



Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

330 Main Street, Hopkinton, NH 03229-2627 - (603) 746-3170 – www.hopkinton-nh.gov

**SELECT BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Hopkinton Town Hall – 330 Main Street,
Monday, November 3, 2025 Approved**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice Chair Whitley called the Public Meeting of the Board to order at 5:32 p.m.

Select Board Members Present: Chair Dunlap, Steven Whitley, Victoria Bram, Alyssa McKeon, and Jeffrey Donohoe (remotely participated until 7:00 pm).

Staff Present: Karen Hambleton, Town Administrator; Karen Robertson, Planning Director; Lisette Cid, Human Services Director; Paula Simpkins, Recreation Director; Rose Jansen, Library Director; Kelly Henley, Finance Director; and Christine Johnson, Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Chair Dunlap made a motion to allow Jeff Donohoe’s remote participation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitley and was unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE (3:02)

i. Approval of Consent Agenda (03)

TOWN OF HOPKINTON - SELECT BOARD			
CONSENT AGENDA			
3-Nov-25			
ITEM	DATE	ACTION	COMMENT
AP MANIFEST			
AP MANIFEST DATED 11/3/2025	11/3/2025	APPROVE	1,871,831.00
EMPLOYEE PAYROLL DATED 11/03/2025			
DIRECT DEPOSIT: \$95,167.13	11/3/2025	APPROVE	
PAYROLL CHECKS: \$2,734.20	11/3/2025	APPROVE	
PREVIOUSLY APPROVED - NO ACTION NEEDED			
EMPLOYEE PAYROLL DATED 10/9/2025	11/03/2025	APPROVE	
DIRECT DEPOSIT: \$100,415.15			
PAYROLL CHECKS: \$3,850.38			
OTHER			
FOREBEARANCE AGREEMENT	11/03/2025	APPROVE	\$62,103.82
EXEMPT ORGANIZATION BUSINESS INCOME TAX RETURN (NEEDED FOR ELECTIVE TAX CREDIT) DIRECT			

Chair Dunlap called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for November 3, 2025. Ms. McKeon seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Approval of Public Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025 (04A)

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Public Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining.

ii. **Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025, Session I (04B)**

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session I. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining.

iii. Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025, Session II **(04C)**

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (not sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session II. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining

iv. Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025, Session III **(04D)**

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (not sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session III. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining.

v. Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025, Session IV **(04E)**

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (not sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session I. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining

vi. Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025 Session V **(04F)**

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (not sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session I. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining

vii. Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025, Session VI

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (not sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session I. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining

viii. Approval of Nonpublic Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2025, Session VII

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the Nonpublic Meeting Minutes (not sealed) of October 27, 2025, Session I. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote with Mr. Donohoe abstaining

III. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS (6:36)

i. 2025 Budget Overview

Ms. Hambleton presented the 2025 Budget Overview. Ms. Hambleton noted that the Board had requested that the Budget increase stay at or below 3% and indicated that the Town was close to that target. She noted that the following budget numbers were still pending.

- Waste Management for its work at the Transfer Station.
- The Cemetery Committee
- Capital Improvement Program numbers.

Discussion ensued regarding the Budget Schedule, the regular meeting schedule, and the scheduling of a meeting with the Town of Webster.

ii. Planning/Zoning

Planning Director Karen Robertson presented her 2026 budget totaling \$167,842, an increase of \$1,697 (1%) from 2025. She said the budget supports the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and administrative functions.

She summarized the following line items.

- Telephone: small increase, tracking within budget.
- Computer Software: +4% (ArcGIS Online; Query Manager; Avitar for permits/ZBA/PB approvals; integrates with assessing to flag pickups).
- Registry of Deeds: \$75 (recordings/copies), unchanged.

- Professional Services: CAI mapping maintenance (+4%); \$3,700 to complete Master Plan section on “Conservation, Preservation & Open Space” (with Central New Hampshire Regional Planning & Conservation Commission).
- Planning Consultant Services: \$2,400 for as-needed technical analysis (e.g., build-out/mapping supporting zoning work), not for application peer review.
- Travel/Meals: level; based on IRS mileage.
- Conferences/Training: level; conference attendance noted (New England Planning Conference).
- Printing: down ~ \$350 after code book purchases (new International Codes kept in-house for reference).
- LexisNexis Land Use Handbooks: annual set for board use.
- Advertising: level; applicant-reimbursed.
- Postage: \$2,275 (prior \$1,850); discussed meter tracking by department and impact of large abutter lists.

Ms. Robertson noted that the department continues to balance public access to paper plans with efforts toward digital submissions. She acknowledged that multiple weekly night meetings have increased workload and overtime, and she is discussing solutions with the Town Administrator. She also announced that **Public Hearings on Zoning amendments** are scheduled for **November 18** and **December 9**, and materials are available online.

iii. Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Christine presented her proposed 2026 budget, largely level-funded, with a 4% increase in the software contract. She summarized the following budget line items.

- Professional Services: Record book preservation (one to two volumes, depending on condition); long-term digitization is a goal.
- Training: Reduced; full-week conference not cost-effective; maintain funds for shorter updates.
- Postage: Higher due to rate increases; some offset by fees (lien notices, civil forfeitures).
- Dog Tags: Permanent tags implemented; future orders reduced (e.g., from ~1,600 to ~500).
- Furniture/Equipment: New shredder (ballots/secure docs) and plan for DMV printer replacements (one already replaced; others aging). Lease options may be reviewed.
- Elections (three elections in 2026):
- Wages and Supervisors of the Checklist hours (minimum four meetings/year required).
- Affidavit envelopes for Town Meeting to be locally purchased; state supplies envelopes for the other two elections.
- Ballot printing: budgeted for two double-sided ballots as contingency.
- New tabulator (ImageCast): equipment delivered; Town pays for supplies (pens, tape rolls, seals) and programming/coding (recurring per election).
- Accessible voting (“one-for-all”): Town codes the machine; tablets borrowed from state; cost shared with School District.
- Operational notes: accepts folded absentee ballots; end-of-night printout includes write-ins.
- Online renewals: Lower cost to Town than postage; usage increasing, though some revert to paper.

She explained that the election budget increased sharply due to three elections in 2026. Additional funds were budgeted for election wages, affidavit envelopes, ballot printing, and new ImageCast tabulator equipment to be used starting in March 2026. Ms. Johnson said the new tabulator supports absentee ballots and provides an improved write-in log.

Board members discussed postage and online vehicle registration renewals. Christine said online processing is less expensive than mailing paper renewals and is being used more frequently.

iv. Finance/Personnel

Finance Director Kelly Henley presented the Finance and Administration budget.

She recommended reinstating a Finance Clerk position (eliminated in 2019).

The following key budget drivers were summarized:

- Software (MTS): 4.5% increase.
- Training: maintained.
- Audit Services: increased by \$50; contract locked in for three years.
- OPEB valuation: reinstated for compliance with GASB 75.
- Copier/Postage: increased due to contract escalation.

Regarding Personnel administration, Ms. Henley reported that health insurance renewals were favorable, with one plan decreasing by 0.3% and the other increasing by 2.9%. She explained that changes stemmed from employee plan choices rather than rate hikes. Dental insurance, she explained, had increased by 2%, and life/disability rates were unchanged. She stated that employee contribution percentages remained the same.

Debt Service (Principal & Interest)

Ms. Henley also summarized the following items.

- Open Space Bond: final payment this year; \$0 next year.
- Other bonds (e.g., Road and Houston Barn): normal principal/interest shifts per amortization schedules; corresponding interest lines match each principal line.

Insurance

There was an increase in property & liability insurance of \$36,000. She explained that staff discussed pursuing the Primex “Prime Access” program items (e.g., Safety Manual, an active Joint Loss Committee) to reduce costs, but this is dependent on staff capacity. She explained that risk pool dynamics potentially affect rates, but that no major local claims have been reported.

v. Recreation

Paula Simpkins, Recreation Director, presented the Recreation budget. Ms. Simpkins summarized the following key budget items.

- Kimball Pond Wages: Staff forecasting was based on fewer lifeguards and a smaller swimming area (may enlarge slightly while maintaining 3-lifeguard rotation).
- Ice Rink Part-Time Wages: requested to increase from \$600 back to \$900 to retain reliable clearing help, as storms impacted clearing budget in prior years, and funding ran out.
- Travel/Meals: trending higher with supply runs and program support (e.g., senior lunches, camp).
- Pond Testing: slight increase due to an extra test when a reading was outside the typical range; samples are processed at Eastern Analytical Labs (Concord).
- Milfoil: Background on Kimball Lake/Pond infestation; State-approved options include chemical treatments and certified diver hand-pulling. In the past, \$5,000 was dedicated to hand-pulling, which focused on the swim area (reported to the State). A long-term solution may require larger multi-agency coordination (state, Conservation Commission, volunteers/lake association, etc.). Discussion ensued regarding whether to budget this item in the operational or the Recreation Maintenance Fund. Ms. Simpkins indicated that she will continue to gather State guidance and practices from other towns.

vi. Human Services

Human Services Director Lisette Cid presented the Human Services budget. Ms. Cid identified the following key points.

- Budget remained close to prior-year levels.
- Assistance levels continue to fluctuate based on individual cases.
- Explained process for rent, fuel, and emergency aid, administered under state guidelines.
- Increase noted in heating and utility assistance requests.
- Training and supply lines held flat.

Ms. Cid emphasized that all expenditures are closely monitored, and reimbursement is sought whenever possible.

Board members thanked her for her diligence in balancing compassion with accountability.

vii. Library

Library Director Rose Jansen presented the Library's proposed 2026 budget. Ms. Jansen highlighted the following budget items.

- Malware protection has gone from a software-based monthly fee to a yearly fee, which will be more costly. She explained that the need for more sophisticated software stems from AI-driven attacks. Discussion ensued about how to manage rising IT costs Town-wide.
- Overall budget-maintained core services will have modest increases tied to salary adjustments and rising material costs.
- Efforts have been made to manage costs through shared resources and grants.
- Utilities and maintenance costs have increased slightly due to energy rates.
- The library continues to focus on community programming, youth services, and technology upgrades.
- Circulation numbers are strong.
- The Library continues on-going collaboration with the Friends of the Library to fund special events.

The Board expressed appreciation for the Library's service and fiscal responsibility.

viii. Executive/IT/Assessing/Legal/ Gov't Buildings/Regional Planning/Patriotic Purposes/Housing/Economic Development

Ms. Hambleton presented the Executive Department budget. Discussion centered around assessing expenses and changes in funding since 2024. She noted the following budget highlights.

- Salary lines do not reflect cost-of-living adjustments:
- Community Action Program has requested \$6,000, and it was noted that last year they provided \$214,000 services and assistance to residents.
- Supplies, printing, advertising, dues, subscriptions, and legal services remained level-funded.
- Town Report printing costs are unchanged.
- No structural or personnel changes are proposed.

Discussion ensued regarding the line-item expenses associated with patriotic events.

Economic Development

The Board discussed the Economic Development (ED) position and discussed the best approach to either fill or restructure the role to address many unfilled needs. Mr. Whitley indicated that he was still working on a potential job description for the unfilled ED

position. Ms. McKeon asked that Ms. Hambleton send a prompt to help the Board focus the conversation on what needed to be resolved. The group agreed to revisit the topic once the broader budget picture was clear. Mr. Whitley suggested that the Board enter a nonpublic session to discuss any personnel or contract matters.

Chair Dunlap summarized that the next meeting would continue with additional department reviews and thanked all staff and Board members for their preparation and time.

IV. NONPUBLIC SESSION 2:52:28

Mr. Whitley made a motion to enter into a nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3 II (c). The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Sabrina Dunlap	Yes
Steven Whitley	Yes
Victoria Bram	Yes
Alyssa McKeon	

MOTION PASSED 4-0.

The Board and the Town Administrator went into a nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 8:24 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 8:49 p.m.

Vote to seal nonpublic minutes:

Mr. Whitley moved to seal the minutes of the just completed nonpublic session because it was determined that divulgence of this information could adversely affect the reputation of someone other than a Board member. Ms. McKeon seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Sabrina Dunlap	Yes
Steven Whitley	Yes
Victoria Bram	Yes
Alyssa McKeon	Yes

MOTION PASSED 4-0.

These minutes were sealed.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Whitley moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. McKeon seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Mesa-Zendt
Executive Assistant/Grant Coordinator