

TOWN OF WESTFORD

SELECT BOARD

MINUTES

DATE: January 27, 2026

TIME: 6:45 PM

PLACE: Town Hall, Main Meeting Room/Virtual

PRESENT: G. Thomas Clay Chris Barrett, John Cunningham, Noëlle Donovan,
Sean Kelly

OTHERS

PRESENT: Town Manager Kristen Las, Asst Town Manager Michael Edwards,
Members of Permanent Town Building Committee, Board of Library
Trustees, Audience Members

CALL TO ORDER

Select Board Clay called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

SB Chair Clay asked for a motion to enter Executive Session to consider approval of a tentative agreement with the Westford Police Association (WPA) for FY26 to FY28, as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the town's bargaining position and to approve and release the Executive Session minutes of October 28, 2025.

It was moved by SB Member Barrett, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR BY ROLL CALL TO ENTER Executive Session for the purposes noted above.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to Open Session at 6:53 PM for purposes of completing the remaining agenda items.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Select Board Member Sean Kelly.

OPEN FORUM/FAQ/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Town Manager Kristen Las thanked all the winter storm response staff, including DPW and Facilities, for their tireless work in the snowstorm that started on Sunday and did not end until Monday night.

SB Chair Clay reported the Westford Police Department has guidance on their webpage regarding immigration issues or requests from federal agencies.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI) Co-Chair Joe Diamond acknowledged Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Westford CAT Executive Director Sarah Fletcher delivered the annual Westford CAT audit report. SB Member Barrett praised for their daily newspaper and encouraged residents to check it out.

School Committee Chair Kathryn Clear spoke about the agenda item regarding the change to the Town Meeting date and asked for it to be considered before the Select Board closed the warrant.

CONSENT AGENDA

Banner Request:

The Town Manager's Office requested permission to hang a banner in front of the First Parish Church from March 23, 2026-March 30, 2026 to announce the March 28, 2026 Annual Town Meeting.

The Town Manager's Office requested permission to hang a banner in front of the First Parish Church from April 28, 2026- May 6, 2026 to announce the Annual Town Election.

Stefany Eck requested permission to hang a banner in front of the First Parish Church from May 7, 2026 – May 18, 2026 to announce the Westford Kiwanis Apple Blossom Festival and Parade.

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE the Consent Agenda as presented, subject to all Public Safety recommendations.

PUBLIC HEARING – LIQUOR LICENSE CONVERSION FROM WINE AND MALT BEVERAGES TO AN ALL-ALCOHOL LICENSE PURSUANT TO M.G.L.c.138 §12D FOR JJ'S PLACE, LOCATED AT 223 GROTON ROAD, MANAGER JOSHUA JOHNSON

It was moved by SB Member Cunningham, seconded by SB Member Barrett, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO OPEN the Public Hearing.

Owner and Manager of the Liquor License Joshua Johnson appeared before the Board to request a conversion of his current wine and malt restaurant license to an all-alcohol restaurant license in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 138, §12D.

It was moved by SB Member Barrett, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE the application of JJ's Place, 223 Groton Road, to convert their wine and malt liquor license to an all-alcohol liquor license in accordance with M.G.L. c.138 §12D.

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO CLOSE the Public Hearing.

NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (NMCOG) ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION

NMCOG Executive Director Jenny Raitt and Deputy Director Kelly Lynema presented their Annual Report for the Town of Westford. They gave brief overviews of the past year's collaborations which included sustainability support services, LRTA items, Open Space and Recreation Plan and MBTA Communities technical assistance, as well as regional efforts. SB Member Kelly, the Select Board representative to NMCOG, said that NMCOG is our silent partners in many projects. They ended with projects that will be addressed or continued in the coming year. Board members thanked them for their efforts on our behalf.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE PERMANENT TOWN BUILDING COMMITTEE AND THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES ON THE J.V. FLETCHER LIBRARY RENOVATION AND EXPANSION PROJECT

Owner's Project Manager (OPM) Jennifer McGrory of CHA updated the Board on the Library Renovation and Expansion Project. Currently the project is in the construction phase and is on schedule, still targeted to be substantially complete in November of 2026 and open in January of 2027. The project remains within the Town's approved budget, with 96% contingency remaining. Library Director Ellen Rainville reported that fundraising efforts were ongoing. Ms. McGrory reported that work to enclose the new addition will begin this month. There were questions from Board members regarding the contingency fund and how it was structured as well as clarification on other items within the budget. Ms. Rainville and Ms. McGrory update budget figures on the website every month. Town Manager Las stated that considerable effort has been made to maintain cost efficiency. Periodic reports will be given to the Select Board, or as requested.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026 AT 9:00 PM

Moderator Angela Harkness was present to review the warrant articles with the Select Board. Suggestions were made as to the order of the articles and agreed upon.

DISCUSS REQUEST FROM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO CHANGE THE MONTH AND DAY OF TOWN MEETING

School Committee Chair Kathryn Clear summarized a discussion the School Committee had regarding the date and timing of the Annual Town Meeting. She said that School Committee members felt that putting the date forward to April or May would give much needed time to finalize the school budget. They are requesting a warrant article to change the bylaw. Currently the bylaw reads that the Annual Town Meeting is the fourth Saturday in March, unless it falls on the day before Easter. In that case, it is pushed forward one week. This generated much discussion and SB Chair Clay stated that it was the consensus of the Board to have further discussion at their next meeting.

Due to the continuation of discussion, the warrant was not closed at this meeting.

REQUEST FROM THE BOARD OF REGISTRARS TO AUTHORIZE IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING FOR THE MAY 5, 2026 ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

Town Clerk Laurie Shaw reported that the Board of Registrars voted 3-0 to recommend to the Select Board that they vote to authorize in-person early voting for the May 5, 2026 Annual Town Election. She provided her recommendation as to dates, times and place.

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO AUTHORIZE In-Person Early Voting for the May 5, 2026 Annual Town Election at the Town Clerk’s Office as presented by the Town Clerk.

REVIEW AND APPROVE THE VOTE PREPARED BY BOND COUNSEL REGARDING USEFUL LIFE OF FIRE TRUCKS APPROVED AT FALL TOWN MEETING 2025 AND DUE TO BE BORROWED FOR MAY 2026

The vote was presented to the Board for their approval.

It was moved by SB Member Barrett, seconded by SB Member Donovan, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE as presented the vote prepared by Bond Counsel regarding the useful life of fire trucks approved at the Fall Town Meeting 2025 and due to be borrowed for May 2026.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

- a) Request from the Permanent Town Building Committee to appoint Meghan O’Connell as an alternate member for a term to expire June 30, 2027

SB Member Donovan stated that her vote was not to be taken as a reflection of Meghan as a resident or her right to express her views. She stated that for this committee she was looking for members who can work collaboratively, support the town’s adopted direction once decisions are made and help move complex projects forward as a team. It was her observation that this appointment would benefit the PTBC at this time.

It was moved by SB Member Cunningham, seconded by SB Member Kelly, and VOTED 4 IN FAVOR, 1 OPPOSED (Donovan) TO APPOINT Meghan O’Connell as an alternate member of the Permanent Town Building Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2027.

- b) Request from the Pedestrian Safety Committee to appoint Michael Lengyel to the high school student seat for a term to expire June 30, 2026

It was moved by SB Member Cunningham, seconded by SB Member Donovan, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPOINT Michael Lengyel to the high school seat of the Pedestrian Safety Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2026.

- c) Request from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to reduce the number of alternate seats from six (6) to five (5)

Co-Chairs Joe Diamond and Anjali Rajput made the request, citing the recent restructure that had been approved by the Select Board and School Committee.

It was moved by SB Member Kelly, seconded by SB Member Donovan, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE the request from the Diversity, Equity, and Equality Committee to reduce the number of alternate seats from six (6) to five (5).

- d) Discuss next steps regarding the proposed Resident Voting Study Committee
After receiving a report from Senator Cronin and Representative Arciero on the lack of movement regarding this issue at the state level, therefore the Board asked that volunteers who applied for the Committee be notified that the group will not be formed at this time. They also asked that this committee be removed from the database.
- e) Request from the Bylaw Review Committee to appoint Ellen Doucette for a term to expire on June 30, 2026 and Kristi Bates for a term to expire on June 30, 2027

It was moved by SB Member Cunningham, seconded by SB Member Barrett, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPOINT Ellen Doucette to the Bylaw Review Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2026 and TO APPOINT Kristi Bates to the Bylaw Review Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2027.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Minutes from the Executive Session of October 28, 2025 were presented for approval.

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE the Executive Session minutes of October 28, 2025.

BOARD REPORTS/UPDATES

There was nothing reported.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Request to approve the following:

- a) Appoint Dan O'Donnell as Acting Town Manager from February 14 through February 20, 2026
- b) Accept a gift in the amount of \$3,000 from Lowell Five Bank as requested by the Treasurer/Collector's Office
- c) Grants:
 - 1. Authorization to apply for Apply for Green School Works FY26 Funding for the FY2027 Building Management Systems Replacement Project in conjunction with a planned Phase II of the Town's Ch 25A, §11i Performance Contract
- d) Purchase Orders:
 - 1. MJM Solutions, LLC in the amount of \$12,600 for seven (7) employees to complete the Professional Certification in Community Hoarding Intervention as requested by the Health Department

It was moved by SB Member Barrett, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE items a through d as presented.

- e) Contracts:

1. Westford Police Association (WPA) Collective Bargaining Agreement for FY26-FY28, as requested by the Town Manager's Office

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO APPROVE the Westford Police Association Collective Bargaining Agreement for FY26-FY28.

CORRESPONDENCE

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO WAIVE the reading of the list of correspondence.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by SB Member Donovan, seconded by SB Member Cunningham, and VOTED 5 IN FAVOR TO ADJOURN at 9:29 PM.

Kristen D. Las, Town Manager date

G. Thomas Clay, Chair date

Submitted by Patricia Dubey, Recording Secretary