



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, February 9, 2026 - Approved**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Dunlap called the Public Meeting of the Board to order at 5:34 p.m.

Select Board Members Present: Chair Sabrina Dunlap, Steven Whitley, Alyssa McKeon. Victoria Bram and Jeffrey Donohoe joined remotely. Mr. Donohoe left the meeting at 6:29.

Staff Present: Karen Hambleton, Town Administrator

Chair Dunlap moved to allow Ms. Bram and Mr. Donohoe to join remotely. Mr. Whitley seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by a roll call vote.

II. POINTS OF PRIDE (1:10)

- Ms. Hambleton applauded the Highway Department for jumping into action when there was a safety concern at the school involving snowbanks sticking out onto the sidewalk.
- Chair Dunlap thanked everyone who worked so hard on the school and town budgets and to the Budget Committee members for their hard work as well.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE (2:20)

- Approval of Consent Agenda

Regarding the Right to Bury, Ms. McKeon asked what is a Temporary Right to Bury, and is there any reason one shouldn't be approved? It wasn't clear of the exact purpose of the form, but there didn't appear to be any reason to hold up the process.

CONSENT AGENDA February 9, 2026			
ITEM	DATE	ACTION	COMMENT
AP Manifest			
AP Manifest Dated 2/9/2026	2/9/2026	APPROVE	\$65,392.57
EMPLOYEE PAYROLL DATED 2/12/2026	2/9/2026	APPROVE	\$116,025.99
PREVIOUSLY APPROVED - NO ACTION NEEDED			
AP Manifest Dated 2/02/2026			\$171,772.20
AP Manifest Dated 1/21/2026			\$74,950.99
AP Manifest Dated 1/21/2026			\$15,897.14
AP Manifest Dated 1/21/2026			\$191,446.22
RIGHT TO BURY			
Lot 324 Plots 1 & 2; Lot 325 Plots 1,2,3 & 4; Lot 328 Plots 1,2,3 & 4	2/9/2026	APPROVE	
Lot 323 Plots 1,2,3 & 4; Lot 326 Plots 1,2,3 & 4; Lot 327 Plot 3	2/9/2026	APPROVE	
Temporary Right To Bury - Donald Patscheider - Memorial Garden	2/9/2026	APPROVE	
ABATEMENT REQUEST RECOMMENDATION			
258-036-000; 758 Upper Straw Road	2/9/2026	APPROVE	
OTHER			
Personnel Action Form - Elected Position - Resignation - C. Johnson	2/9/2026	APPROVE	

Mr. Whitley made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKeon and approved by a roll call vote 4 yes, 0 no., 1 abstention.

IV. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS (4:15)

- Sarah Persechino, Town Moderator

Town and School elections will be held on Tuesday, March 10th. The polls will be open from 7:00am to 7:00pm at the Hopkinton Middle/High School.

The Annual Town Meeting has been set for Thursday, March 19th at 6:00 pm. Ms. Persechino encourages everyone to arrive earlier than 6:00 pm. The check-in process becomes very long if everyone shows up at the same time.

There is a strong group of volunteers and staff working to make this go off without a hitch.

There are two assistant moderators this year, Jim O'Brian and Anna Wells. Both have helped in the past and bring a lot of experience.

Ms. Persechino is working with the Town Clerk's Office and Town Administrator to prepare and distribute information for voting this year.

There are a few new things that will be rolled out: A new ballot counting device for elections.

There have been years of consideration and testing in the State about what devices will be approved. Hopkinton received information on the approved devices at the end of last year.

There will be a public ballot counting device test, the public is invited to observe. It will be posted on the town website.

There have been two trainings with the company LHS - the same NH based company the Town used for the last ballot counting device. Poll Pads can be used for Town Meeting check-in.

Ms. Persechino is working with the new school moderator on written rules and procedures for the annual Town Meetings which will be posted on the town website. They are useful for folks who may not have attended a Town Meeting before. It includes voter responsibilities and other information.

The Hopkinton fourth and fifth graders submitted designs to the state election sticker contest.

Ms. Persechino was able to use the designs submitted by the students to make Hopkinton specific stickers for the local election.

Deputy Clerk, Emily Ceriello, is putting together the first ever Best Dog voting for election day.

Kids ages 0-17 will be able to vote at their own voting station, which hasn't happened since before Covid.

Anyone interested in nominating their dog to be one of Hopkinton's top five candidates needs to send information to the Town Clerk's Office by February 20th. Dogs must

be licensed with the rabies vaccine. One dog per household.

Ms. Persechino is waiting for Select Board schedules for election day, so she can prepare subs to fill in if necessary. Chair Dunlap asked if it is ok for Select Board members to touch the ballots. Ms. Persechino said no. Additionally, if your name is on the ballot you should be outside, not inside the polling place.

Ms. McKeon asked about the deadline to give input about the space layout, and are there two versus one mic station due to budget limitations? Ms. Persechino said they have used two in the past but it was difficult tracking the lines and whose turn it was. Ms. Persechino proposes a traveling mic which would help those with accessibility issues.

The auditorium is an overflow space. The second assistant moderator will help keep the communication flowing to auditorium.

If there is a specific accessibility request, call the Town Clerk's Office, or email Ms. Persechino.

For general election day questions call the Town Clerk 603-746-3810. Volunteer shifts are: 7:00 AM – 12:45 PM and 12:45 PM – 7:00 PM.

- **Leif Rosenholm, Eagle Scout Conservation Project Presentation.**
Mr. Rosenholm is returning as requested by the Select Board in a prior meeting. The project includes cleaning up and rebuilding the public picnic area near Cedar and Main. It is near the dam on the opposite side of the Contoocook River from the Fire Department.
When the snow melts Mr. Rosenholm would like to put metal-coated weatherproof picnic tables and trash cans. The color is being discussed, green or black are recommended. He presented a rendering with details on items and commercial costs from Uline.
Eight-foot in-ground picnic table x2 = \$2,200.
Wireless trashcans x2 = \$300.
Anchoring hardware = approx.. \$400.
Boy Scouts project sign = ?
Total estimate = \$4,900-\$5,000.
Project Impact: Enhances the public space for gathering; helps businesses by providing a space to eat and sit; encourages people to be outside when there are clean spaces. The wire and slotted metal materials allow snow, ice, and water to run through to prevent rotting and mold. Mr. Rosenholm provided a project location map and material sources.
Mr. Whitely asked about a timeline. Mr. Rosenholm is hoping to gather the funds and volunteers to be able to start after the snow melts. Ms. Hambleton introduced Mr. Rosenholm to Public Works Director, Mr. Blanchette. Mr. Blanchette expressed his support of the project. Some anchoring logistics were discussed.
- **Transportation (28:22)**
Marlo Herrick, David Hemenway, and John Clark from Webster joined with Hopkinton's Dan Blanchette, Director of Public Works and Jolene Cochrane, Transfer Station Superintendent. Ms. Hambleton introduced the meeting. The Board invited all parties involved in the Transfer Station for a conversation on how things are going. Ms. Hambleton sent the following questions in advance of the meeting:
 - What are the physical obstacles to installing the gate?
 - Who is using the Transfer Station and what would be the best way to monitor this?
 - What are maintenance needs?
 - Are recycling numbers available, what happened to them after the green bags went away?
 - What are the cleanup efforts where the fence is going to be, and beyond it where the trash is blowing?
 - What support does the Transfer Station need from the Town of Hopkinton?

Fence

Mr. Blanchette began by addressing the fence. The original plan was to use galvanized metal fencing, but the money wasn't in the budget last year. The plastic fence is breaking down quicker than expected. The plan now is to put up a chicken wire fence because chain-link would be too costly to install. There are two sections of chicken wire that will need removal in winter to allow snow storage.

Mr. Blanchette and Ms. Cochrane are planning a workday with both of their crews on an off-dump day, including the woods. This would require overtime for Ms. Cochrane. Volunteers would be a great help. In addition to the loose trash, there is stuff left over from the old landfill - tires, etc. that are down a steep embankment requiring chains and equipment to remove. Mr. Whitley asked about a timeline on the fence. Mr. Blanchette said after the snow melts. Ms. McKeon asked about timing of the seasonal removal of sections of the fence. Mr. Blanchette said the two sections and posts will be removed in the fall before frost.

Ms. Hambleton said she was asked if there is an alternative place to put snow. Ms. Cochrane said there are three spots and they fill up. She noted that when she plows, she also pushes debris into that area so she can do daily clean ups as snow begins to thaw. If she puts snow further out there will be additional areas to clean and she wouldn't be able to do the daily checks she does with the closer piles. Mr. Clark asked if the chicken wire fence is included in the 2026 budget. Yes, it is.

Gate

Ms. Cochrane and Mr. Blanchette both agree a gate is a last resort. There are out-of-town people coming in but not in the numbers that have been floating around. The max case scenario is 25 people a week. At 150 lbs of waste per person (which is on the high side, the average is 30 – 40 lbs) multiplied by 52 weeks equals 97 ½ ton per year. That is \$10,335. a year. The gate is \$40,000; plus \$5-\$10,000 for the electrical connection. General and daily maintenance costs still need to be added in.

Stickers

Mr. Blanchette and Ms. Cochrane discussed stickers. Every January new stickers could be issued, and Ms. Cochrane can sell them at the Transfer Station.

Ms. Herrick asked what the requirements would be to get a sticker. Ms. Cochrane said an I.D. or utility bill. Out-of-state license plates are ok. The car might be a company car – the car owner can still be a resident and use the Transfer Station.

Mr. Clark thinks the gate could be problematic causing backups. A sticker system could be done if it's thought through. Mr. Blanchette said the Town Clerk knows a year ahead what color the car registration sticker will be. Maybe the dump sticker could be coordinated to help identify if the dump sticker is current.

Mr. Clark asked Ms. Cochrane how hard it would be to monitor the stickers. She said her crew has been getting caught up. With the staffing she has now, it is possible. Without current staffing, a part-time person to come in and track would be needed. Mr. Clark suggested using a volunteer if there were guidelines.

Mr. Blanchette spoke with Chief Hennessey about addressing situations that could arise. Chief Hennessey suggested starting with a sign that says *No trespassing, you cannot dump without a sticker, etc.* That would help enforce the law. Ms. Cochrane said she has never had an issue with non-residents. They leave when she asks them to. The issues arise when it is a resident who doesn't have a sticker. Chair Dunlap said she volunteered one weekend and that most people were reasonable, but there were some issues. She found that having a reasonable standard of enforcement would be helpful and supports a sign. Ms. Cochrane asked for clarification on whether the Board wants her to enforce the sticker rule or not. Ms. McKeon asked who would make the stickers.

Ms. Cochrane said she could do that. Mr. Blanchette said the registration color/coordination could start this year with some education for the public. Logistics were discussed.

Trailers

Mr. Hemenway noted that the January contract for waste removal changed. Previously at a joint meeting there was discussion about trailers, where did that end up? Ms. Hambleton said that the 5-year contract with Waste Management was renewed. It was the most affordable option. Keeping and using our existing the trailers made the contract higher, using the Waste Management supplied trailers is more affordable. Mr. Blanchette suggests keeping one new trailer and selling the other two. Discussion ensued regarding sale value and loss of value over time if they are kept.

Recycling

Recycling report was distributed. Numbers are up a bit, fairly level with green bag numbers. Demolition has gone down significantly. Ms. McKeon asked how often these numbers are generated. Ms. Cochrane said they are in the Town Report every year. An audience member asked about a joint towns Transfer Station Committee. Does it still exist? No, it doesn't. Mr. Whitley asked if the ERRCO fees are in line. Ms. Cochrane explained that ERRCO undercharged for 2025. They haven't sent numbers in for 2026, however, it will likely be higher to recoup their lost fees. Recycling logistics, programs and education and awareness were discussed. The recycling building needs to be addressed at some point, and is in the CIP. It's a significant cost including a total tear down. It was noted that the traffic flow isn't great and the overall layout isn't ideal. They are making the best use of the space. Ms. McKeon acknowledged the self-sufficiency and good work of the Transfer Station staff, and asked if there is anything that the Select Board can do to support their work. Mr. Blanchette suggested coming to help with the spring clean-up. Spring clean-up events will be announced.

- Bonnie Christe, 302 Smithfield Rd. Contoocook, with a public service announcement. **(1:31:21)** The Waste Reduction Committee and the Library are cosponsoring a program on waste, on February 19th with three speakers: Mike Nork and Paige Wilson of DES, and Transfer Station Superintendent, Jolene Cochrane.
Topic: How much waste do we dispose of a year, what is in the waste, what is the state plan to manage it?
- Landfill Cap **(1:34:06)**
Ms. Hambleton and Mr. Blanchette had a conversation with Nobis Engineering to get an idea of what it would take to do the landfill cap repair in a phased approach as opposed to all at once. \$400K, half the cost, is the phased cost. Mr. Blanchette recommends spending the \$800K to do the entire project right. A 6" rainstorm in a 12-hour event could result in additional \$800K to fix the \$400K fix. Mr. Blanchette is looking into combining the cesspool closure work at the same time. DES isn't directly involved because the liner hasn't been punctured, however they are being kept in the loop. The challenge is that CIP had put this in next year's budget, 2027. Mr. Hemenway noted the increase in rain and flooding events and asked if this type of damage is something the Town should be anticipating? Mr. Blanchette said yes. Discussion ensued regarding budgets, timelines, big picture, CIP projects, and next steps.

George Park

Mr. Blanchette has received several quotes, however, none for a mason or concrete flooring. He asked if he were to find one if he could proceed. Mr. Whitley proposed the option to waive the solicitation of competitive bid requirements, or allow that solicitation has been completed, and approve moving ahead with the contractors that responded.

Mr. Whitley moved to waive the competitive bid requirements for the George Park Bathroom Project for the mason, the concrete floor and the directional drilling. Ms. McKeon seconded and the motion was approved unanimously by roll-call vote.

Mr. Hemenway would like to address the bond. Ms. McKeon said they have two years to set the details of the bond. Construction can begin before those details are set. She recommends a dedicated meeting around that conversation after the Town Meeting. Mr. Whitley recognizes the concern about borrowing the money and passing the cost on to taxpayers. He also agrees that a dedicated meeting after the Town Meeting is most productive.

Ms. Hambleton clarified that the note is written after the construction is complete. Mr. Hemenway expressed concern that the contract is signed with the State and that it says twenty

years. Nothing about it being optional. Ms. Hambleton said Ms. Mesa-Zendt dove into the contract. Discussion ensued.

- **Ambulance Billing**

Ms. Hambleton reported that the Town Administrators have spoken and will review the contract after the Town Meeting. Mr. Hemenway has questions about what percentage Warner paid so Webster can match that. Ms. Hambleton shared the payment made by Warner. Mr. Hemenway understood that Webster and Hopkinton were working on a new contract. Ms. McKeon confirmed, yes, that the old contract was signed so there is an existing contract, and a new contract still needs to be hammered out. Additionally, and separately, are the payment plans. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Whitley noted that setting the meeting before the Town Meeting isn't possible. They will look at dates after that.

The Select Board thanked the Webster Board for attending after which they left the meeting.

Chair Dunlap requested to push two items to the next meeting: Class 6 Road, and Board Goals.

V. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES (2:50)

Ms. Hambleton handed Chair Dunlap the GMI paving contract to sign. Ms. Mesa-Zendt is working on a Community Challenge Grant for the purpose of developing preapproved ADU plans downloadable to the public.

The Housing Committee asked that the Board consider adding a new position to their committee for a representative from the Hopkinton Village Precinct. Ms. McKeon said the Housing Committee doesn't have an impact on the HVP because of the zoning. The HC would like to extend an invitation to HVP with intention of collaboration.

Mr. Whitley moved to add a seat for a Hopkinton Village Precinct representative, Chair Dunlap seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0 with one abstention.

Ms. Mesa-Zendt and Ms. Hambleton have talked about conducting pulse surveys to solicit community input. Pulse surveys will start after the Town Hall Meeting.

There have been questions from the Community and Economic Development Committee about information sharing. There is a need for better communication across boards and committees. Some suggestions were a newsletter, regular reports to the Select Board, and a repository of all documents. Ms. Hambleton noted that the website is a repository. Mr. Whitley said having a board member on the committees is very helpful, and that he hadn't been able to attend CEDC meetings lately, which could be having an impact.

Ms. Hambleton met with Lee Wilder and Louise Carr about horseshoes. They are drawing up pictures.

Steve Lux, should he get elected, will no longer be able to serve as a Trustee of the Trust Funds. A new one will need to be appointed.

VI. Warrants

Mr. Whitley moved that the Select Board recommends articles 3-7 to the voters. Ms. McKeon seconds and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

VII. Other (3:04:39)

Ms. Bram commended Jolene and Transfer Station staff for dealing with the transition to the new trailer system. They have handled it well.

Ms. McKeon said thank you to Beverly for pulling together the goals graphic.

Mr. Whitley said that the Community and Economic Development Coordinator position is in the board packet. He would like that to be on the next agenda to get it squared away.

Chair Dunlap noted that the letter for the Town Report is ready, Ms. Bram made some edits. It is ready to go.

VIII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION (3:04:39)

Chair Dunlap made a motion to move into multiple non-public sessions under RSA 91-A:3 a, a, d, b, c and e. After the non-public ends the board will not conduct any further business. Mr. Whitley 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 under RSA 91-A:3 a, at 8:41 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:02 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. Chair Dunlap 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.

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 and Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately under RSA 91-A:3 a, at 9:02 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:15 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. Chair Dunlap 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.

Chair Dunlap made a motion that the Board enter into a non-public session under Nonpublic RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Lease of Property. 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 and Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately under RSA 91-A:3 a, at 9:15 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:23 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

Chair Dunlap made a motion that the Board enter into a non-public session under Nonpublic RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputation. 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 and Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately under RSA 91-A:3 a, at 9:23 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:28 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

Chair Dunlap made a motion that the Board enter into a non-public session under Nonpublic RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Legal. 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 and Town Administrator went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately under RSA 91-A:3 a, at 9:28 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 9:34 p.m.

These minutes were not sealed.

I. ADJOURNMENT

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 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Marcellino
Administrative/Assessing Assistant