



# Town of Hopkinton

Office of Select Board

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

**SELECT BOARD  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES  
Hopkinton Town Hall – 330 Main Street  
Monday, January 26, 2026 - Approved**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Dunlap called the Public Meeting of the Board to order at 5:35 p.m.

**Select Board Members Present:** Chair Dunlap, Steven Whitley, Alyssa McKeon, and Victoria Bram.

**Staff Present:** Karen Hambleton, Town Administrator

**II. POINTS OF PRIDE (:54)**

- Chair Dunlap thanked Department of Public Works for dealing with the monstrous storm and, as always, doing a great job. Mr. Whitley agreed and hoped there is some rest ahead.
- Ms. McKeon recognized Contocook based The Brussel: Custom Catering and Events for winning The Knot’s Best of Weddings 2026 for the second year in a row.
- Ms. Bram thanked the Library for providing after school programing every Wednesday, and said it’s been great.
- Regarding the storm, Ms. Hambleton thanked the employees that came in to work to keep things rolling.
- Ms. Bram expressed gratitude for how the Transfer Station staff handled the duration of time in between the hopper and trailer.

**III. ADMINISTRATIVE (2:21)**

<b>CONSENT AGENDA</b>			
<b>January 26, 2026</b>			
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>
<b>AP Manifest</b>			
AP Manifest Dated 1/26/2026	1/26/2026	APPROVE	\$157,875.61
Employee Payroll Dated 1/26/2026	1/26/2026	APPROVE	\$115,967.96
<b>Previously Approved-No Action Needed</b>			
AP Manifest Dated 1/05/2026	1/26/2026		\$319,356.59
Employee Payroll Dated 12/29/2025	1/26/2026		\$115,818.62
<b>Tax Collector's Supplemental Warrant Property Tax Levy</b>			
239-061-000	1/26/2026	APPROVE	
217-004-007	1/26/2026	APPROVE	
<b>Intents to Cut Wood or Timber</b>			
OP#25-227-15-T 232/13 & 14 - Sugar Hill Road	1/26/2026	APPROVE	
OP #25-227-14-T 208/093/001 - Pine Street	1/26/2026	APPROVE	subdivision not recorded yet.
<b>Other</b>			
Amended Clean Energy Credit Filings	1/26/2026	APPROVE	
Deed Waiver for 202-005-000	1/26/2026	APPROVE	
Appointment to Office - Conservation Commission Alternate - 3 years - S. Clay	1/26/2026	APPROVE	

i. Approval of Consent Agenda

*Mr. Whitley made a motion to adopt the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll call vote.*

ii. Approval of Public Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2025 (04A)

*Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the public meeting minutes of December 9, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bram and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.*

iii. Approval of Public Meeting Minutes of December 22, 2025 (04B)

*Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the public meeting minutes of December 6, 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKeon. Mr. Whitley abstained. Ms. Bram abstained. Chair Dunlap and Ms. McKeon approved.*

**IV. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS (5:13)**

i. Energy Committee

Ken Traum, 402 Maple Street, Hopkinton.

The Energy Committee drafted a press release distributed to the Board for consideration. The Coalition rates are going to be higher than the Unitil and Eversource default rates. Residents' bills may be \$15-\$20 more a month if they stay with the Coalition. Residents may want to switch off to a third party supplier temporarily or permanently. This announcement has taken some time to put together due to difficulty getting a meeting quorum.

Ms. Bram asked for clarification on the statement at the bottom of the press release that says "... vision of community power is a marathon not a sprint." Kim Quirk. Mr. Traum said the Coalition doesn't have the financial reserves like the utility companies. They are working to build those reserves over the long term.

Ms. McKeon asked if there was a similar conversation a few months ago. Mr. Whitley confirmed, yes, there was a notice that went up regarding rates, this press release is consistent with what we have done in the past.

Ms. McKeon is in favor of posting the press release on the town website and Facebook. She appreciates the inclusion of language and links, which make it much easier to post.

Mr. Traum requested adding two alternates to the Energy Committee to allow the Committee to function better in the future. Ms. McKeon inquired about why getting a quorum has been an issue. Mr. Whitley clarified it is not a member core issue, it's been vacation and illness. Process was discussed.

*Mr. Whitley made a motion to add two alternates to the structure of the Energy Committee. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKeon and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.*

Ms. Hambleton inquired if now would be a good time to pause and assess spending taxpayer money on something that isn't cost effective. Mr. Whitley said this question came up at the Energy Committee. There was reservation about continuing to promote a program that is not delivering the cost savings that people initially thought would be there. The hope is that Community Power is building reserves and as those reserves grow, the rates will become competitive with the utility companies.

Mr. Traum said there wouldn't be a problem if the Town felt there was savings to be had from switching for six months.

Ms. Hambleton said there are currently approximately sixteen electric bills. Only four are on Community Power. Discussion about contracts ensued. Ms. Hambleton recommends staying with the contracts/rates they have.

**V. OLD BUSINESS (21:12)**

i. Review 2025 Revenue and Expenses

Line items were reviewed and discussed. In particular: investments, legal services, ambulance, sewer, and revenue projections. Ms. Hambleton said these numbers are based on historical numbers rather than optimistic projections.

Ms. Bram said as a whole it's comforting to read through the reports and expenditures and revenue, as they show a respect for taxpayers, and a conservative and transparent approach with money. Ms. Bram said the budget also highlights how well staff did during the interim of administrators, by handling day-to-day operations and keeping their budgets in check.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS (43:36)**

i. Operational

Ms. Hambleton reported a software glitch that didn't capture the Community and Economic Development position wage line. This resulted in the updated payroll tax being left out of the operating budget. The operating budget without the correct payroll tax was: \$10,175,335. The corrected operating budget with the payroll tax is: \$10,174,348.

*Ms. Bram made a motion to approve the operating budget for 2026 in the amount of \$10,174,348 per the budget line item report. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKeon and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.*

The Sewer budget was discussed at a previous meeting, but still needs to be voted on.

*Ms. Bram made a motion to approve the sewer budget for 2026 in the amount of \$270,726. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitley and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.*

Ms. McKeon confirmed that the TIF District won't be addressed prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

*Ms. Bram made a motion to approve the all-in budget including operating and sewer in the amount of \$10,445,074 per this budget line item report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitley and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.*

**VII. Economic Development Position Job Description**

The job description was reviewed and updated by the Economic Development Committee. Ian Hart, EDC chair, approached the microphone and delivered a committee report. The committee folded in the newly approved goals, vision and objectives into the draft job description with the intention of matching the direction the town is going in. Chair Dunlap asked for any highlights or changes. Mr. Hart noted public relations as an item, and that the committee kept the core job responsibilities from the first draft.

Ms. Bram clarified that her initial draft wasn't intended for the full EDC, just Mr. Whitley and Mr. Donohoe.

Mr. Whitley asked if the committee discussed that the job is a part-time position. There is a lot in the job description, that to be consistent across multiple channels, public relations/communications requires a lot of time. Mr. Hart said the committee did discuss that it ought to be a full-time position, but not at this time.

Ms. McKeon appreciates how the committee has brought focus to the job description. There are a few sections that can be condensed to make it less daunting to an applicant. Some of the information could

be removed and then communicated in person during the interview and/or onboarding process. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Bram confirmed this doesn't have to be voted on now, there is still time for edits.

Ms. Hambleton conferred it does seem like a lot, and suggested that the Select Board revisit it after discussing their annual goals.

Mr. Whitley asked if this has to go back to the committee. Ms. McKeon said she'd like to get a green light on the final draft before it gets posted, and offered to make the suggested condensing edits and hand off to Ms. Hambleton.

### VIII. NONPUBLIC SESSION (48:45)

*Chair Dunlap made a motion that the Board enter into a non-public session under Nonpublic RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel. Mr. Whitley seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.*

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

### MOTION PASSED 4-0.

The Board, Town Administrator and Police Chief went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 6:23 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 7:05 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.

### IX. GOALS (1:31:12)

Ms. McKeon shared her goals; three pillars:

- Move projects forward or shut them down. George Park for example. Discussion ensued.
- Improve taxpayer accessibility for engagement with the government. Ms. McKeon mentioned the website as an example.
- Financial framework to serve the town. How finances are analyzed; finish the audits that Ms. Hambleton has already started. Name long term goals, and financial frameworks like the TIF district.

Chair Dunlap shared her goals:

- Conduct a committee overview.
- Evaluate website and Facebook.
- Follow through on transportation initiatives.
- George Park

- PILOT agreements
- Strategic governance as a possible way to nest goals.
- Review of policies (this would capture social media, public art, etc.)

Mr. Whitley shared his goals:

- George Park including forming a steering committee.
- Riverway Park
- TIF District

Regarding the TIF District, Ms. Hambleton recommended pulling out the EDC position from the TIF discussion. If the definition of the TIF changes, the job description will likely not change.

Ms. Bram shared her goals:

- Likes Ms. McKeon's three pillars structure on how to address goals.
- Public art policy or green space policy
- Policy for donations to the town (food pantry, skateboard park, benches, etc.)

Discussion ensued:

The Personnel Policy Revision has begun the policy audit process. Ms. Hambleton will confirm that Ms. Mesa-Zendt and Mr. Cass recently went through all of the policies. Ms. Hambleton noted that the policies are all on the website stamped with last time they were updated.

Chair Dunlap asked how the Board wants to organize these goals. Mr. Whitley asked what the February Board agenda looks like. He suggested starting with George Park, and a meeting with the Transfer Station.

Superintendent Ms. Cochrane and Director of Public Works Mr. Blanchette. Ms. Cochrane and Mr. Blanchette will be invited to the February 9th Board meeting.

Mr. Whitley suggested creating a separate document that outlines the goals. Ms. Bram asked Ms. Hambleton if Ms. Mesa-Zendt would synthesize the goals into a graphic.

Ms. McKeon would like the Transfer Station to receive questions ahead of meeting so they have time to prepare.

Board offered the following list of questions:

- What were the physical obstacles to installing the gate?
- Is there an alternative?
- How would this be monitored?
- What are the recycling numbers/data after sticker/green bag changes?
- What Transfer Station staff need to be supported?
- What is failing; what is in good repair?

Ms. Hambleton would like to start with tracking building maintenance.

Ms. McKeon would like to invite the group in charge of the horseshoe pile back. They have been conducting research and are supposed to provide a rendering with pricing. Ms. Hambleton will check in with them.

Ms. Bram said it would benefit the Board and Budget Committee if, once financial reports are finished, they could get a couple paragraphs from Kelly with highlights and how things are tracking.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS (2:13:58)**

### **i. Planning Board Recommendations**

The Planning Board recommends Molly Hardenbergh who is currently an alternate fill the vacancy on the Board created by the passing of Clarke Kidder. When Mr. Donohoe's Select

Board term is up, they recommend he become the alternate. Mr. Whitley asked if Ms. Hardenbergh wants to become a full-time member. According to the Planning Board, she is. Discussion ensued regarding term process.

*Mr. Whitley moved to approve Molly Hardenbergh as a full member of the Planning Board as of January 26, 2026 through April 30, 2027. Ms. Bram seconded and the motion was approved anonymously by a roll-call vote.*

- ii. Engineering Bill  
A fee amendment was identified in October resulting in a twenty-thousand-dollar difference from original quote to provide engineering for three culverts. Ms. Hambleton suggested proposing to split the difference due to the miscommunication and no pause on the work to be completed. Discussion ensued.
- iii. Warrant Draft Update  
Discussion of process, and pending information. The Select Board does not have additional warrants to add and recommends the draft to the Budget Committee.
- iv. Select Board Town Report  
Chair Dunlap is almost done. Board gave recommendations for additional content.

#### **XI. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES (2:44:30)**

- i. Transfer Station Fence  
Ms. Hambleton, Dan Blanchette, and Ron Klemarczyk met at the Transfer Station. They agreed upon chicken wire fencing and identified areas where it can be removed in the winter for plowing. Mr. Blanchette would like to sell the two trailers one is brand new, not used. Board agreed to pursue the sale of the trailers.
- ii. Town Report Dedication  
Board is discussing potential individuals to whom the Town Report can be dedicated.
- iii. Meeting with Webster  
This was supposed to happen in January. The Board proposed inviting them to the February 9<sup>th</sup> Board meeting when Ms. Cochrane and Mr. Blanchette will be present
- iv. George Park Bathrooms  
Ms. Hambleton asked Dan Blanchette. if this is a project that can happen this year and he said yes. He would need to contract a lot of it out as their plate is pretty full. Ms. Hambleton asked him if doing the bathrooms would result in a redo when the rest of the plan was done. He said no. The estimate for the bathrooms will be around 200K.

#### **XII. BOARD AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (2:54:03)**

- i. Budget Committee Public Hearing is Wednesday, February 4, 2026.
- ii. Board member Jeff Donohoe will be finishing up his term March 31, 2026.
- iii. Ms. Bram will be joining Ms. Hambleton for 'Cookies with Karen' in early March.

**Nonpublic Sessions RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Legal and RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Legal**

*Mr. Whitley made a motion to move into two Non-Public sessions under RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Legal, after which the Board will not conduct any further business. Ms. McKeon seconded and the motion passed unanimously by a roll-call vote.*

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

**MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board and Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 8:34 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 8:45 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

*Mr. Whitley made a motion that the Board enter into a non-public session under Nonpublic RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Legal. Ms. McKeon seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.*

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

**MOTION PASSED 4-0.**

The Board and Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 8:45 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:08 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. McKeon moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Bram seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the meeting was declared adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Marcellino  
Administrative/Assessing Assistant