



## **Select Board Meeting Minutes**

Monday, March 16, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Town Offices, Select Board Room

36 Bartlet Street, Andover, MA 01810

Meetings are televised on Comcast Channel 22 and Verizon Channel 45

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### **I. Call to Order – 6:30 P.M.**

Chair Alex Vispoli called the meeting of March 16, 2026, to order at 6:30 P.M. Members Present: Alex Vispoli, Chair, Ellen Townson, Vice Chair, Melissa Danisch, Clerk, Laura Gregory and Kevin Coffey.

Also Present: Town Manager Andrew Flanagan, Deputy Town Manager Mike Lindstrom, Deputy Town Manager and Town Clerk Austin Simko, Town Counsel Doug Heim, Deputy Town Manager of Operations Brittney Lavoie.

### **II. Opening Ceremonies**

#### **A. Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance**

A moment of silence was observed followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Ryan DeLorenzo.

#### **B. Recognition of Dorothy DeLorenzo**

Mr. Vispoli asked Ms. DeLorenzo's family to join the Board in recognizing her as long-time support and minutes taker for the Select Board. Since 2007, Ms. DeLorenzo has chronicled all the Select Board meetings accurately and on time. and Mr. Vispoli read aloud a recognition of those efforts and presented a bouquet of flowers followed by a family group photo with the Board.

### **III. Town Manager Report**

Mr. Flanagan introduced Benjamin Meade, newly appointed Director of Conservation, and noted Mr. Meade was a Conservation Agent for 8 years, is familiar with Andover Conservation issues, and has a strong vision for Conservation issues in town. Mr. Meade thanked all for this opportunity and noted his interest in Open Space and Conservation issues in town and is looking forward to working in this new position and with the Board.

### **IV. Communications/Announcements/Liaison Reports**

Mr. Lindstrom gave an update on the Haggett's Pond Rail Trail, which is about to open. Last step is installation of ADA railing and staircase, and the contractor will be on site March 23. There is about two weeks of ADA work, installation of a kiosk and then open to the public.

Ms. Lavoie praised the AYS event last week attended by over 300 kids. It was a great opportunity to place students with summer jobs/internships and a range of other opportunities. Event expected to be held again next year.

Mr. Simko mentioned election for Town Offices is next Tuesday and there is a short time left to get the mail- in ballot. Mailbox in front of Town Offices may be used for ballots. Old Town Yard site will be developed by MINCO and approvals from MBTA are in and they are working on their internal processes to get project going. Closing by June. Land disposition sets the rest of the dates. If they close in June site work will start in about 60 days. Two years end date.

Ms. Townson asked about dog waste receptacles on the Haggett's' Pond trail and these will be provided. Ms. Townson recently took an MMA online class and learned Andover was one of a few towns with Tri-Board meetings and thanked Mr. Flanagan for this.

Mr. Vispoli thanked those who participated in the Turf Field Forum last week. Andover High School Juniors and Seniors will be able to take a Credit for Life course with Dave Florine on April 14 to learn to build and balance real life budgets.

Ms. Gregory thanked Mr. Flanagan and staff for the Saturday annual budget meeting. The LWV will hold a candidates' forum on Wednesday at 7 PM at MHL.

## **V. Public Comment**

Kristen Wise from Inwood Lane asked about the Capital Carry Forward introduced last year allowing the Town Manager to keep excess capital funds in an account for spending above and beyond long range forecast. She said last year's CIP showed \$175K coming from a Capital Carry Forward that was not used. Ms. Wise said this policy seems to subvert the vote of Town Meeting as the CIP lists how money is to be spent and what is not used was not returned to the voters as free cash. Suggested financial subcommittee consider a financial policy on this rather than a statement in the CIP.

Mr. Flanagan said the Capital Carry Forward was introduced two summers ago as a four-component plan and described the process which follows best practices for using or repurposing funds and offsetting cash with costs. It was always intended to be a transparent process and allows for handling long standing delays with projects outside the of CIP or Town Meeting and the monies referred to have been applied.

## **VI. Regular Business**

### **A. [MBTA – Burnham Road Presentation](#)**

Presentation to the Board by MBTA on upcoming bridge repair and closure on Burnham Road.

Three members from the MBTA, Omar Alchaar Project Manager, Adam Kamoune, and George Kober gave a slide presentation on the Preservation & Maintenance Program regarding the Burnham Road bridge.

Mr. Alchaar described the existing bridge condition, proposed preservation and maintenance plan, with schedule of work, traffic plan for road closure and detour, and outreach efforts.

The existing stone bridge renovated in 1972 has deteriorating bearings and the steel girders need to be repaired. Recent inspections also showed missing masonry and mortar in some places.

Work will involve reconstruction and shoring of the bridge, repointing stone masonry and steel blasting and painting.

Each corner of bridge will be done separately for a total of four phases due to the narrow road. Mr. Vispoli asked if the road could be widened and the process for requesting such expansion. He noted there have been public requests for widening both the Burnham and Central bridges. Mr. Alchaar responded that it would be outside the scope of this capital program.

Mr. Kamoune said that at the end of the useful life of the bridge which could be 15-20 years from now, full replacement along with pedestrian access and bridge widening - a larger scale project – could be considered.

Ms. Danisch and Mr. Coffey noted that the bridge looked to be at least a hundred years old and Ms. Danisch said there was a good response from previous historic railroad bridge work and that safety is key.

Mr. Kamoune said the bridge abutments were installed in 1865, but it is the steel girders from a 1972 renovation that require structural work rather than the abutments.

Mr. Alchaar spoke of the schedule which will take 8 months between end of March 2026 and end of Fall 2026 with full road closure during this time. Some of the prep with message boards will begin this week. Access to the park under the bridge on the other side of Burnham Road will not be affected. Detour plans and outreach by flyers to local abutters and public engagement are next steps and this information will be on the web site.

Mr. Alchaar said there will be no pedestrian access under the bridge due to safety reasons.

Mr. Coffey asked about alternatives for pedestrians which could be quite a distance, and if planned outreach would be the first notice to abutters, giving them one or two weeks' notice.

Mr. Coffey also asked about ancillary effects on abutting properties such as noise and dust from the renovations. Mr. Alchaar said all safety regulations will be followed, and resident issues will be addressed as they crop up. The Select Board will be updated as needed.

Ms. Gregory asked about access to the parking lot by the fields and whether construction vehicles would be parked in that area. Equipment will be stored nearby, but not in the parking lot.

Ms. Townson asked about the public outreach schedule, ensuring the Shawsheen river area would be protected, and dust containment. Flyers will go out this weekend to the public and there will be outreach to those using the fields. Although work crews may start as early as 6:30 AM these hours will be during the week not weekends. Lead was found on the bridge, and its containment and disposal will be according to regulations. Anticipated end date is October. A possible pedestrian archway to the side of the bridge will be discussed. Mr. Vispoli thanked the team for their presentation.

B. Grant of Easement

Board to consider voting to approve and execute grant of access easement for 264 Andover Street.

Mr. Heim said this is the last stage of a long process approved by Town Meeting, the Conservation Commission, and the State for an easement across a section of driveway that existed prior to the Town buying a parcel of land which included a section of that driveway, to access conservation land. Attorney Mark Johnson said all parties have agreed to the easement for the residents of this address and all that is needed is the Select Board to sign and it will be recorded at the Registry of Deeds. The State requires an appraisal due to Open Space issue.

Ms. Townson moved to approve and execute the grant of access easement for 264 Andover Street. Ms. Danisch seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

C. [Annual Town Meeting Articles](#)

Board to consider voting to take a position on the following articles:

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| P4 | <p>Fiscal Year 2027 Budget</p> <p>Mr. Flanagan said this Article includes the entire budget unless funded through warrant articles. \$252,629,652. (less budgeted revenues and offsets)</p> <p>Ms. Danisch moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P4 "Fiscal Year 2027 Budget." Ms. Townson seconded. Motion passed 5-0</p>   |
| P5 | <p>Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Projects Fund</p> <p>Mr. Flanagan said this is funded from cash, mostly Facilities funds. Mr. Coffey asked if funded out of taxation, and it is. Within 7-7.5% target.</p> <p>Ms. Townson moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P5 "Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Projects Fund." Ms. Danisch seconded. Motion passed 5-0.</p>  |
| P6 | <p>Capital Projects from General Fund Borrowing</p> <p>Mr. Flanagan note this is the other section of the CIP funded from 7- 7.5% target.</p> <p>Combines Debt service and Article 5. Pulled out Chandler Road Project into its own Article, leaving the new amount as \$9,238,000</p> <p>Mr. Flanagan outlined town sidewalk program, large public works vehicles, town parks and playgrounds, major town projects and major school projects.</p> <p>Mr. Coffey noted ladder truck funded from free cash and asked whether \$578K for public works vehicles might also have been funded out of free cash rather than debt. Mr. Flanagan said it could potentially have been, but there might not have been sufficient cash reserves because of unknown expenses before closing out at the end of year, so it is a balance.</p> <p>School ADA question from Ms. Townson.</p> <p>Mr. Coffey Moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P6 "Capital Projects from General Fund Borrowing." Ms. Danisch seconded. Motion passed 5-0.</p> |
| P7 | <p>Capital Projects from Free Cash</p> <p>\$4.8M for included most small vehicles, minor sidewalk repair, town and school security, IT.</p>  |

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|     | <p>Kathy Grant, Morton Street, asked where \$150K approved from free cash for DPW was as it was not listed in this or last few Articles. Mr. Flanagan explained request sheets vs recommendations for funding.</p> <p>Ms. Danisch moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P7 “Capital Projects from Free Cash.” Ms. Townson seconded. Motion passed 5-0.</p>   |
| P8  | <p>Capital Projects from Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds</p> <p>Includes the Water main replacement/improvement project, Wood Hill Pumps and Motor Control Centers, Ozone generators, Shawsheen pumping station; all built into the water rate plan. \$26,335,000.</p> <p>Mr. Coffey noted Town did not receive a \$1M grant it applied for from Congressman Seth Moulton’s Office for these improvements. Ms. Gregory noted subsidy with North Reading users.</p> <p>Mr. Coffey moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P8 “Capital Projects from Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds.” seconded. Motion passed 5-0.</p>  |
| P22 | <p>Bylaw Amendment – Ballardvale Historic District</p> <p>Planning Board and Commission recommended approval. Legal allowances under Chapter 40C of State Law and exemptions explained. Empathetic and clarified purpose streamlined sections, expedited approvals</p> <p>Katherine Robinson and Remi Machet Commission members explained reasons for updated Ballardvale Historic District Commission By-Law. Ballardvale first of Andover’s planned mill villages. Preserve and Protect buildings and history.</p> <p>Mr. Simko gave an overview of bylaw process timeline from June to present. Ms. Robinsons described design guidelines and upcoming process. Ms. Townson asked about generators and composite wood. Generators are exempt in current bylaw but not addressed in state law.</p> <p>Ms. Danisch moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P22 “Bylaw Amendment-Ballardvale Historic District.” Ms. Gregory seconded. Motion passed 5-0.</p> <p>Joann Michalik 7 Hearthstone Lane Place Preservation Commission member stated support for the design.</p> |

Chandler Road Recreation Area

Debt service and Free Cash funding.

Mr. Connelly gave an update of Phase II of the proposed playground and field as well as public feedback from a 1/14/26 meeting and considerations after that meeting. Photo of Option 4 showed this area with desired program/amenities.

Mr. Flanagan addressed the budget with a model of projected enterprise fund revenue from synthetic turf field. Abutters' concerns with parking lot addressed.

Joann Michalik 7 Hearthstone Place—questioned lifetime costs of artificial turf of \$1.5M over 10 years. Mr. Connelly spoke of use and hours over long run and maintenance/replacement costs.

Miranda Chave 49 Porter Road—asked whether there would be a breakdown of allocation or a bundled \$5M for voting purposes. Mr. Flanagan said it would be bundled as it is integrated into the capital budget.

P33

PFAS product testing and end of life recycling plan included in bid.

Mr. Coffey asked whether the lower field shown in the photo would be included in this phase and was playing field equipment part of the plan. Lower field not included in Phase II. Mr. Coffey also asked whether the Article should specify that artificial turf would be used in case an amendment was proposed at Town Meeting, such as substituting natural grass. Mr. Flanagan said Articles typically don't specify materials used in a capital budget warrant Article. Mr. Heim said it's the Moderator's decision whether to allow an amendment and it was decided to confer with the Town Moderator on this matter prior to signing the Warrant.

Ms. Danisch noted concerns the public shared with the Board and thanked those for time and input.

Ms. Gregory noted efforts of the Select Board on this issue. Mr. Vispoli said the process worked well.

Ms. Townson noted the various types of fields and asked whether this was a vote on the concept. This is the design stage as it goes through the permitting process.

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|     | Ms. Danisch moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P33 "Chandler Road Recreation Area." Ms. Gregory seconded. Motion passed 5-0   |
| P41 | <p>Bylaw Amendment Ambulance Revolving Fund</p> <p>A financial mechanism explained regarding the fund for supplies and equipment in the revolving fund and revenue from ambulance fund.</p> <p>Mr. Coffey moved to recommend Town Meeting Approval of Article P41 "Bylaw Amendment Ambulance Revolving Fund." Ms. Townson seconded. Motion passed 5-0.</p> |

**VII. Adjourn**

Ms. Danisch moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 PM. Mr. Coffey seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

**Summary of Town Manager Staff Appointments**

The Town Manager is pleased to announce the following appointments:

| <b>Department</b>                | <b>Name</b>                               | <b>Position</b>          | <b>Date of Hire</b> | <b>Rate/Term</b> |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Community Development & Planning | Benjamin Meade<br><i>(Robert Douglas)</i> | Director of Conservation | 03/11/2026          | \$127,000/year   |