MINUTES
HARWICH SELECT BOARD
Donn B. Griffin Room, Town Hall
732 Main Street, Harwich, MA
Executive Session 5:45 P.M.
Regular Meeting 6:00 P.M.
Tuesday, February 18, 2025

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Jeff Handler, Chair, Peter Piekarski, Clerk, Julie Kavanagh and Don Howell

PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Michael MacAskill, Vice Chair

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Joseph Powers, Town Administrator

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Handler called the meeting of the Harwich Select Board to order on Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 5:45PM noting that they would be entering into Executive Session and returning to Open Session no earlier than 6:00PM.

Mr. Piekarski moved to enter into Executive Session as presented. Seconded by Mr. Howell.

Vote: 5:0 in favor by roll call vote. Motion carried.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Pursuant to MGL c.30A section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for all town unions and non-union personnel and the Chair has determined that open session would have a detrimental effect on the town's bargaining position

Mr. Handler called the meeting of the Select Board back to order noting that while in Executive Session no action was taken.

Mr. Handler read the Open Meeting Law Notice.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Handler invited all attendees to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. STAFF COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Handler congratulated the Grateful Mug for passing through the Planning Board. He commented on how the community is working together to create a better environment for all.

V. WEEKLY BRIEFING

Mr. Powers gave an update on the Phase 3 Sewer Extension work from February 17-28 noting the location of the work. He also noted the location they will be focusing on March 2-7.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Matt Sutphin read a letter into to the record which he had previously sent to the Select Board members.
Dear Board members, The CPC will soon vote on the merits of providing a million dollars to further the Main Street Bog Project. The germ for this project was one person who brought this thought to the Tech School Administrator. The School Administrator brought it onto the town. It was ill conceived. Aside from all the environmental issues to contend with as well as the questionable future access to construction funds by the State, given our political climate, there is also the need to consider the future operating costs as John Chorey informed the Board last week. We do not need to run two facilities. I encourage the Select Board to require an alternative analysis before rushing headlong into development of a site that will have runoff concerns, animal husbandry concerns, unanticipated expenses and far too much environmental degradation. This is after all, supposed to be a campus dedicated to environmental schooling. In addition to the existing $120 million, the Tech campus should be useful for those interested in the contemplated curriculum. It should be remembered that the Main Street Bogs were purchased with Land Bank Funds. I recall being a voter. I think everybody expected it to be open land and now, here we are 25 years later, deciding whether or not we should build on it. I ask you to go back into history a little bit, consider what the voters voted for, what money they parted with at that time and respect it. I would add that those tax dollars, were they to be spent, would activate more nitrogen loading in Herring River and there's a lot of money on the table to deal with nitrogen loading. This property is a headwater to the Thatcher Bogs which is a headwater to the Herring River. It makes sense to build something like this on high land away from estuaries, away from wetlands. It would make more sense to consider the construction somewhere other than close to wetlands. The proposal was probably thought of in a good way, that it would provide some farming education for people at the Tech School but I say to you as a farmer, it is very optimistic to think going forward another generation or two that the farms on Cape Cod will look as they do today. They won't. They will be inherited, families will split, property will get sold. There will be a few farms left but as a practical matter, schooling kids to be farmers on Cape Cod is pie in the sky. I encourage you to think of this project differently than you may have thought of it to date and consider the cost benefit of doing what's necessary if that curricula is to be fully developed. Consider doing it on the existing Tech property where the parking areas already exist, the lighting already exists, everything already exists just plug in another building.

John Carey, who is redoing the West Harwich School House, announced that he has submitted an offer to purchase the West Harwich Baptist Church. He offered his assistance to preserve the building. He believes everyone in Harwich wants this building saved and he thinks it's time for the Town to step up and fight to save the building. He hopes that other people will also offer to help this building also.

Patrick Otton of East Harwich commented that on Thursday the 20th, the Board of Health's Agenda will include a request that the Town not use second generation anti-coagulant rodenticides. He noted that a SGARs are highly toxic, prevented from public sale but available for licenses applicators. Mr. Otton explained the negative effects of using the SGARs and that there is a bill being submitted before the House of Massachusetts to restrict SGARs. He will be going before the Board of Health to request that they not use SGARs on Town property.
Mr. Otton noted that the issue of electronic voting came up at last year's May Town Meeting. He requested an update on that issue, noting the positives to electronic voting.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes from February 3, 2025

Mr. Piekarski moved to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes from February 3, 2025. Seconded by Mr. MacAskill.

Vote: 3:0:1 in favor by roll call vote with Ms. Kavanagh abstained. Mr. Howell was not present for the vote.

Mr. Handler took New Business A. at this tine.

VIII. JOINT MEETING WITH SELECT BOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget deep dives with the following departments:

* Police Department
* Department of Public Works
* Information Technology
* Health Department
* Youth and Family Services
* Fire Department

Mr. Handler noted that due to an error in posting, this will not be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee. The Board will proceed as scheduled and asked the Police Department to present first.

Chief Considine referred to last March and the discussion about the Police Department's staffing crisis. He noted that they were down 12 officers and how many officers they have hired. He noted last year's overtime as being $134,000 in the red. Chief Considine noted that they currently have 4 vacancies in the Department and how many officers are on long term off duty status. They currently have gone from 12 vacancies to 8 with a possibility of filling 4 vacancies. He commented that after FY26, the Department will finally be as close to full strength as they have been in 9 years. Chief Considine noted the challenges and cost of having two officers out long term during the summer. The Department remained steady on Salaries & Wages and Expenses per instructions, with minor contractural increases. He noted that the Department also had an Enhancement of Services (EOS) request.

Mr. Powers noted that each of the five Departments scheduled have a request for EOS. He noted that all pertinent information is included in the packet. He noted that Administration had not added information for the Fire Department's Budget and it will be added to a future meeting.

Ms. Kavanagh asked Chief Considine how many bodies they will be down after the three he referred to go through the academy.

Chief Considine replied that he is unsure what will happen with the status of the Injured On Duties (IODs)

Mr. Handler asked if Chief Considine considers injured officers in full staffing.

Chief Considine replied that he does and explained why.

Mr. Howell commented that with everyone who is requesting an EOS, it's a two parter. The first is having a short discussion on what the impact is of the enhancement. The second part the Chief cannot answer because the Select Board, as part of their Goals and Objectives, have to make sure that any EOS comes with a corresponding offset. It is supposed to be revenue neutral. He would like to hear what it is the EOS entails and why it is that the Department needs it.

Mr. Piekarski asked what training academies Chief Considine has at his disposal.

Chief Considine replied that Falmouth is a new one and only running once a year. There is also the Plymouth Academy and they run twice a year. The Randolph Academy is a difficult commute for the recruit.

Mr. Piekarski asked if the long term IODs are compensated through the Town's Budget or insurance coverage.

Chief Considine replied that it is all through the Police Department's Budget. They work through the insurance company to manage it but financially it comes down to the Police Department.

Mr. Piekarski asked if there was reimbursement from the insurance company to the Town.

Mr. Powers will followup on that.

Mr. Handler asked for the Chief's EOS request.

Chief Considine noted that he could not find the money in the Police Department's Salaries & Wages for the EOS. He noted that the request would be to add a fifth Road Sergeant which would also require them to backfill with a patrol officer. He noted the impact on Salaries & Wages for both the promotion to Sergeant and hiring a new officer. Chief Considine explained the need for an additional Road Sergeant in detail noting that they presently use an Officer in Charge (OIC) to fill a shift and why he feels it is a difficult scenario. He also emphasized that the position of Sergeant is the most crucial role in the Department. Having a fifth Road Sergeant would mean there would only be two shifts, each week, not covered . He also noted that the Department is extremely young and there are only 3 qualified OICs. Chief Considine commented that he feels that the addition of a fifth Road Sergeant is crucial for everyone.

Mr. Howell commented that he understands the situation with the Sergeants. He asked how Chief Considine predicated the impact.

Chief Considine replied that regarding the impact on the Officer position, they usually look at step 2 hoping to get someone with experience. With a Sergeant, they start at step 1.

Mr. Howell commented that he asked because of the ancillary cost of benefits are not covered by Prop 2 1/2. He feels it's a risky proposition to budget for step 1 for the Sergeant without knowing for a fact that the Department can acquire a newbie for that position.

Chief Considine responded that those who take the Sergeant test are close to a top step. The difference between Officer and Sergeant is roughly $20,000.

Mr. Howell commented that the obligation to the Retirement Fund and insurance for health care is up to almost 40% in some organizations.

Ms. Kavanagh asked if the additional Officers would have an effect on the overtime. She commented that she understands the importance of the position.

Chief Considine replied that it would, if they were full strength.

Mr. MacAskill commented that he supports this position but they have to find the money.

Chief Considine commented that he appreciates the opportunity to present this to the Board.

Mr. Piekarski asked that Mr. Powers update the Board with an all-in number for the patrol officer. He asked Chief Considine if he could promote a Patrol Officer to Sergeant and not backfill.

Chief Considine replied that he could not. Losing a spot would be an issue in the Patrolman Union.

Mr. Piekarski asked, that aside, could that happen in the Chief's system regarding staffing.

Chief Considine replied that he would not be comfortable with that. He listed what items he included in his request.

Mr. Powers noted that he would be updating the Chief's memo which was originally in support of his Budget effort going back to December and was relying upon FY25 rates. They now have a better understanding of the Budget and other costs such as health insurance and he will factor those into the update as well. Mr. Powers stated that the minimum overall cost that was projected for EOS was just under half a million dollars.

Mr. Handler asked if the public had anything to say.

Peter Hughes of S. Harwich commented that the most compelling reason to consider this request is the youthfulness of the Officers. He commented that he feels they owe it to the public to put the safety of the public first but also the safety of the Officers. He commented that they have to find the money but he appreciates that Chief Considine brought this forward and that it is time to do it.

Chief Considine thanked his team for putting the Budget together with him, most importantly Kate Varley.

Mr. Powers stated that as the Board hears from the Department heads, they will hear that he and each of them has discussed the EOS. He stated that these are worthy discussions and he emphasized that there is validity in everything the Department heads are talking about and there are things that are coming from conversations he has had with them. It comes back to meeting the requirements of the Board

* Department of Public Works

Lincoln Hooper, DPW Director and Sean Libby, Facilities Manager were present. He noted that Kim Berube would not be joining them. Mr. Hooper asked to speak to the EOS first. His request is for a Deputy DPW Director. He gave a brief overview of the Department's employment history. He commented that the Department works because of the people, not because of the positions. He noted that the organization has 39 full time people, with 7 different Departments under the DPW umbrella. He noted that the Board has added functions to the DPW through the years, which he noted. He also noted that he its less than 2 years away from retirement and he feels it is important to consider this position. Mr. Hooper suggested funding this with the vacant Town Engineer position as well as a position he has not filled at the disposal area for a scale house operator. He noted that having succession planning in place is a priority for him this year.

Mr. Powers noted that Mr. Hooper's memo references a salary of $135,000 and asked if Mr. Hooper factored in benefits to those two positions.

Mr. Hooper replied that it doesn't include benefits. He looked into finding a Deputy DPW Director with (Professional Engineering)PE which is how he arrived at the $135,000.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that she liked the idea of the PE and the preparation for the future. She added that the bulk of the money is there.

Mr. Howell commented that he understands where Mr. Hooper is coming from . Picking up the Engineer is the plus side. He cautioned that the retirement is pegged to salaries. To be apples to apples the Board would have to look at what this position is, even if it picks off a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) from another spot and saves it, there are still some ancillary costs. He asked that Mr. Powers look into that and commented that the only one he could think of that would be static is the healthcare.

Mr. MacAskill commented that he appreciates that Mr. Hooper is thinking to the future and his retirement. He asked Mr. Powers if because the engineering position is in a union, not filling that position would fall into negotiations.

Mr. Powers replied yes, that's correct. The way he reads the proposal as presented, there are two bargaining exercises that may need to take place.

Mark Kelleher of West Harwich commented that what Mr. Hooper proposed is wonderful, he has included an engineer, Hooper's succession planning and it has it covered financially. He commented that it is a win/win for the Town. Mr. Kelleher noted that there is a $750,000 charge for architectural engineering drawings for the bulkhead at Saquatucket in the Capital Budget this year and $9 million two years from now to rebuild the bulkheads. He noted that, thanks to Mr. Libby and John Rendon, the engineer they brought in has said that the bulkhead is good for another ten years.

Mr. Hughes commented that he is in favor of the concept and asked, if they bring an engineer in, Mr. Hooper retires in two years and the Deputy Director moves up, would the position of Town Engineer still be available?

Mr. Hooper replied yes and commented that they have managed to get by without an engineer on staff however it slows their response to resident's requests for various things.

Mr. Hughes noted to the Town Administrator that in his Budget, under Town Engineer Expenses, there is an increase of $100,000.

Mr. Powers responded that it is for Municipal Solid Waste and the Town still has to pay that. He added that he is not agreeing that dollars match. There is more analysis that needs to be done and more bargaining that needs to be done. These are low ball numbers that will increase as they go forward on the Budget discussion.

Mr. Hughes noted that some people are looking for monies for structural analysis of buildings and he would hope that a Professional Licensed Engineer would be able to do the relatively simple structural engineering analyses and the Town would save that money elsewhere.

Mr. Handler asked if one person is capable of doing both jobs, DPW Director and Town Engineer.

Mr. Hooper replied that he was not thinking town wide or supporting community development, it was supporting DPW functions.

Mr. Powers cautioned that the scenarios that were presented to Mr. Hooper are hypothetical and there is no correlation that if this position of Deputy Director were to be created and if there were a retirement in the Director or Deputy Director level, the Town would do a search. He hopes to get to the request, what is the value and what is the cost.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that they would not have a professional land surveyor responsible for structural, that is a separate engineer. She noted that this can't be a catchall, structural is separate for PLS.

Mr. MacAskill commented that if the DPW Director retires and hopefully the Deputy Director has been groomed to take over, they would certainly consider going outside and hiring as they do in many positions.

Mr. Powers replied that he thinks it's dangerous in the hypothetical stage to say this is exactly how it's going to go. As Administrator he has said that whenever there is a vacancy, the first thing they do is look at a reorganization opportunity. He noted that they are talking about the FY26 Budget that can impact upon their operations next year and obviously there are implications for the future. Whenever there is an opportunity to analyze and reorganize, they always take that opportunity. He also noted that there are a number or positions involved that would require bargaining. Mr. Powers commented that the delta between the DPW's 5 line managers and the next step is extraordinary and there is no natural progression beyond the 5 managers. The chasm between the managers and the Director positions would be lessened by the presence of a DPW Deputy Director.

Mr. MacAskill commented regarding the Engineering line item that he believes they have crept up on that over the last 5 years, as a need for additional services. He asked if there is a delta between the salary range for the Town hiring a straight engineer to what the current table is and what the Town spends on engineering every year.

Mr. Powers replied that the total line item for Engineer is still made up of Salaries & Wages and Expenses. The total line has Expenses for Projects that are related to engineering, not just related to the engineering position itself. He commented that in this scenario, they wouldn't necessarily delete the Engineering Department and replace it with a Deputy DPW Director. There is still a need for engineering type projects and expenses.

Mr. MacAskill pointed out that there are monies available outside of the engineer salary as currently listed on the table for that hire. He believes there is money to be added to another salary to help, without eliminating the position. Mr. MacAskill voiced his objection to comments made by members of the Finance Committee, whether they are public or not. He noted that this was supposed to be a joint meeting, they failed to post and this is a presentation of the Boards. The time for public comment on the EOS should come, in his opinion, at the point when the Select Board is putting the Budge forward and after the Select Board makes their decision. Department heads shouldn't be grilled about numbers during a presentation.

Mr. Howell commented that he couldn't disagree more. Mr. Howell addressed Mr. Hooper and referred to the situation in the Department about union negotiations because he would have to create a new position. He noted that when you create a position, that is subject to a union and we have 8 unions, not just one monolithic union. He added that if a new position is created, his guess is that the union will start insisting that position get filled. It's not as easy to get out of it as it is to get into it. He commented that if they start pulling positions in to create another position, it is unknown what the union that is going to lose a position is going to say if the position is not filled later on. He cautioned that this is not an easy swap.

Mr. Powers noted that he agreed with the previous speaker. The process of bargaining is not simple.

Mr. Hooper noted that he has not set a date for his retirement. It could be in less than two years however he is still here because he enjoys his job, the people he works with and the challenges it presents. He commented that for stability, he hopes the Select Board can vet this out as best they can and come to a favorable conclusion. Regarding the DPW Budget, Mr. Hooper noted that they are down 2.1% and explained why.

Mr. Powers noted that the packet includes the Budget comparison for Department 421. He emphasized that 421 is the main line MUNIS reporting for what is considered to be Highway. There are other smaller Budgets that relate. The Board has the DPW Budget as well as a recap of the Transfer Station Analysis aka audit, that was done in FY24.

Mr. Hooper noted that he followed the directive for Salary & Wages and other items. The only new position is the EOS. He recapped the Expenses noting how much they were down.

Mr. Powers noted that the bottom line number for Salaries & Wages has been in the Draft Appendix, the 2% wage adjustment is not et incorporated into the specific MUNIS Reports.

Ms Kavanagh commented that what she continues to wonder about is offering the construction contractor services of getting rid of their debris and such because it cost the Town a lot of money. She also noted the increase in repair services due to working on a lot of different vehicles over time.

Mr. Hooper responded that every time a vehicle comes in, everything is underfunded and he gave examples and an explanation.

Mr. Howell agreed with the previous comment noting the increase in cost over the last five years.

Mr. Handler thanked Mr. Hooper and Mr. Libby for the presentation.

*Information Technology

Mr. Powers noted that of all the potential EOSs, the IT one does offer the greatest promise to date however the numbers still have to be analyzed. With this EOS, the Town could save, as it relates to other costs such as Barnstable County. As the Board does a deep dive for the new position, there could be savings within FY26 if they can pull back on one of the relationships they currently have.

Sarah Eaton, Director of IT explained the changes in working with Barnstable County over the last two years and the challenges she faces because of those changes. She suggested that by offsetting from Barnstable County and having a full time IT help desk person it would offset the cost and put the IT Department in a better position to handle all the technological needs.

Mr. MacAskill commented that he supports the concept and looks forward to the further vetting of the numbers.

Ms. Kavanagh agreed that it is an important position and Ms. Eaton needs consistency and help. She thanked Ms. Eaton for all the advances she brought in a short period of time.

Mr. Piekarski referred to the Barnstable County $96,000 and noted that if the new position is created, the person won't be in place July 1. He asked if Barnstable County is paid on a monthly or quarterly retainer.

Ms. Eaton replied that the Town has an Inter-Municipal Agreement with Barnstable County through the end of this fiscal year. The County is paid just over $8,000 monthly.

Mr. Piekarski commented that he would like to see what the total number looks like and where it stands. He thanked Ms. Eaton for the presentation.

Mr. Howell commented that if the Agreement ends on June 30th, Barnstable County will probably not ask for less next year. He is curious about what people are thinking about that because there are a lot more people than when the Agreement started.

Ms. Eaton replied that for the last Agreement, she and Mr. Powers sat down with the IT Director for Barnstable County. What Barnstable County will do is take the average of everybody's hourly salary at Barnstable County IT across the board and put that in for their pricing. She does not anticipate an increase.

Mr. Powers noted that the Inter-Municipal Agreement is specifically with the Barnstable IT Department. His Administration is still waiting to hear the overall County assessments. He anticipates that the assessment is going up so there could be an increase in the Barnstable County IT, however that potential increase further begs for the EOS.

Mark Kelleher asked if Ms. Eaton will have the same expertise hiring somebody off the street that Barnstable County offers. He asked where this person will be housed and in slow times if this employee will be able to do other duties.

Mr. Powers replied that he and Ms. Eaton expect to be able to attract qualified candidates. Depending on what happens at the County, theoretically, the street may be a parking lot and it might be related to other Municipal or Government organizations. He also stated that the IT Department is more than sufficient to handle another individual, if not two. Whether that individual could help other Departments is the bargaining piece. He and others that he noted would craft another job description if needed. The primary intent of this would be to add to staff for Information Technology. Mr. Powers noted that there are two presenters this evening, including Ms. Eaton, who fit the bill of the organizational structure of a single person Department, which doesn't like. The position they are contemplating would get rid of one of the five single person Departments.

Mr. Handler thanked Ms. Eaton for her presentation.

Mr. Piekarski asked Mr. Powers where the $96,000 is in the Munis Report.

Mr. Powers asked Ms. Eaton if the $96,000 is incorporated into the "support" line item.

Ms. Eaton replied yes, it is in the support line item.

*Health Department

Mr. Powers reiterated that when they hear from the Director of Health, there is a comprehensive, coherent argument for the establishment of a division. It came from the vision and guidance of the Director as well as contemplation with him. He noted that this request is for the Town of

Harwich to try to meet what they see present day and in the future, both a Health and Human Services division.

Carrie Schoener, Health Department Director spoke about the Public Needs Assessment and what information it includes. She emphasized the highlights and commented that she believes the Town of Harwich can address some of the needs by uniting Youth and Family Services Housing Advocate and the Health Department under the Health and Human Services Division. Ms. Schoener noted that she is making a two fold request. One is for the creation of the Health and Human Services Division the other is for the creation of the Health and Human Services Division leader. She noted the benefits to the Town for this Division and position. She also noted that the intent of the Health and Human Services Division leader would not be to take away responsibilities from existing Department heads or to create an extra level of supervision. The intent of this position is to provide support to the Departments, create a sense of unity and collaboration amongst these essential Health Departments while performing their own set of daily tasks, which she listed. She noted that the cost benefits will be to the residents, mostly in the form of health care savings and she gave examples. Ms. Schoener commented on the Council on Aging and their exemplary work and also noted that 64.7% of the population in Harwich is 64 years old or younger. She hopes to see a similar target of services tailored to meet the needs of the target population of working families and households earning below the median threshold, ensuring a healthy and productive community.

Mr. Powers noted that the request is for a Health and Human Services Division. Under the Charter, Chapter 5 Town Administration describes what a division is and he gave examples. It is a management right that exists in the Town of Harwich Charter. Everything here is bargainable and requires that conversation but it is a worthy endeavor to discuss creating a new division as is allowed.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that she likes the organization and thanked Ms. Schoener for the thoughtful approach.

Mr. Handler commented that in his opinion. mental health is one of the most overlooked and underserved aspects of traditional healthcare. He appreciates the strategizing to help the citizens here in Harwich. He thanked Ms. Schooner for her presentation.

Mr. Powers noted that the costs are expected to be minimum to start without further analysis.

*Youth and Family Services

Mr. Powers noted that Ms. Symington is one of the five single person Departments and Administration supports the concept of abolishing single person Departments and enhancing them wherever possible.

Ashley Symington, Director of Youth and Family Services gave a brief overview of her qualifications. She noted the services that the Department offers to Harwich residents at no cost to them. Ms. Symington listed the existing programs was well as new programs for this year. She noted that adding a clinician has costs and benefits. She noted a low ball amount of approximately $69,457 a year for a full time staff member noting that there will be a better candidate pool if they go full time as opposed to part time. Ms. Syminton listed the benefits to the Town and the residents by hiring a full time clinician. She emphasized the it will allow the Town to better meet the needs for mental health care in the community. She also explained the responsibilities of a school counselor and that there is overlap with the school counselors and community based counselors. She described her responsibilities as a community based counselor. Ms. Symington explained that there are changes in the pipeline for mental health care on Cape Cod that could potentially tax the services that Harwich already has. She noted the Cape's provider shortage and that things often become crisis level before people are able to receive services. She also noted facilities in the area that will be closing and that there are no inpatient psychiatric beds available on Cape Cod for juveniles and the effects of that on residents. She emphasized that this position is needed now because the needs assessment is showing that this is what the Harwich community is in need of. They are consistently reporting across multiple types of needs assessments that there is a greater need for mental health care than is currently provided.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that it was an amazing presentation, Ms. Symington knows the facts and is trying to plan ahead and trying to help the youth which is incredibly important. She commented that the kids are struggling mentally so badly across the board. She expressed frustration that at the State level, they continue to abandon the Cape in terms of mental health, in terms of regular health care, whether it's children, adults or elderly. Ms. Kavanagh commented that she likes where this is going. It costs money but however they can figure out a way, it will be helping the members of the community that need it most. She noted that it also falls back to the discussion about creating a division and sharing resources. She commented that she likes all of this because it is truly trying to help Harwich's community on a daily basis and it's not just school related. She added that everyone across the Cape needs to continue to pressure our Representative and Senators to do more for us here because we are all lacking, Ms. Symington can't and nobody can plug that hole.

Mr. Howell commented that the original intent of the Department and the position was to create an environment of wellness, not to be dealing with problems. He thinks everybody needs to focus on the fact that you're late to the game if you're dealing with addiction, depression or other issues that might have been preventable. Mr. Howell noted that going outside of the classroom is a real help. He asked Ms. Symington if she deals physically at the Middle School in Chatham.

Ms. Symington replied that she has gone to Monomoy Middle School for a number of things including school sponsored events. She has been in several of their Health classes and she listed other programs and events she has run both in and outside of school.

Mr. Howell commented that he had someone who went through the exercise with the Council on Aging and Girl Power. All these things are healthy and mentoring thoughts. He commented that he was sure Ms. Symington didn't separate the Harwich and Chatham kids. It has morphed into that because the school system has changed. He thinks the time is right to have a conversation with Chatham about underwriting part of this department because they benefit from it. He agreed with Ms. Symington that there are no pediatric or adolescent psychiatrists on Cape. It is daunting and creates bigger problems that don't need to happen because it takes a long time to unpack all that. He stated that the practical question he has is, isn't there a time for a discussion with Chatham on this because practically speaking, its too late to start dealing with these kids when they're in High School. He commented that it used to be appropriate to start talking to 7th and 8th graders but particularly with drug interdiction, he is thinking the upper level of Elementary School is where you need to start now. Mr. Howell commented that especially with social media and phones, there are kids that couldn't get information that got them into trouble, they find it readily now when their parents aren't home. He commented that they have to be mindful of where the game is in terms of where Ms. Symington's hours are deployed.

Mr. Handler commented that his understanding is that Ms. Symington wants to create space for more one on one counseling sessions. He likes that she used the term Insurance blind. He asked if there is something that prevents a Municipality from allowing somebody like Ms. Symington to enter into third party reimbursements and discussions with the major providers and not charge a copay.

Ms. Symington replied that if somebody has a copay, that typically is non-negotiable with insurance companies. That is part of the insured person's contract with the insurance company. Creating programming or something that would subsidize that is something she could look into.

Mr. Handler asked if Ms. Symington got referrals from Monomoy on a consistent basis and she replied yes. He asked if Chatham has someone in the same role and Ms. Symington.

Ms. Symington replied that Chatham is working on it. Currently, individual counseling and the coaching services are available to Harwich residents only. When she is contacted by somebody outside of Harwich for that particular service, she acts as a referral source and provides information on how to access somebody and connect them with somebody. For group counseling, it is impossible to say that it is only for Harwich residents with a few exceptions which she noted. She noted the two positions that Chatham created, they have hired for one position and the other has been open since it was posted.

Mr. Handler thanked Ms. Symington for her time and presentation.

Mr. Powers noted for the Board that that was the conclusion of the discussion on EOSs. It did not conclude the discussion on Budgets. The Board was looking to do a deep dive into the three big Budgets. The next step would be the Fire Department however the material was not included in the packet. He apologized to the Chief and asked that he and the Deputy speak generally to what is published in the Appendix B.

*Fire Department

Chief LeBlanc and Deputy Chief Thornton were present. Chief LeBlanc noted that the Fire Department Budget represents what the Budget instructions were, which is their Budget from FY25 with any step raises or any contractural raises that were required and a level service fund. The Department is anticipating five retirements beginning July 1st. He noted that the Assistant to the Fire Chief is retiring and noted her responsibilities. He explained why her position will be posted this week and filled by April 1st noting that he believes they can replace it in this year's Budget. Because the Department had budgeted for several of the retirements in this year, they are going to try and hire 3 of the firefighters as early as June 1st. Chief LeBlanc noted that they have tried to manage the overtime as best they can. He noted that his records show that this year they are at 73% of the year and 60% of the overtime. They are running a little in the plus considering they currently have 5 people out. Chief LeBlanc commented that they have worked on station coverage and noted the statistics of the coverage. He sees that shifting and will be talking about adding staff, not in the next few years but as part of the conversation going forward. Chief Leblanc noted that they have 2 big items on Capital which he explained in detail. He explained the challenges of getting ambulances and why they are asking for two at this Town Meeting.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that it's important to remind the public how long it takes the Department to get equipment and she appreciates how difficult it is to lose staff.

Mr. Howell agreed that it is important for the Fire Department to tell the story because the public needs to understand that they are dealing with twin problems. He noted the population and the big trajectory, especially in East Harwich over the years as number one. Also the trajectory of older citizens has been getting much bigger. He thinks the over 60 is at least 50% of the population and it's more like 40,000-45,000 people here in the summer time. He also noted Fontaine. With all of that it is a difficult thing to operate. Harwich has an outstanding Fire Department and both sides of that building are terrific people. He appreciates that they are trying to make do with what they have and he understands the lag time.

Mr. Piekarski referred to what Chief LeBlanc brought up regarding bringing on some people in this fiscal year to get prepared for next fiscal year. He asked Chief LeBlanc how he would manage that, assuming that the people coming on would be in the Salary & Wage line.

Chief Leblanc explained what they did with one of the long term vacancies by hiring someone who could eventually be full time but could also relieve some of the overtime. He noted that they have used a lot of the Budget to this point but people have also used a lot of their time which also relieves the overtime budget. That money will be available to the Department. He explained how it could potentially take pressure off next year's Budget.

Mr. Piekarski asked if Chief Lelanc has had any updates from other Departments regarding apparatus.

Chief LeBlanc replied that it is getting worse, not better. There were some positive changes that may shorten the lead time for the ambulances from three years to two.

Mark Kelleher asked 3 questions. In 2023 the Fire Department was running close to 5,000 runs. He asked how the trend was, moving forward to anticipate future needs. He also noted that last year there were 413 runs out of Fontaine and about 27% were Harwich which means a fair amount of ambulance runs are being done for people other than Harwich. He also noted that 16% were going to Chatham which is something to think about in negotiations with Chatham. He asked about ambulance reimbursements, how much does the Department get from Medicare and with all that's going on Budget wise, has the Department anticipated any reductions in the reimbursements from Medicare?

Chief LeBlanc replied that the trend of runs typically trends up but he does not anticipate getting significantly busier than they already are. The negotiations with Chatham regarding Fontaine is not something he has any expertise on. He will look into the Medicare. He doesn't know if they will see a change in ambulance billing or in what is covered.

Mr. Howell commented that as he understood it, there is no direct correlation between either Medicare or insurance reimbursements in the Fire Department's Budget. The Department doesn't get the money, the Town's General Receipts, the General Fund gets that money. It is not that the Fire Department is getting rich off calls because they're getting money for insurance.

Chief LeBlanc stated that the Fire Department's Budget is not dependent on it and while he understands it goes to the greater good of the Town's Operating Budget, it is never a deciding factor on whether they will transport somebody or what their level of service will be maintained at.

Mr. Howell stated that what he was driving at for the public is, it is not a Revolving Fund and the Fire Department does put effort out and get money back from the insurance companies.

Mr. Handler thanked Chief LeBlanc and Deputy Chief Thornton for the presentation.

IX. COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

A. Voter Information Committee – Chair Tricia Murray

Tricia Murray, Chair of the Voter Information Committee was joined by Amy Jalbert and Pauline Teas. She noted that she had submitted their report and she offered to give a brief overview or answer questions.

Mr. Handler suggested a brief overview.

Ms. Murray noted the Voter Information Committee's Charge and the 2024 highlights demonstrating their mission. She noted what they will be doing in 2025 to continue to promote voter participation. She thanked various people for their assistance and invited the public to join the Committee's meetings noting when and where they meet.

All Board members thanked Ms. Murray for her report and the work the Committee is doing.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion on Elected Charter Commission:

1. Notice that Petition to Establish Elected Charter Commission is sufficient
2. Discussion and possible vote to place the Charter Commission Office and Ballot Question on the May 20, 2025 Annual Town Election Ballot
3. Overview of Charter Commission process

Emily Mitchell, Town Clerk noted that the Elected Charter Commission reviews and recommends amendments to the Town's Charter. She described the requirements of the Law, noting that to satisfy the 15% threshold, the petitioners had to gather signatures from 1,818 registered Harwich voters. The Clerk was able to certify 1,869 valid signatures. Ms. Mitchell stated that she is notifying the Board, as the statute requires her to give formal notice that the petitioners have satisfied the requirement. Ms. Mitchell noted that the statute calls for the Select Board to place, within 30 days of her Notice, both the Office of Charter Commission and a ballot question about establishing a Charter Commission on the next regular Town Election. That is the May 30, 2025 Town Election. She has provided the Board with sample motions and sample language, if the Board would like to act at this time.

Mr. Howell asked, for the public, what would happen if the Board does not act within 30 days.

Ms. Mitchell replied that the statute says that the Board shall place it. If the Board does not place the question within 30 days, it will appear on the ballot anyway.

Mr. Handler asked the Board members if this is something they would like to move on tonight or wait. He would like to move this forward tonight.

Mr. Piekarski moved to place the Office of Charter Commission with 9 members to be elected on the May 20, 2025 Annual Town Election Ballot. Seconded by Mr. Howell.

Vote: 5:0 in favor by roll call vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Piekarski moved to place the following ballot question on the May 2025 Annual Town Election Ballot: Shall the Commission be elected to revise the Charter of the Town of Harwich? Yes or No Seconded by Mr. Howell.

Vote: 5:0 in favor by roll call vote. Motion carried.

Ms. Mitchell noted that voters should expect to see the Office that the Select Board just placed, on the ballot. She described the process for the Office after the election.

B. Vote to approve a temporary closure from February 2, 2025 to March 14, 2025 for BLM Restaurant Group, Inc. d/b/a The Lanyard, 429 Route 28

Mr. Handler noted that there is a letter in the packet. The applicant made an error and did not notify the Board prior to closing.

Matt Kelley, one of the owners of the Lanyard was present. He noted that there was a change in ownership and it was an oversight, certainly not intentional. He commented that they are essentially asking for forgiveness. Their plan is to open in a couple of weeks and never have something like this happen again.

Mr. MacAskill commented that he appreciates the paperwork and the apology. Mistakes do happen and it's refreshing to see the establishment offer their apology in person.

All members commented that they appreciate the establishment coming in and apologizing in person.

Mr. Piekarski moved to approve a temporary closure from February 2, 2025 to March 14, 2025 for BLM Restaurant Group, Inc. d/b/a The Lanyard, 429 Route 28 for the purpose of repainting, floors and some cosmetic work. Seconded by Mr. Howell.

Vote: 5:0 in favor by roll call vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Powers requested taking Old Business B out of order noting that Amy Usowski, Conservation Agent is waiting remotely.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Preliminary discussion on next steps for the agreement with Davenport Realty for 62 Route 28; Votes may be taken

Mr. Howell noted that they had a Town Meeting which pondered what the DCPC for the area was. There were several annunciated purposes in that. He was involved with the folks who wanted to set it up and it was always based on economic development and saving the historic character of that entire swath. He continued that they went in front of Town Meeting and there was permission granted for them to enter into an agreement but it was extremely complicated. He emphasized the they have no agreement with the church. Their agreement is a successor agreement, they are going to own it for about a half hour while papers are being traded at the registry of deeds. The real Purchase & Sale Agreement with Davenport is with the church and subsequently they were going to help with lot lines in order to be able to create frontage and size of lots, to able to do certain things on that lot. He stated that he voted for it but pondering what the purpose of eminent domain is which is, a public purpose has to be enunciated, we are no longer in the realm of affordable housing. They were never there, they never actually promised that although the original RFP came out with that. He stated that it was a mistake, it should have never been there, it wasn't what they were trying to do. They were trying to save the building, at least the facade of the building or the envelope of the building. He noted that at this point in time, when we're talking about the person who wants something from the Board which would be exercising their eminent domain authority, he is out. He commented that he cannot see a public purpose if you're going to create a hole in the ground. That whole thing is arouse at this point because they're not preserving anything. They are giving a real estate opportunity to somebody by expunging the lot lines to create a clean sheet of paper. He understands that Mr. Carey had an interest in the property. Mr. Howell commented that it is not with the Board, it can't be with the Board because the church has an agreement. He is unsure if it can be aggregated or not. He had asked legal counsel and he will stick by it because he was originally on the wrong end but he was the first one to start objecting to it. He commented that he sees nothing different about this. You have to be willing to change your mind as the circumstances develop. He stated that he knows it is inconsistent with what he originally said but he is totally out on this. He would oppose anything that allows that building to be leveled because he thinks the engineering report is nonsense. He commented that it was clearly not thought out well. You can't recreate history, they are either saving it or not saving it. He stated that at this point they are not saving it and he would love for the Board to take the opportunity to get an off ramp on this legally to see what it would take to unpack this whole thing with Davenport because the Agreement is not with the church. He noted that they could still file for the demolition but he would oppose that himself. He added that the citizens of this town have a right to oppose that because its essentially creating Epcot, it's a nice recreation of what used to be. It isn't what it used to be anymore. He commented that the had an epiphany that they had gone as far as they could possibly go with this legally and he is off the wagon. He will oppose this in the future if the Board can't get to a vote.

Mr. Piekarski commented that it sounds as if Mr. Howell is interested in bringing counsel into this conversation and he has no problem with that.

Mr. MacAskill commented that he is unsure what he can say because a lot of this was done in Executive Session. He did state that they have a legal binding document with Davenport Company and he has said from the beginning, the Town doesn't own this building. The Town is taking, not for a public purpose but for many public purposes. He noted that Mr. Howell is correct, the Board did not discuss affordable housing because that was rejected by Davenport Company from the beginning and the terms workforce housing and rents being based on the square footage of the units that were made. He commented that if the legal team can figure out a way out of this with no cost to the Town, then if folks want to save this then great. He hopes everyone understands that they are years away from a new deal and without the public purpose, it'll be interesting to see who actually steps up and if they do it without the Town's help. Mr. MacAskill stated that this building was for sale for years with no interest, until somebody got it and that it might be torn down. Mr. MacAskill commented that his understanding is that the owners have already gone for a demo permit and they can demo it anyway. The Select Board wasn't part of that. He commented that it is interesting how the conversation has changed. The Board talked to Town Meeting about preserving historic facade not about preserving the building and it was always an option that it might be torn down. Mr. MacAskill commented that it is nice to see people step up now and he will follow the directions of Town Counsel on what the liability to the Town would be because the Select Board voted to enter into this agreement.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that she is happy to have legal get involved, She noted that she is the one who voted against it and did it as a non-responsive bid to the RFP and she stands by that.

Duncan Berry of West Harwich invited everybody to consider the reality that the Town voted to preserve the building. Legal Counsel added a "public use" to facilitate the taking. He stated that when the preservation and public use are in conflict, the addition of the public use is nullified. The preservation is what was contracted for. Mr. Berry stated that the public use was actually the preservation. He commented that he can't imagine that they would have to explain that to an attorney versed in Civil and Municipal matters, this is something that is of intrinsic inestimable value. He commented that whether it adds to a SHI list entry on a spreadsheet or not is irrelevant. The skyline, the tone and the quality of life in the Town would be destroyed by removing this. Mr. Berry stated that you cannot have two mutually exclusive things, one of which the public voted for and one which was added on later. If they are self negating, it scotches the whole thing.

Mr. Howell noted that his ask is to be on the Agenda. He would like to know what the Select Board's exposure is but he doesn't think it is great at this point because they were trading eminent domain for joining lots that nobody can prove whether they do or don't belong to the primary lot. He commented that the only people the Board should be talking to are legal counsel, to see how they can unpack and unwind this thing. He noted that he is not trying to do anything to hurt the Town but he thinks allowing this to go much further, would hurt the Town.

Mr. MacAskill stated for the record and to a previous speaker and not Select Board member Howell, Duncan Berry was very involved in the conversations of this for the past year. Mr. Berry had spoken with and met with Davenport Company to measure molding and look at windows to look into where they could be sent to be preserved and put back in. Mr. MacAskill commented that Mr. Berry recognized the it might not be able to be saved. Other people have now said it might be able to be saved. Mr. MacAskill stated for the record, this conversation went on for a year and the previous speaker was involved in that. The public purpose again, what the Board talked about, was preserving the facade of the building. For the paper's purposes and for the public's purposes, it's not the simple.

Mr. Berry noted that his conversations with Davenport had to do with the preservation and restoration to a status quo anti when the removing of the cladding and the sheathing, that was put on prior to 1990. The desire was to move something backward in time with the intact fabric of the surface. He commented that you can't demolish something and then say that it qualifies for preservation. He commented that this is not a matter of something that is complicated. It is as single as A does not equal not A. Mr. Barry noted that you can't have something new that is going to have a historic preservation thing put on it. If they put up a new church, it would not be called the West Harwich Baptist Church. He argued that the reason he went into those discussions with Davenport was because the plausibility of a demolition was revealed only when looking at the interior. He argued and he would argue that any sensible structural engineer would say the same thing that these thin, pressed tin panels collapsing from the weight of rain from trusses, does not represent structural damage to the building that would trigger the need for demolition. He noted that this is an interior shell, not an interior structure problem. He commented that his interest and discussions were in good faith. He added that those engineering reports didn't go into the building, there is no structural analysis of anything. He argued that anytime the Town goes into something where a structural analysis or engineering report are required, in this town, for every town, for every owner of a home, none of that kind of analysis has anything to do with this. He commented that this was a kind of empirical, well I think I'm going to say that this isn't going to stand. He stated that it is absolutely anti-scientific.

Matt Sutphin gave documents to Mr. Handler that were not related to the Church. He then commented that, listening to Paul Doane at the Historic Commission meeting, that he approached Dewitt Davenport about gaining entry to the church so an engineer could go in and access the church. Mr. Davenport does not want anybody to go into the church and will not give permission to anybody to go into the church to establish the structural viability of the church. Mr. Sutphin commented that clearly that speaks to a guy who just wants to tear something down. He added that he does not think in conscience, people who manage the Town, would let somebody push the Town around that way. Mr. Sutphin commented that he is glad to think that the Select Board will go to the end of the road with their attorneys and find a way to solve what is an extremely selfish posture on the part of Davenport.

Mr. Howell asked if there was a representative from the church at this meeting. He asked someone in the audience if papers had passed between them and Mr. Davenport.

Mr. Handler asked that they go to the microphone.

Jonathan Cobb, Pastor of First Baptist Church of West Harwich replied that yes, they are under contract however he wanted to limit what he said so as not to incur any legal ramifications. He spoke for people in the neighborhood, commenting that he thinks it would be in the Town's best interest to preserve the present building with the clock tower, the stained glass windows and the edifice. He noted that the ceiling collapsed a few years ago but that was caused by a leak in the roof.

Mr. Howell commented that the Church had a Purchase & Sale Agreement that has been executed but not actually been consummated as a sale at the Registry of Deeds so the title is still with the Church. He asked if that is correct.

Mr. Cobb replied that Attorney Michael Princi is his attorney.

Mr. Howell inserted that, having heard what Mr. Cobb has heard tonight, he was wondering where Mr. Davenport comes off denying access to something that he doesn't own.

Mr. Cobb replied that he has the key to the building and the Church still owns that building. He stated that if someone wanted access, they can come directly to him and he will work with the Town for whatever needs to be done.

Mr. Howell commented that he appreciates that. He requested that this be on an Agenda with some legal counsel. He would also like to know, in an analysis of this, where Mr. Davenport comes off not allowing anybody to look into something that is germane to his request since he doesn't own it.

Mr. Handler noted that the temperature of the Board is clearly to get legal counsel involved and he will start that process tomorrow and get it on an Agenda forthwith.

B. Update on Walther Road stairs

Mr. Handler noted that regarding the Walther Road stairs, they have the Town's legal opinion and Conservation's opinion. He opened the discussion to the Board.

Mr. Piekarski noted that clearly that have the opinions and he said again that he disagrees with both of their opinions. However, it is what it is.

Mr. MacAskill also commented that he disagrees with both opinions. He also noted that the Board never got to the cost of replacement to the Department and where that money would come from.

Ms. Kavanagh commented that she does not disagree with the attorney's opinion. She added that based on the feedback they got originally from Matt Sutphin, she thought he was saying he was in favor of it because he had history of it. Her understanding is that the stairs are attached to the cabana.

Mr. Sutphin commented that they were. He lives next door and noted that his family owned the Jenkins property at one time. He explained that the stairs were connected to the cabana and how and why the Fire Department had the opportunity to burn it down. The stairs were not burned down. Mr. Sutphin noted in his letter that Josephine Jenkins wanted to contribute to the last wilderness on the shore of Nantucket Sound and he suggested they let her. He noted that he had written a letter to the Board in 2011 because new purchasers on Davis Lane wanted to wall off their turf and keep people off their beaches. The beaches were divided up and a Town sign was posted forbidding access to the beach from Bay View Road with instructions to use Merkel Beach to access Nantucket Sound which he commented, wasn't right. He had asked for the Board to think of the Walther Road property with Josephine Jenkins' intention, her money, her gift, accepted By this Town and Bay View Road. Mr. Sutphin noted that another family gave the Town a 6 foot right of way so anyone could go down to the beach. The Town acknowledged that gift, took down the first sign and put up a sign saying to stay on the 6 feet to go to the water. He stated that the Board has precedent for honoring somebody who gifted the Town. He asked the Select Board to continue to honor somebody who gave a gift to the Town. It is clear that all Ms. Jenkins wanted was a bike rack and open space to be enjoyed by the Town, not a public/private relationship between the people on Walther Road who don't enjoy beach frontage and the Town. He suggested the if the Board is ready to make a revisionist change like that, residents can't count on anything. He asked that the Board honor the intention, he would expect it of his own gift.

Ms. Kavanagh noted that the Conservation Commission, which is a regulatory Board, voted not to put the stairs back. What she had said when they were originally talking about this was that if this Board was talking about putting stairs back, they need to be mindful of Conservation and also those stairs would have to be removable or have some way to protect that bank. She noted that Conservation's Charge is to protect the bank and the Select Board's Charge is to protect the property that was gifted to the Town. She commented that she feels counsel has made the right determination.

Richard Waystack of Harwich participated remotely. He commented on the area of Walther Road Beach and Neil Road Beach, noting that the next property over is having a huge seawall put in. Currently you can see the overage of the sand on Walther Road Beach and Neil Road Beach. He also noted that those stairs have been replaced since the cabana was taken away. He urged the Board to be careful because of the liability that the Town will face. Without having stairs there, people are going to use that walkway to go down to the beach. He commented that there is a drop off and someone is going to get hurt. There is inherent liability for the Town if nothing is done there. He commented that he disagrees with both counsel and after seeing the project that's being done on the next property, he does not see why a small set of stairs could not be put there. He urged Board members to take a look at what is happening right now on these beaches before they make a decision.

Ms. Usowski noted that the Conservation Commission did consider the Select Board's opinion and also counsel's legal opinion on the stairs and, at a public meeting, decided to agree with Counsel based on the language on the deed and not on its wetland merits. Had they considered the wetland merits, it would have had to have gone before the Conservation Commission as a formal filing had the Commission and the owner decided to pursue reconstructing stairs there. She commented that she wants folks to know that Conservation is not trying to disregard the property. There is activity happening near by and she had gone to the property because there was concern about the condition of the beach. She had a conversation with the contractor for 19 Walther Road who was building the seawall. She noted that there was material on the beach to stage the equipment, the material is gone. Suitable material has been placed on 23 Walther Road, the Town property where there has been severe erosion. The material from that property was gifted to the Town and accepted by the Conservation Commission at a meeting. The Commission is trying to fill the gap where there has been erosion and they voted to accept compatible material from 29 Walther Road where a house is being rebuilt. She noted that they don't want to neglect this property. She noted that if this closes the discussion of whether or not the Town is considering applying for stairs, the Conservation Commission will discuss how to get appropriate signage, symbolic fencing to decrease Town liability down that banking and have a discussion with the Select Board as well.

Mr. Piekarski commented on Counsel's opinion and read paragraph 2. although the deed could be construed to include stairs, her better interpretation is that it doesn't. He commented that it is an arbitrary decision by counsel. He stated that he is not convinced that the deed states that stairs couldn't be there.

Mr. Handler noted the other factors, and cost of the new stairs, regulatory with Conservation. He doesn't feel that he is ready to make a decision on this tonight. If someone wants to put a motion on the table, they could entertain it. He would like to speak with Ms. Usowski more and bring it back. All Board members agreed to bring it back.

XII. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Powers announced a contract related to the boat engine for the Harbormaster's primary patrol boat, noting details. The purchase was on the Capital Plan for FY 26 and he will make the updates because the purchase occurred in FY25 with funds still available to the Harbormaster. Mr. Powers noted that the Land of Low Value Auction is scheduled for Thursday, March 11th. More information will be available at the Select Board's meeting on February 24th. Mr. Powers noted that the Select Board has invited, to their meeting on the 24th, Administration, and the citizens who have presented 9 Citizen Petition Articles. The Board has been provided the language and Counsel will provide interpretation of what they believe the net effect of each Petitioned Articles as well as information from the petitioners themselves. He also noted what presentations will be before the Board on that date. Next week the Board will also have the Draft Warrant to date. Mr. Powers listed what is included in the Draft Warrant and what has not yet been drafted. He also noted that the Select Board has until the fourth Tuesday in February which is next Tuesday, to transmit to the Finance Committee the FY26 Budget. The Finance Committee has given notice that their Public Hearing on the Budget will occur next Thursday, February 27th.

XIII. SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Mr. Piekarski requested that the Q2-24 and Q2-25 be included in next week's discussion. He added that hopefully that can be updated for Q3 also.

Mr. Powers replied that tomorrow is his weekly meeting with the Finance Director, these topics are on the Agenda and the Board will have more information tomorrow.

XIV. CORRESPONDENCE

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Piekarski moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Howell.

Vote: 5:0 in favor by roll call vote. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judi Moldstad
Board Secretary