

# Select Board

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January 6, 2026

Present:

- Select Board: Mr. Bill Ramsey, Chair, Ms. Liz Klein, and Ms. Julie Strehle
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Mr. Art Robert, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations
- Ms. Katie Dugan, Assistant Town Administrator for Finance

## **Call to order:**

6:00 PM: Chair Ramsey called the meeting to order and read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held in person and/or remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.”

No one indicated that they were recording the meeting.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

## **Approval of Minutes**

**Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 2, 2025. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.**

**Vote: Ms. Strehle made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 9, 2025. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.**

**Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 16, 2025. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.**

**Vote: Ms. Strehle made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 18, 2025. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.**

## **Proclaim January 7, 2026 as Adelia Day in the Town of Hingham**

The Select Board read a proclamation honoring Adelia Szklut, a young Hingham resident who passed away in 2024 from a rare form of cancer. The proclamation was read in honor of Adelia’s birthday and proclaimed January 7 as “Adelia the Wonder Girl Day” in the Town of Hingham.

**Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to proclaim January 7, 2026 as Adelia Day in the Town of Hingham Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.**

## **Consider approval of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages license to Vitamin Sea Brewing for the New Year’s Bonfire at Weir River Farm to be held on Saturday, January 10, 2026 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

Rich DiBona, Vitamin Sea Brewing explained that the annual bonfire at Weir River Farm will take place this Saturday. Residents are invited to bring their Christmas trees to add to the bonfire. The event will

include food from the Mom on the Go food truck, beverages, and an opportunity for the community to gather and enjoy the evening by the bonfire.

Elyssa Scheck, Trustees, added that a police and fire detail will be at the event.

**Vote: Ms. Strehle made a motion to approve the issuance of a Special (One-Day) Wine and Malt Beverages license to Vitamin Sea Brewing for the New Year’s Bonfire at Weir River Farm to be held on Saturday, January 10, 2026 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.**

**Consider the Application for Multiple Amendments (Change of Officers, Stock and Ownership Interest, Pledge of License, and Change of Manager) by Amelia Ruth Corp. d/b/a Main Street Market & Spirits, 484 Main Street, Hingham**

Greg Sullivan, Attorney, explained the application is to change the licensed shareholders in the company.

**Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to approve the request of Amelia Ruth Corp. d/b/a Main Street Market & Spirits, 484 Main Street, Hingham for a Change of Manager, Change of Officers/Directors, Change of Ownership Interest, Change of Stock Interest, and Pledge of License in accordance with the Application for Multiple Amendments filed on November 17, 2025; subject to the approval of the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.**

**Designate Assistant Town Administrator for Finance Katie Dugan as an authorized user of the Plymouth County APRPA Plan portal to prepare applications on behalf of the Town**

Tom Mayo explained that ARPA program requirements include designating a point person for filing purposes. As a result, the user designation will be transferred from the former Assistant Town Administrator for Finance to the current Assistant Town Administrator, Katie Dugan.

**Vote: Ms. Strehle made a motion to authorize Assistant Town Administrator for Finance Katie Dugan to prepare and enter information into the Plymouth County American Rescue Plan portal in support of one or more applications to Plymouth County for grants (“ARPA Grants”) to be funded from a grant received by Plymouth County under the American Rescue Plan Act. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.**

#### **FY25 Fund Balance Memo**

Mr. Mayo noted that as part of the annual budget and warrant process, the Town prepares the fund balance memo and financial forecast.

Ms. Dugan reviewed the fund balance memo, noting it is based on the Town’s Annual Comprehensive Financial Report approved in December. Ms. Dugan reported a total fund balance of \$57.77 million, of which \$38.9 million is unassigned, remaining relatively stable from the prior year. In accordance with the Town’s financial policies, a portion of the unassigned balance is restricted, resulting in an excess unassigned fund balance of approximately \$11.3 million. Ms. Dugan noted this represents a slight decrease from last year due to strategic investments and lower investment income, but still reflects a healthy balance available for future community investments.

#### **Preliminary FY27 Financial Forecast**

Mr. Mayo explained that Ms. Dugan has been working on the financial forecast for some time and that the document is now ready for release. A forecast group meeting was recently held with School Department and Advisory Committee leadership, and this version represents the first of several iterations, with additional revisions to follow as the document continues to evolve.

Ms. Dugan explained updates to the five-year financial forecast, noting that FY25 actuals have been incorporated, the FY26 estimate remains consistent with figures presented at Annual Town Meeting,

and new projections have been added for FY27 along with an additional four years of forecasting. Ms. Dugan highlighted updated new growth assumptions based on a strong FY26 performance and recent post-COVID residential development trends.

Ms. Dugan noted that the current forecast shows an estimated \$1.1 million shortfall, which is typical at this stage of the budget process. Potential adjustments include anticipated updates to state aid, local motor vehicle excise receipts, and healthcare cost estimates, which are currently shown conservatively. Ms. Dugan stated that as additional information becomes available over the next several weeks, the shortfall is expected to narrow to approximately \$300,000–\$400,000, with stabilization funds and existing financial policies available to address any remaining gap heading into Annual Town Meeting.

With a brief discussion it was noted that the \$1.1 million shortfall at this stage of the process is a strong position, compared to previous years when shortfalls were higher. Motor vehicle excise tax receipts beginning this month and a potential 1–2% increase in state aid, as indicated by Senator O'Connor, were cited as positive factors that could help reduce the gap.

Ms. Dugan explained that early indications of motor vehicle excise receipts will be available in January, providing insight into FY26 trends. Ms. Dugan also clarified that the current forecast assumes flat investment income due to prior large borrowings for town projects, which reduced cash balances generating investment returns. Year-to-date investment income trends suggest about \$2 million, roughly half of last year's level, and the FY27 forecast follows a similar conservative approach.

Anita Ryan, 37 Baker Hill Dr, questioned a short fall in 2031 and a need for an override. Mr. Mayo explained that the likely hood of an override in FY28 when the MOU expires was discussed three years ago, is still under evaluation, and the current forecast numbers do not determine its timing. Mr. Mayo emphasized that five-year projections are preliminary estimates, becoming more accurate over time, and that the Town is legally required to balance the budget each year.

Karen Johnson, 16 Berkeley Circle, asked for clarification on new growth and GIC rate assumptions, including timing and comparisons with other towns. Mr. Mayo explained a consultant advises that GIC rate information will likely be available in January. Early projections ranged from 5–15%, and a 12% rate was used for budgeting as a conservative assumption, with the hope it may decrease. Ms. Dugan explained that the \$700,000 new growth forecast is a conservative baseline based on residential construction, while larger amounts, like FY26's \$1.3 million, reflect commercial projects. Future commercial growth is acknowledged but not precisely timed.

Christine Smith, 2 Park Circle, asked if current debt service levels for recent projects explain the higher tax bills and if this will continue until the next major project. Ms. Dugan explained that current debt service reflects all town borrowings. Debt for Foster and public safety projects is largely complete, with no new borrowings planned this year. Remaining authorizations for water and sewer projects will be largely covered by enterprise funds.

### **Design and Cost of the new Center for Active Living Building Update (Chris Wante / Dan Pallotta)**

Carol Tully, Chair of the Advisory Committee, called the Advisory Committee to order adopting the language read previously in the meeting.

Chris Wante, EDM Studios, provided a project update, noting completion of design development, an updated cost estimate, and progress since the September schematic design review, including coordination on planning and zoning permit applications.

Mr. Wante recapped prior cost estimates, noting that the overall project breakdown remains consistent with what was presented at Town Meeting 2025 and in September. Mr. Wante reported that the total project cost has decreased from \$34 million to \$30.7 million, and now to approximately \$29.9 million

following design development. While individual line items have shifted slightly, the overall reduction reflects ongoing cost-containment efforts.

Mr. Wante further explained that \$400,000 off-site construction cost for Bare Cove Park Drive primarily includes installation of the sewer line from the DPW area to the project site and basic utility connections. It was noted that the estimate does not include paving, parking restriping at the park entrance, or installation of a new water line and fire hydrant at the gate.

<b>PROJECT COST UPDATE</b>	
<b>estimated design development costs – CURRENT</b>	
<b>Component</b>	<b>Est. Costs</b>
Center for Active Living Building – 25,950SF	\$19,964,549
Center for Active Living Related Sitework – 140 parking spots	\$6,213,950
Unsuitable/Hazardous Materials Disposal	included above
Off-site Construction in Bare Cove Park Drive <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>	\$400,000
<b>CONSTRUCTION COST - TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,578,499</b>
Soft Costs (Furniture, Testing, Contingency, etc.)	\$3,348,924
<b>PROJECT COST – TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,927,423</b>

1. Off-site construction in Bare Cove Park Drive only includes the cost of sewer line installation and lateral conduits for electric off the pole as shown on the site plan.
2. This number does not include a new water line extended to the Bare Cove Park entrance gate for a fire hydrant and hydration station via WRWC.
3. This number does not include Bare Cove Park Drive repaving, sidewalk, and parking space restriping for Bare Cove Park Drive parking area via DPW Chapter 90.

Next steps for the project include:

- Mid-January: Planning/Zoning hearings
- March: EDM Studio completes bid documents
- Mid-April: General Contractor bids are received
- Late April: Town votes on construction funding

Dan Pallotta, OPM P3, described the qualifications for bidding the project.

Ms. Klein asked about recent design changes. Mr. Wante explained that the updates include minor foundation refinements that do not affect the overall floor plan, right-sizing of systems such as HVAC, preliminary design element adjustments, and parking modifications to reduce the number of spaces.

Karen Johnson, 16 Berkley Circle, inquired about the timeline of socializing the final before Town Meeting. Mr. Mayo anticipated that a finalized estimate would be available one to two weeks before Town Meeting and included in a supplemental insert, likely with a “not-to-exceed” amount.

Patricia Burns, 1 Bel Air Rd, questioned proceeding to Town Meeting without a final cost estimate and asked whether the project was definite, also noting her concern that the current building was not being renovated. Mr. Ramsey stated that converting the building into a senior center was studied by the Building Committee and found infeasible due to parking constraints, objections from abutters, and high renovation costs. He also outlined the process, noting upcoming Select Board review, Advisory Committee consideration, and a final Town Meeting. Ms. Strehle added that a public meeting held in November provided detailed information on the project and would be helpful for residents seeking background.

Several other residents also commented:

Anita Ryan, 37 Baker Hill Dr

Hilary Hosmer, 204 Linden Ponds Way  
Judy Sneath, 89 North St  
Virginia Ballou, 219 Hersey St  
Peter Goldstein, 44 Bel Air Rd  
Nes Correnti, 17 Ward St

**Appointments and/or reappointments (for a list of Talent Bank Applicants and Board and Committee vacancies, please visit [Hingham-ma.gov/SB](http://Hingham-ma.gov/SB))**

There were no appointments to be made.

**Public Comment**

Anita Ryan, 37 Baker Hill Dr, gave a brief history of building 14 located on Bare Cove Park Dr.

**Select Board/Town Administrator Reports**

Mr. Mayo reported there was a One Day Special Permit approved for Trivia Night at Congregation Sha'aray Shalom on January 24, 7:30 to 11pm with an estimate of under 100 attendees.

Ms. Strehle noted that in the coming weeks the Select Board and Advisory Committee will begin reviewing the town budgets and proposed warrant articles. She encouraged residents to follow the articles from the start, participate in hearings, and provide input, emphasizing the opportunity to influence the process before Town Meeting.

Mr. Ramsey announced the Board will be meeting on Thursday via Zoom to start budgets.

**Ms. Klein made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.**

**The Select Board meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.**

Documents:

1. Minutes – 12/2/25, 12/9/25, 12/16/25, 12/18/25
2. Adelia Day Proclamation
3. Vitamin Sea – New Year's Bonfire
4. Amelia Ruth Corp multiple amendments packet
5. Transition Support for ARPA portal access
6. FY25 Fund Balance Memo
7. Retail license renewal packet
8. FY27 Forecast
9. HCAL Building Presentation