Those present were Marianne Cooley, Cathy Dowd, Joshua Levy, Kevin Keane, and Town Manager Katie King. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance was also in attendance.

6:08 p.m. Public Comment Period

Debbie Bryson, 18 Hoover Road, commented that she is opposed to the proposed construction work on Hoover Road and Paul Revere Road, citing her concerns over the proposed timeline and layout of the proposal. She believed that only certain residents were invited to the neighborhood planning meeting and perceived a lack of responsiveness to her feedback. She felt that a previous effort to reduce speed by putting a stop sign on Hoover Road did not address the root of the problem, and recommended the Town address the issue by using lighted stop signs at the intersection of Paul Revere Road and Tower Ave. She believes there have been very few accidents in the 30 years that she has lived there. She worries that pedestrians will be endangered shrinking street width. She advocated for an additional engineering study to be conducted before any redesign is started.

John Kalin, 15 Hoover Road, commented that he agrees with Debbie Bryson's previous public comment and supports adding a stop sign at Paul Revere Road. He stated that he and many in the neighborhood are opposed to the current plan and urged the Board to vote against it.

Paul Smith, 201 Paul Revere Road, commented that he was present at the public meetings and heard from the Director of Public Works. He described the detailed conversations he had and heard during the neighborhood meeting and believes that more than a stop sign is necessary to solve the challenges of this intersection. Mr. Smith noted that most of the residents he has spoken to in his neighborhood would like to see the intersection improved for safety. As an abutter, he would be directly impacted.

Dave Sherman, 100 Rosemary Way, commented that he was having difficulty hearing some of the audio via Zoom.

6:20 p.m. International Overdose Awareness Day Proclamation

Vice Chair Cathy Dowd read the 2025 International Overdose Awareness Day Proclamation, and designated August 31, 2025 as International Overdose Awareness Day in Needham.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve and sign the 2025 International Overdose Awareness Day Proclamation.
Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:22 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Grant of Location – 122 Birds Hill Avenue
Presenter: Joanne Callender, Eversource Energy

Eversource Energy requested permission to install approximately 11 feet of conduit in Morningside Road. The reason for this work is to provide electric service to the new home at 122 Birds Hill Avenue.

The Department of Public Works has approved this petition, based on Eversource Energy's commitment to adhere to the Town's regulation that all conduit installed must be 3" schedule 40 minimum; and, that when buried, that conduit must be placed at 24" below grade to the top of the conduit.

Ms. Cooley noted that in the future it would be helpful to have the name of the developer in the application.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 11 feet of conduit in Morningside Road.
Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0.

6:24 p.m. Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda
Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda.
Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Milee Pradhan	Design Review Board Term Exp: 6/30/2028
2.	Michael Marciello	Commission on Disabilities Term Exp: 6/30/2028
3.	Ruth Langsner	Water and Sewer Rate Structure Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027
4.	See Agenda Packet for Full List	Election Officers (Wardens, Clerks, Deputy Clerk, Inspectors, and Tellers) Term Exp: 8/31/2026

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of June 24, 2025
3.	Approve a request from Sam Snekvik, Executive Operations Coordinator, Bikes Not Bombs to hold the road event "Bikes Not Bombs Century Challenge 2025" in Needham. The event is scheduled for Sunday, September 7, 2025 with a rain date of Sunday, September 14, 2025, starting at 7:20 a.m. The event and route have been approved by the following departments: Fire, Police, and Public Works.
4.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: • $1,500 from Needham Public Library for Annual Banner Sponsorship
5.	Accept the following donation made to Needham's Aging Services Division: • $700 from Clifton F. Holbrook
6.	Accept the following donation made to Needham's Youth & Family Services: • $100 from Robert Wilson for the Crisis Support Donation Fund
7.	Accept the following donations made to Needham Public Health Division: • $1,000 from an anonymous donor for Needham's Traveling Meals program • $50 from Claire Blum for Needham's Flu Program

NOTICE OF APPROVED BLOCK PARTIES

Name	Address	Party Location	Date	Time	Rain Date
Celia Carboni	42 Greenwood Ave	Greenwood Ave between Great Plain Ave & Powers St	7/26/25	3pm-11pm	7/27/25
Ulrike Gorgens	50 Rosemary Street	In front of 50 Rosemary Street	9/5/25	5:30pm-8:30pm	N/A
Nicole Foster	48 Mayflower Road	Mayflower Road between Great Plain Ave & Alden Rd	9/6/25	4pm-7pm	9/7/25
Paul Kaboub	57 Parkinson Street	Parkinson St between Manning St. & Webster St.	9/6/25	4pm-8pm	9/7/25
Amelia Lofaro	376 Warren Street	Lower Laurel Drive between 13 & 27 Laurel Drive	9/6/25	4:30-7:30pm	9/7/25
Frances Parpos	89 Glendale Road	Outside of 31 Glendale Rd	9/13/25	3pm-8pm	9/14/25
Tami Lightfoote	48 Elmwood Road	Elmwood Rd from Fuller Rd to Lancaster Rd	9/13/25	4pm-9pm	9/14/25
Kate Deeley	61 Kenney Street	Corner of Kenney Street & Barbara Road	9/20/25	3pm-12am	9/21/25

6:26 p.m. Director of Public Works

Water and Sewer Abatement

David Davison provided an overview of the proposed water and sewer bill abatement for Beth Israel Deaconess – Needham, including a summary of the negotiation and settlement for $51,210.14. The hospital will also be paying the balances, which are in excess of $200,000. Mr. Davison answered questions from the Board regarding the nature of the dispute, the specific numbers of the abatement, and the calculations for the current balance agreed upon by the Town and Beth Israel Deaconess.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to approve Water and Sewer Abatement #1345.
Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Intersection Layout Changes – Hoover Road/Tower Avenue/Paul Revere Road

Carys Lustig and Tyler Gabrielski presented an updated layout plan for the intersection of Hoover Road, Tower Avenue, and Paul Revere Road. This is an intersection that has had repeated applications to the Traffic Safety Committee for improved flow and has been identified by staff as a location that is challenging to manage for sidewalk and roadway snow removal. The intended redesign will make traffic patterns clearer, funnel traffic more appropriately through the intersection, is intended to have a traffic calming effect, reduce impervious surface, reduce plowable surface, allow for the readjustment of sidewalk tractor routes, and better clarify where Paul Revere Road and Hoover Road start and end. DPW has met with the abutters and other residents to present several options, and this option is a modified version of the preferred option that was changed based on feedback. The layout has been marked on the street and notifications and cones will be up prior to construction.

In her presentation, Ms. Lustig emphasized the Select Board's complete streets policy, which ensures that all modalities are considered when completing a road project. Ms. Lustig noted that there are several goals of this project including the improvement of sidewalk plowing on the school walking route and increased safety for pedestrians, especially children walking to the Mitchell School. The project will include significant physical changes, including altering the curbline and right of way, as well as adding sidewalk. She added that neighborhood residents have reached out to DPW with safety concerns regarding speeding and both the Fire Department and the School Department have approved the plan.

Mr. Gabrielski also noted that the primary strategy to calm traffic is to make changes to the built environment and signage is an accessory. Additionally, according to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), stop signs are not to be utilized as speed control; they can be used in tandem with other strategies. Other benefits of this project include that with reduced road area, there will be less snow to plow and will reduce impervious surface, assisting with stormwater management. Ms. Lustig compared this project to the intersection at Brewster Drive and Alden Road, noting that there has been a great deal of success in safety at this intersection.

Discussion ensued with Board members asking about the stop lines at the intersections, the benefits of making intersections like this smaller, whether there will be sidewalks on both sides of the road, and whether any of the roads in this neighborhood are cut-through streets where traffic is redirected via Waze or other GPS apps. Mr. Keane asked about the walkway at 201 Paul Revere Road and whether the homeowner will be responsible for adding to the existing walkway and who will maintain the added space. Ms. Cooley asked whether this added land is added to residents' deeds. The next steps for the project will be to finalize the design, order the radius curb, and break ground in September.

<u>Great Plain Ave (Harris Ave to Dedham Town Line) Markings Improvements</u>
Ms. Lustig presented a proposed updated line striping change to Great Plain Avenue between Harris Avenue and the Dedham line. This would assist in managing speeds on Great Plain Avenue by reducing the travel lane down to 10-11 feet, adding a striped bike lane, and making some traffic calming improvements (particularly around a previously identified high concern crossing near Broadmeadow Road). This continues traffic lane narrowing that was done several years ago on Great Plain Avenue between Warren Street and Harris Avenue. This project preserves the existing striped parking and provides a protected bike lane in the commercial corridor on one side of the road. The reason this project is being done this season is because this corridor is being micro surfaced and presented a blank surface to line. There are no changes to the hardscape infrastructure, this is a painting adjustment only and complies with the Select Board's complete streets policy. The plan has been reviewed by the Mobility Planning and Coordination Committee as well.

Ms. Lustig provided an overview of the plan for this project to reduce the width of the traffic lanes and add a buffered bike lane similar to what exists on Greendale Avenue. She emphasized that there will be no removal of parking spaces, keeping in mind the businesses in the area that depend on parking for customers. Board members discussed the effects of this project on parking for residents and businesses along Great Plain Avenue as the addition of a bike lane will create a de facto parking restriction in the residential areas. Ms. Cooley asked if the striping for the bike lanes will be fixed relative to the center line instead of the curb. Board members expressed that residents should be given notice that there is a change in parking regulations given the addition of a bike lane.

7:24 p.m. Stormwater Study
Presenters: Phil Paradis, BETA Group, Courtney Botello, BETA Group, Tom Ryder, Town Engineer

Phil Paradis provided a summary of the stormwater study report prepared by BETA for the Town of Needham. The presentation covered the historical context of stormwater management in the Town and the current challenges faced. Mr. Paradis reviewed the history and challenges of stormwater management in Needham, citing the post-World War II era as the time when a significant portion of previously undeveloped land was developed, with 139% growth from 1940 to 1970. This included construction of homes with limited regulations, with many wetlands filled, culverted streams, channelized streams, inadequate drainage, and pavement with limited mitigation. During the August 8, 2023 rain event, it became clear that many neighborhoods are heavily impacted by lack of drainage, such as Highgate and Woodledge, and Linden and Maple. These neighborhoods were infilled on natural wetlands. Mr. Paradis noted that the increase in teardowns and climate change have led to increased impervious surface and runoff.

<u>Stormwater Study</u>
Following August 2023, the Town embarked on a Stormwater Study to identify the main issues with capacity management, identified below:

- Filled wetlands → loss of natural flood storage
- Undersized culverts → overtop roads and flood abutters
- Channelized streams → loss of natural flood storage
- Physical barriers (MBTA tracks)
- Inadequately regulated historical residential construction
- Inadequate/non-existent historical street drainage systems
- “Patchwork” drainage improvements not adequately modeled

<u>Stormwater Study Recommendations</u>
Mr. Paradis and Ms. Botello also reviewed the recommendations of the Study:

- Regulations Updates
    - Evaluate and update redevelopment regulations
        - Currently only requires 1-inch retention
        - Tear downs add 20-40% impervious area
    - Future 10-year storm event = 2.47 inches higher than TP-40
- Stormwater System Mapping Updates
    - 2026 – Stormwater Asset Management Grant
    - Need before hydrologic/hydraulic models
- Public-Private Partnerships
    - Reduce impervious surfaces
    - Expanded infiltration/storage systems on private sites
- Restore Flood Storage
    - Identify properties to accept flooding
    - Install subsurface storage/infiltration system
- Capital Improvement Projects
    - Stormwater upgrades for all capital projects
    - Increase system capacity
- Drainage System Capacity Upgrades
    - Develop hydrologic/hydraulic models

- Upgrade all drainage systems to accommodate 10-year storm

Mr. Paradis also reviewed 40 potential projects that the Town can engage in to improve stormwater capacity management, including the implementation of bypass systems, hydrologic/hydraulic models, subsurface storage and infiltration systems, commercial/industrial area retrofits, drainage system capacity upgrades, and structural upgrades. Mr. Paradis concluded his presentation by highlighting recent progress and completed projects in the Town, including various watershed management evaluations and plans, and reviewing upcoming projects.

Board members and presenters discussed the Town's proposed draft Stormwater By-Law and the associated regulations and enforcement, how watersheds are interconnected, and land purchasing for the purpose of infiltration and/or storage capacity. Board members noted that stormwater will be a significant consideration as the Pollard School Project continues. Mr. Paradis added that the phosphorus control plan is also another important component to be discussed at a later date.

8:14 p.m. Abatement of Ambulance Charges
Presenter: David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance

Mr. Davison reported that a Needham resident who was transported by ambulance to the hospital by the Needham Fire Department has requested that the bill be reduced by $865 because the individual believes the cost is too high, and the Town did not disclose at the time of service that there is a charge. The individual is not claiming financial hardship.

The Board and Mr. Davison discussed this request, including when ambulance rates were last changed and the plan to discuss these rates with the Board at an upcoming meeting. Additionally, Mr. Davison outlined some of the nuances with this particular situation. Ms. Dowd emphasized the incredible resources Needham has to maintain emergency services available to residents, including Advanced Life Support, and the resources that must be dedicated in order to maintain this system.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote not to approve an abatement request for ambulance bill 24-238825 issued on December 20, 2024, for a service date of September 18, 2024.

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

8:29 p.m. Town Manager

<u>Call for and Open Special Town Meeting Warrant</u>
Ms. King asked the Board to call for a Special Town Meeting to be held on Monday, October 20, 2025 and to open the warrant for that meeting. The Board is scheduled

to close the warrant on September 9. Of note, the most recent item to be added is a General By-Law Amendment around Dog Licenses. Other articles potentially to be discussed before October 20, 2025 include the Stormwater By-Law, Accessory Dwelling Units, and Quiet Zone.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to call for and open the warrant for the October 20, 2025 Special Town Meeting.
Second: Ms. Dowd. Unanimously approved 5-0.

<u>Recycling and Transfer Station Hours</u>
Ms. King recommended that the Select Board vote to set the following public hours for the Recycling and Transfer Station on a year-round basis:

Tuesday	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Thursday	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Friday	7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Saturday	7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Ms. King explained that this modified proposal provides more access for the public than the summer schedule that was previously in place, with a total of 41 hours per week. Although there are fewer hours in this schedule compared to the current non-summer schedule, there is more time each morning. This new plan recognizes the need for residents to access the RTS while also considering staff recruitment and retention. Ms. King added that the RTS Study is ongoing, and the consultant will present their analysis and recommendations before the end of this calendar year.

Board members discussed how the Town can balance resident access and staff retention, with Mr. Levy arguing that this change is a loss in useful hours. Other Board members agreed with the modified hours in order to create more consistency for residents and recognizing the positive effects it will have for staff retention.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to set the public hours for the Recycling and Transfer Station on a year-round basis beginning September 1, 2025 as noted in the agenda.
Second: Ms. Dowd. Approved 4-1 with Mr. Levy against.

<u>Town Manager Report</u>
- Ms. King reported that she has received inquiries about the Deputy Town Manager search process and that at the Board's next meeting on September 9 she will have a final candidate to recommend for approval of appointment.
- Ms. King also reported that, with regard to litigation of the Water Management Act, DEP restrictions would apply to Needham and to other communities similarly situated. The Town is currently in discussions regarding next steps.

8:50 p.m. Board Discussion

Select Board Goal Setting FY2026 – 2027

The Board discussed the FY2026 – 2027 goals and initiatives. The Town Manager recommended that the Board adopt the goals and initiatives as presented. They discussed the following policies in detail:

- *40B Guidelines*
  Mr. Levy raised his concern that the Board had not followed the Town's policy on 40B on the prior two applications during the past year. Board members discussed their understandings of the policy and the nuances of establishing regulations compared to guidelines and the other governing bodies who are involved in the 40B application process.
- *Noise: **0-18 months***
  Mr. Levy argued that there are reasons other than construction that cause noise, such as leaf blowers and other noise-generating activities. Ms. Dowd added that it may be helpful to compare Needham's by-law to other towns' by-laws.
- *Appointments Policy*
  Board members agreed that the current Appointments Policy will stay in place.
- *Elected Boards for Public Works and Other Functions*
  Mr. Levy outlined the potential benefits of instituting a Board elected for oversight of DPW. The Board discussed some of the underlying concerns and the importance of maintaining the existing division of responsibilities between the technical expertise of DPW staff and the Select Board as the elected body.
- *Staff Retention and Recruiting: **0-18 months***
  Ms. King recommended that this be added to the goals list for this year as an ongoing effort.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board vote to adopt its vision, goals, and initiatives for FY2026 – 2027 as amended by our action tonight.
Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Pollard Project

The Board discussed the Pollard Middle School Project draft options matrix. This matrix outlines draft facilities and educational goals for the Pollard Middle School Building Committee to use as a tool to compare project options.

Board members discussed the options matrix and its role in informing the Permanent Public Building Committee/School Building Committee and the public about the various project options. Specific topics included cost, construction, and sustainability, among others. Ms. Dowd also noted the limitations of the current options matrix and what may be missing from the analysis and how important this will be when communicating about the project with the public. Mr. Keane also raised the safety issue for the potential Dedham Ave location with the MBTA tracks. The next community feedback meeting will be on August 21. Ms. King also noted that she anticipated a refined version of the options matrix, as well as a first overview of cost estimates for each option, by the end of August.

Committee Reports

Ms. Cooley and Ms. Frail reported that Large House Review Committee discussed potential floor area ratio and height changes that the Committee is considering and how they will be modeling this on potential house designs. Ms. Cooley noted that the reducing the size of homes does not mean that affordability will improve; this is not an expected outcome.

Mr. Levy reported that the Stormwater By-Law Working Group met and also held a public hearing; there were many questions for DPW staff about how infrastructure is implemented and how this impacts stormwater.

Ms. Dowd reported that T-CHOC met. Reg Foster reported that the State made their decisions about housing funds; Linden Chambers did not make the first round, as expected. The full update from the Committee's quarterly meeting will be provided in September.

Ms. Frail reported that the Council of Economic Advisors met and had a full discussion of the priorities including the referral items from the Select Board, notably taking action on an exploration of an Economic Development Plan for the Town, as well as the parking issues that the Town has been evaluating.

Ms. Frail also reported that the Tree Preservation Planning Committee met with Town Counsel and is moving forward on a focused by-law on clear cutting due to new construction and reviewed Wellesley's Tree By-Law as an example.

Mr. Keane reported that he attended the event hosted by From Needham to the World.

10:04 p.m. Adjourn

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Exception 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Needham Police Union and the Police Superior Officers Association, and pursuant to Exception 6: to discuss the purchase, lease and value of real property, in particular the residential dwelling units located at the Stephen Palmer Building, 83 Pickering Street, Needham, MA, where the Chair declares that an open meeting on both of these items may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body [The Chair so declares.] and to adjourn at the conclusion of the executive session without returning to open session.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call.

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, September 9, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of the August 12, 2025 Select Board meeting can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJm_a15x5-w or at https://www.needhamchannel.org/2025/08/needham-select-board-8-12-25/.