

Select Board

February 17, 2026

Present:

- Select Board: Mr. Bill Ramsey, Chair, Ms. Liz Klein, and Ms. Julie Strehle
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- 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 January 27, 2026. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.

Consider the Agreement with Ockers Technology for IT Hardware and Services

Bill Hartigan, IT Director, explained that the Town’s firewall, installed in October 2018, will reach end-of-life and end-of-support in July 2026. To avoid service disruption, the Town is seeking to replace it in advance.

After reviewing multiple hardware vendors and service providers, OCRS was selected. The new firewall will be the same manufacturer as the current system and is designed to handle increased video and remote connectivity demands, with an expected lifespan similar to the existing equipment.

Vote: Ms. Strehle made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Agreement with Ockers Technology for IT Hardware and Services in an amount not to exceed \$53,272.68. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.

Consider the Amendment #8 to the Agreement with Dig It Construction, LLC for the Route 3A Broad Cove Pump Station Force Main Improvements Sewer Project

Russell Tierney, Sewer Superintendent, explained that the amendment would allow the pipe header at Broad Cove to be raised and upsized to improve hydraulics, add a real-time flow meter, and increase capacity. Because the station serves approximately 95% of the North Source District and two pumps date to 1956, he recommended replacing the older pumps and related valves with new, more energy-efficient grinder pumps to improve reliability and ease of maintenance.

David Sequeira, Procurement Officer, added that the change order extends the contract time by 141 calendar days, establishing a target completion date of May 29, 2026.

Vote: Ms. Klein made a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the Amendment #8 to the Agreement with Dig It Construction, LLC for the Route 3A Broad Cove Pump Station Force Main

Improvements Sewer Project in an amount not to exceed \$462,672.00. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.

Discussion and possible votes on the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

- **Article HH: Citizen Petition: Establishment of a Youth Commission**

Henry Buckley, 235 Lincoln St, proposed creating a Youth Commission to advocate for young residents, including community and youth members, a student Youth Advisory Committee, and programs like awards and community engagement.

Marcus Neafsey, 133 Chief Justice Cushing Hwy, spoke in favor of the proposed article.

Diane Dinapoli, 16 Gardner St, offered assistance if the article returns in the future.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend no action on Article HH, Establishment of a Youth Commission. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.

- **Article II: Citizen Petition: Transfer a Parcel of Land (200 High Street – Assessor Parcel 124-0-32)**

Anita Ryan, 37 Baker Hill Dr, proposed an article to transfer the 6 acres currently owned by the School Department at 200 High Street parcel (124-0-32) to Conservation, regardless of the upcoming HCAL vote.

Susan Murphy, Real Estate Counsel, cautioned that boards legally control their land, and Town Meeting votes directing their actions could set a problematic precedent.

Josh Ross, 125 Wompatuck Rd, asked about the implications of changing the land designation and how that would affect the already approved Article 97 process. Ms. Murphy responded that the town meeting vote alone would not be sufficient under existing case law and additional steps would be required, so this designation would not affect the process already completed.

Diane Dinapoli, 16 Gardner St, asked about bow hunting on conservation land near a school.

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to recommend no action on Article II, Transfer of a Parcel of Land. Ms. Strehle seconded. All were in favor.

The new Center for Activating Living Building Update

Susan Murphy, Real Estate Counsel, provided an update on the projects permitting process:

- **Article 97:** The legislation passed both houses of the legislature unanimously and was signed by the governor on February 6, fully satisfying statutory requirements. The town submitted an alternatives analysis to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, which confirmed the selected site was appropriate in size, value, and natural resource considerations.
- **Wetlands:** The project team filed a Request for Determination of Applicability to confirm wetland boundaries and 100-foot buffer zones. The Conservation Commission, with third-party review by Horsley & Wynton, verified the delineation over several meetings. Minor adjustments were made, but wetlands and buffers remain protected. The Commission voted unanimously on February 9.
- **Zoning Permits:** A special permit for government use was required and approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals in January.

Ms. Murphy concluded that all required statutory and local permitting steps have now been completed.

Ms. Murphy added that the Planning Board reviewed and unanimously approved the site plan, covering building design, stormwater, utilities, traffic, safety, and lighting. Test pits confirmed the site could manage stormwater without impacting surrounding areas, completing all project permitting.

There was a discussion regarding renewed interest in the building at 225 Beal Street. Ms. Murphy explained that site evaluations consider factors such as configuration, traffic, parking, building condition,

mechanical systems, code compliance, accessibility, environmental conditions, utilities, development costs, permitting, architectural design, and space needs. She emphasized that, under Massachusetts law, the town can only purchase property without a competitive process in cases of emergency or unique suitability. Unlike the North Fire Station, the Center for Active Living does not require a specific location or uniquely suited building. Pursuing a property would require issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) detailing site and building criteria, posting it in the state Central Register for 30 days, reviewing bids, and conducting appraisals, a lengthy process with no guarantee a suitable property would be offered.

Mr. Mayo explained that pursuing a new site would require multiple town meeting approvals for feasibility, design, permitting, and construction, potentially delaying the project 2–3 years and costing \$1–1.5 million per year in inflation.

Private property acquisition would likely exceed assessed value and remove the property from the tax rolls, with an estimated \$61,000 annual loss. The Hitchcock Shoe Building, a 25,000 sq. ft. warehouse with a 6,000 sq. ft. mezzanine, would require extensive renovations, including building envelope repairs, HVAC upgrades to replace natural gas, and a site plan redesign to expand parking from 85 to 140 spaces. These considerations were previously shared in October.

Josh Ross, 125 Wompatuck Rd, stated that switching now is not feasible. He noted that approximately \$2 million has already been spent on design fees, plus additional town meetings, and more design fees. Mr. Ross highlighted the human cost, including the efforts of the building committee, Council on Aging, and other stakeholders, emphasizing that the project has progressed too far to consider alternative sites.

Diane Dinapoli, 16 Gardner St, asked about permitting for 225 Beal St pertaining to government use. Hilary Hosmer, 204 Linden Ponds Way, asked about the article 97 land swap, and the building at 225 Beal St.

Yvette Kanter, 442 Main St, spoke on the long process it would take to acquire 225 Beal St.

FY27 Financial Forecast Update

Ms. Dugan presented an updated five-year forecast, noting that the FY27 projected shortfall has been reduced from over \$1.1 million in January to approximately \$222,000. Updates include incorporation of the Governor’s budget (state aid and assessments), revised motor vehicle excise tax projections, lower projected healthcare premiums based on updated GIC guidance, and finalized debt service from the town’s recent borrowing, which was net neutral.

Ms. Dugan stated that a third version will be presented in early March, incorporating final GIC numbers, with the goal of eliminating the remaining shortfall.

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

Vote: Mr. Ramsey made a motion to appoint Megan Tracy to the Fourth of July Parade Committee for a term ending December 31, 2026. Ms. Klein seconded. All were in favor.

Public Comment

No members of the public came forward.

Select Board/Town Administrator Reports

Mr. Ramsey wished everyone a happy February vacation and noted that the Board will hold two meetings next week, on the 24th and 26th, to complete discussion and votes on warrant articles.

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

The Select Board meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Documents:

1. SB Minutes – 1/27/26
2. The Ockers Company agreement
3. Dig IT Construction LLC amendment
4. ATM Warrant Article packet
5. HCAL Slides
6. FY27 Forecast