

SELECT BOARD MEETING
Monday, January 26, 2026

A meeting of the Lexington Select Board was called to order at 6:30p.m. on Monday, January 26, 2026, via a remote meeting platform. Ms. Hai, Chair; Mr. Pato, Mr. Lucente, Mr. Sandeen and Ms. Kumar, as well as Mr. Bartha, Town Manager; Deputy Town Manager, Ms. Axtell; and Executive Clerk, Ms. Katzenback.

Chair Hai acknowledged the shock and devastation so many are feeling regarding the news of the killing of another US citizen in Minnesota. She reaffirmed the commitment of Lexington to each and every one of its residents and their safety. The Lexington Police Department does not inquire into immigration status for any individual and does not enforce federal immigration law. This is further supported by the Massachusetts Safe Communities Act, which enshrines the same restrictions. Further, the Town resource page on immigration rights and protections is linked in the Board's packet and available on the website. The Town Human Services Department, the Town Human Rights Committee, and the Police Department, are all available resources to support and protect every resident. Everyone should feel able to call upon them for support, if needed or desired. The Select Board is a nonpartisan body. It does not speak about politics as a body, but it does swear allegiance to the community and will work to the best of its abilities to ensure that everyone feels and is able to participate freely in the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Heinrich, 11 Potter Pond, spoke for the Potter Pond Board of Trustees and himself, serving as a Town Meeting member and member of the South Lexington Civic Association. He spoke in favor of addressing traffic issues on Walnut Street. Traffic on Concord Avenue and Walnut Street has increased significantly in both directions. Traffic will further increase with the forthcoming construction of the MBTA multifamily housing development at 329/331 Concord Avenue. The Town's objective should be to make Walnut Street safer for everyone. The street cannot be widened, the hills cannot be reduced, and the street cannot be made one way. The Town needs to find a way to reduce speeds along the road. He asked the Select Board to consider and support the citizens article that is being proposed. The raised median islands being recommended by the Traffic Safety Group are not the solution. They are dangerous and will cause accidents.

Robert Rothberg, Chair of the Lexington Historical Commission, informed the Board that the Historic District Commission and Historical Commission are planning to open applications for a Lexington Preservation Award. This would be made every year by both commissions acting together. Mr. Bartha stated that staff has asked that this program be paused at this time until further discussion can be had.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER CONCERNS AND LIAISON REPORTS

1. Select Board Member Announcements and Liaison Reports

Ms. Kumar stated that the Communications Advisory Committee (CAC) has been working with the Town's wireless service providers to bridge gaps and cell coverage in Town. Based on resident input and Verizon's assessment of their coverage, three broad areas within the Town have been identified where coverage is poor. Verizon is interested in building cell towers on Town-owned land. The CAC organized a meeting with Verizon on January 12, and the outcome was that Verizon representatives will come back to the Town with a proposal for their first and second most preferred locations in each of the three areas identified.

Mr. Sandeen thanked the Lexington Human Rights Committee for running the Martin Luther King Day conversation. He noted that the Human Rights Committee has expressed a desire to start community conversations on the topic that no one is safe unless everyone is safe. These will hopefully be community conversations involving local faith leaders, leaders of local community organizations, members of the Human Rights Committee, etc.

Mr. Lucente stated that the Tourism Committee met earlier today and have been having discussions regarding Liberty Ride and its future. They voted tonight to recommend to the Select Board to continue the Liberty Ride operation and will be sending formal information to the Board regarding that vote. The Liberty Ride is scheduled to go through March 2027 but does not operate between November and March.

Ms. Hai stated that Board members and staff recently attended the Mass Municipal Association's Annual meeting, now called Connect 351. There was an important conversation regarding dignity and the contrast between dignity and contempt in how people speak to each other. She would like to make sure the Board continues to talk respectfully and treat each other in a dignified manner. Copies of the resource document are available at the Select Board window and she recommended people check out www.dignity.us for more information.

DOCUMENTS: Statement on Welcoming Inclusive Communities

2. Lexington High School Project Update to Select Board

Mr. Pato stated that the School Building Committee met on January 12, 2026 and is following progress on the project. Of note, is that the total value design process is working well. The total value design items to date look to be saving the Town approximately \$1.3M. Other items discussed included a refinement to the interior design, flow, access control for use of the building by the public off school hours, and a brief update on plans. The next meeting of the School Building Committee will be held in February.

Mr. Sandeen stated that the Permanent Building Committee will meet on Thursday at 6PM, with primary agenda topics of the Lexington High School, including both total value design and value engineering opportunities.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1. Town Manager Weekly Update

Mr. Bartha thanked and acknowledged the Department of Public Works and the Facilities team for their work during the recent snow storm.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve: One-Day Liquor License - Off Beat Tap Company, 1403 Massachusetts Avenue
 - Seasonal Suites Tap Performance - Sunday, February 1, 2026

To approve a One-Day Liquor License for the Off Beat Tap Company to serve to serve beer and wine for the purpose of the Seasonal Suites Tap Dance event reception, on Sunday, February 1, 2026 1:30 PM - 4:00 PM at the Munroe Center for the Arts, 1403 Massachusetts Avenue.

DOCUMENTS: Munroe Event Map

2. Approve: Battle Green Use Request(s) - Lexington Minute Men

To approve the Lexington Minute Men requests for use of the Battle Green for the following events:

- 18th Century Military Drill - Saturday March 28, 2026
- Rehearsal of Reenactment of the Civilian Evacuation & the Battle of Lexington - Saturday, April 4, 2026 (Rain Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026)
- Annual Civilian Evacuation, Parker's Revenge and Battle of Lexington Reenactment - Saturday, April 18, 2026

DOCUMENTS: LMM - Patriots Day Request Letter & Schedule

3. Approve: Battle Green Use Request(s) - William Diamond Junior Fife and Drum Corps
- Lexington Tattoo - Friday, May 1, 2026
 - Lexington Muster Parade - Saturday, May 2, 2026

To approve the request of the William Diamond Junior Fife and Drum Corps to use the Battle Green on Friday, May 1, 2026, from 6:00pm to 8:30pm for the annual Lexington Fife and Drum Tattoo as part of the Lexington Muster weekend, and to further approve the Parade Corps to march down Massachusetts Avenue towards the Battle Green for the annual Lexington Fife and Drum Tattoo starting at 7:00pm.

To approve the request of the William Diamond Junior Fife and Drum Corps to use the Battle Green on Saturday, May 2, 2026 from approximately 11:00am to 12:30pm for the purpose of lining up for the Lexington Muster Parade, and to further approve Corps Members parading down Massachusetts Avenue towards Hasting Park for the Lexington Muster starting at 12:00pm.

DOCUMENTS: 2026 Muster Parade Route Map

4. Approve: Select Board Meeting Minutes

To approve and release the following minutes:

- November 10, 2025 Select Board
- November 17, 2025 Summit
- November 20, 2025 Select Board
- December 3, 2025 Department Budget Presentations
- December 4, 2025 Department Budget Presentations
- December 8, 2025 Select Board
- December 9, 2025 Department Budget Presentations
- December 15, 2025 Select Board

DOCUMENTS: DRAFT 11102025 Select Board minutes; DRAFT 11172025 Select Board minutes; DRAFT 11202025 Finance Summit minutes; DRAFT 12032025_Dept Budget Presentations; DRAFT 12042025_Dept Budget Presentations; DRAFT 12082025 Select Board Minutes; DRAFT 12092025 Dept Budget Presentations; DRAFT 12092025 Dept Budget Presentations

5. Approve: Water and Sewer Commitments and Adjustments

To approve:

Water and Sewer Cycle 9 Billing	\$320,314.83
Water and Sewer Finals	\$5,827.50
Water and Sewer Adjustments WSAB 12/18/25	(\$39,291.59)

DOCUMENTS: Cycle 9 and finals, WSAB 1-26-26

6. Approve: Eagle Scout Commendation Letter - Trevor Stevens

To approve and sign a letter of commendation congratulating Trevor Stevens of Boy Scout Troop 119 for attaining the highest rank of Eagle in scouting.

DOCUMENTS: Eagle Scout Letter - Stevens

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted by roll call 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Review & Approve: FY2027 Fee Schedule for Recreation & Community Programs

Melissa Battite, Director of Recreation and Community Programs, explained that, if approved, the fees will be implemented during FY27, with the exception of programs that take place in FY27 but are registered for in FY26. Based on historic registrations, the Department is forecasting an estimate of \$172,167.80 in additional revenues.

Mr. Sandeen asked about the fee schedule for community programs/outdoor recreation facilities - outdoor track and natural grass athletic fields. Ms. Battite stated that the proposal is for \$20 per participant. This was previously \$17/person.

Ms. Kumar asked about the discontinuation of tennis/pickleball semi-private lessons. Ms. Battite stated that the semi-private lessons were requested by community members but, when offered, did not fill.

Mr. Lucente asked about affordability of programs. Ms. Battite explained that the Department has a robust financial aid program. The Department works closely with the Human Services Department. Their social worker team reviews the confidential applications and makes recommendations for appropriate discounts. The Department has been awarded grants from the Fund for Lexington over the past 7-8 years, along with grants from the Dana Home Foundation and private donations. The Department has received between \$30,000-\$40,000 per year in financial aid.

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted by roll call 5-0 to approve the FY27 Recreation and Community Program fee schedule as presented.

DOCUMENTS: Recreation Fee

2. Discussion: FY27 Town Manager's Preliminary Budget & Financial Planning

Carolyn Kosnoff, Assistant Town Manager for Finance, reviewed the updated revenue allocation model. The budget initially considered a 2.4% increase in revenues to be shared this year, which was significantly lower than the initial request from both the school and municipal departments. As of Summit III, this Wednesday, a balanced budget will be presented. The available revenue is now up to 3.9% and both the municipal and school departments have submitted a budget that meets that revenue target. One major item was a decrease in the project health insurance increase from 15% to 9%.

Mr. Bartha explained that the GIC, the health insurance plan that State employees use, will require an infusion of funds from the State again. The Governor is strongly encouraging the GIC to make some changes to the plans and the plan designs in order to try to bring the number down.

Ms. Kosnoff noted that it appears all of the free cash available will not need to be used in order to fund the capital plan this year. The original set aside of \$1M is now up to \$2.15M. The Summit could discuss leaving the free cash set aside and available in case something comes up during the year. There is also a potential to allocate some of that to one of the reserve funds, either general, capital, or other.

Ms. Kosnoff noted that total revenue is expected to go up 2.6%. There is 3.9% of ongoing revenues that can be allocated for the budget requests. The General Fund recommended PIRs include \$35,000 for garage door maintenance, offset by targeted reductions; and \$115,000 for a cashiering module, to be funded with Free Cash and the Innovation & Technology capital budget. Non General Fund recommended PIRs include \$100,000 for a recreation strategic plan, to be funded by the recreation retained earnings. There will be further review of the budget at Wednesday's White Book Summit meeting.

Ms. Hai asked about a State grant which had been available to help purchase the recycling and garbage totes. Mr. Bartha stated that the Town is still eligible for grants for this. The amount of the upfront grant and the potential offsetting revenue will be a function of the size that the Town decides to move forward with. The smaller the bins, the greater the capital grant and the ongoing revenue. The appropriation is step one. Staff will then go through a process to determine what the right size is, which will determine what size grant the Town is eligible for.

Mr. Lucente asked if changes to the estimated reduction will occur if there are edits made to the Minuteman assessment or to the health insurance premiums. Ms. Kosnoff stated that if new revenue happens to become available, it could potentially be reallocated. If these changes are not known until the end of February/March, the budget will likely be left as is for Town Meeting, with an opportunity to further refine it at the November Special Town Meeting before setting the tax rate.

Tom Shiple, 18 Phinney Road, expressed concern regarding the capital request for \$250,000 for design of a sidewalk on Burlington and North Streets. This may not solve the problem of improving safety for vulnerable road users, specifically, pedestrians and cyclists. It also may not provide a good ROI for a \$5M+ investment. The October 2025 Walnut Street study stated that sidewalks do not directly influence driver behavior or vehicle speeds. In some cases, they may even encourage faster driving. He suggested that the Board think more broadly about the problems it is trying to solve on that road and consider a combination of solutions. He mentioned a similar issue on Shade Street where advisory lanes were installed to mitigate the issues.

DOCUMENTS: FY 2027 Preliminary Budget Presentation, FY 2027 Preliminary Budget & Financing Plan

3. Update: Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) on Combined Sewer Outflows (CSO) Control Efforts

Ms. Hai noted that this item will be rescheduled to a later date.

4. Presentation: 2026 Annual Town Meeting Article Speed Humps on Walnut Street - Citizen's Petition

Robert Rothberg citizen petitioner, stated that the traffic situation on Walnut Street is dangerous. The abutters, Potter Pond, and the South Lexington Civic Association are united in urging the Select Board to sanction a vote for speed humps. Shade Street has had speed humps for ten years. The estimate from DPW is that these may cost \$60,000. This is a proven technology which should be favored.

Ms. Hai noted that this came to Town Meeting in the fall of 2023 and it was voted down due to concerns raised by all of the public safety departments. She asked how this new proposal is different. Mr. Rothberg stated that he believes only the Fire Chief opposed the original suggestion. He also asserted that response times due to the speed humps on Shade Street have not been slowed and there has been no damage to department vehicles. The ten years of experience on Shade Street should be considered.

Mr. Bartha stated that practitioners would likely recommend removing the speed humps on Shade Street, not adding more of them in Town. Staff is not supportive of this proposal but will respect the will of the Board and the will of Town Meeting.

Mr. Pato stated that, while this item did not pass previously at Town Meeting, there is concern that there has been little to no progress in dealing with the issue since. This is a very difficult traffic area. Speed bumps are fairly frequent throughout the region and many of these areas are likely serviced by emergency response vehicles quite often. He suggested asking emergency services if speed humps in the area have created problems or not.

Mr. Sandeen stated that the Article and the presentation mention speed humps or speed cushions, but the motion only includes language about speed humps. Mr. Rothberg stated that the language should include speed humps or speed cushions. The consulting firm recommended speed cushions, but not medians.

Mr. Lucente expressed concern with engineering a solution without input from the engineers. He asked where funding for this would come from, if it passes Town Meeting. Mr. Bartha stated that the recommendations from TSG were intended to come from the TSG budget, though this is difficult to say without an exact figure. If this petition passes Town Meeting, the other recommendations from the TEC report would likely not also be implemented. Ms. Kosnoff explained that set aside free cash could also be used to cover the project. Mr. Lucente asked that estimate numbers be available for Town Meeting.

Ms. Kumar stated that the evaluation should be the potential damage to emergency vehicles and impacts on response time, versus risk of having a high speed traffic scenario in this area. Also, the effectiveness of median islands versus speed humps. More data and expertise on these items are likely needed.

Tom Shiple, 18 Phinney Road, noted a number of speed humps already located throughout Town. He noted that some Town Meeting Members previously voted against this because it was not a wise use of funds. The estimated cost for the pilot program speed humps at the 2023 Special Town Meeting was \$101,000 and it was cheaper to install permanent ones.

Jay Luker, Precinct 1 Town Meeting Member and member of the Transportation Advisory Committee, agreed that he voted against this proposal previously for the same reasons mentioned by Mr. Shiple. The existing motion itself is not perfect, as it is a bit too prescriptive. He disagreed that median islands are a bad idea; they may be a marginal improvement. He has some questions about the efficacy of speed humps on this particular stretch. As there will be opposition and pushback from emergency service staff, it may not be worth the battle. He has reached out to other towns to see how they deal with similar issues. He would like to hear from Town staff regarding why these solutions are not possible for the Town.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street and Precinct 6 Town Meeting Member, noted that the roadway in question is so narrow that there is not much maneuverability for trucks. Speed in this area is an issue that

needs to be considered, but this needs to be balanced with people travelling to the area in emergency situations.

Steve Heinrich, 11 Potter Pond, stated that he listened to the video from the January 12th meeting where speed bumps and this problem were discussed. The Transportation Safety Group acknowledged that they made those recommendations in part due to the 2023 vote against speed humps. The consultant's report recommended speed humps only in relatively flat areas. The Fire Chief stated during the meeting that he does not know a lot about raised median islands, and that his information on them came from Mr. Pinsonneault. Mr. Heinrich stated that he believes emergency vehicles will find the area difficult to maneuver through if raised median islands are installed.

DOCUMENTS: Walnut Street humps presentation, Art 28 Speed humps article text, Art 28 speed humps draft motion

5. Review: 2026 Annual Town Meeting DRAFT Warrant

Ms. Axtell reviewed the Draft 2026 Election and Annual Town Meeting, including the Moderator letter requesting a hybrid Town Meeting. She stated there are 35 Articles at this time. The Board will be asked to vote and sign the 2026 Election and Annual Town Meeting warrant at its February 2, 2026 meeting.

DOCUMENTS: 2026 Election and ATM DRAFT Warrant, 2026 ATM Moderator Letter

6. Review & Approve: Town Manager Goals

Ms. Hai explained that the Board approved the Town Manager's 2024/25 review in December, which was based on goals and a format that was adopted earlier in the year.

Mr. Sandeen stated that he was overall in favor of the format and structure, however he is concerned with the number of acronyms included.

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted by roll call 5-0 to approve the Town Manager's Performance Evaluation form as presented, subject to clarifying language.

Mr. Sandeen mentioned that the Zoning Board of Appeals approved the comprehensive permit for the Lowell and North Street affordable housing project.

DOCUMENTS: Proposed SB Performance Evaluation Form 2025-2026

ADJOURN

VOTE: Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Select Board voted by roll call 5-0 to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

A true record; Attest:
Kristan Patenaude
Recording Secretary