

**MINUTES
SELECT BOARD
HARWICH TOWN HALL
732 MAIN STREET, HARWICH MA
MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 2025
5:30 P.M. EXECUTIVE SESSION
6:00 P.M. - REGULAR MEETING**

RELEASED

APPROVED

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING: Chair Donald Howell, Vice Chair Peter Piekarski, Clerk Mark Kelleher, Member Jeffrey Handler & Member Anita Doucette

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Acting Town Administrator Meggan Eldredge

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Howell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Kelleher moved that the Select Board enter into Executive Session to discuss the items as outlined below, 2nd by Mr. Piekarski The vote was 5-0-0 with Mr. Howell, Mr. Handler, Mr. Piekarski, Mr. Kelleher & Ms. Doucette all voting aye by roll call

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Pursuant to MGL c.30A, §21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for all town unions and non-union personnel and or contract negotiations with non-union personnel and the Chair has determined that open session would have a detrimental effect on the town's bargaining position
- B. Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel: Acting Town Administrator; Votes may be taken
- C. Pursuant to MGL c. 30A §21(a)(7) to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements, the Open Meeting Law, MGL c. 30A §§ 22(f), (g) to review, approve and or discuss the possible release of executive session meeting minutes dated July 21, 2025 & July 28, 2025

Mr. Howell stated that the board did not complete all elements of Executive Session and that they would likely be returning to that session at the end of open session. The board did take action on the July 28th minutes, approving them with heavy redactions due to ongoing contract negotiations. The board voted to release a portion of those minutes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Howell invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

STAFF COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Mr. Howell thanked Mr. Kelleher who invested a lot of time and effort in seeing that the Non-Resident Taxpayer meeting happened. He spent a lot of time, and any appreciation should be aimed at him.

Brooks Free Library Director Ginny Hewitt was present and reviewed upcoming August events at the library. The children's summer reading program will continue up until Labor Day and people can still sign up. Staff is able to assist if there are any children who might be hesitant readers. There are 33 different programs for children that will run between now and Labor Day. All events are on the website calendar. Popular programs require sign up which will open 2 weeks prior to the events. Some of the bigger events being offered are funded by the Friends of Brooks Free Library. Sign up for events can be done at brooksfreelibrary.org

Community Center Director Carolyn Carey was present and said that they have events for not just younger people, but adults as well. Ms. Carey reviewed the upcoming programs and said that all programs are outlined in the Community Center newsletter. She personally invited those who have not been to the Community Center to come in for a tour and see what the building has to offer.

WEEKLY BRIEFING

Ms. Eldredge gave the two and three week look ahead, highlighting the areas of work. Information is available on the Town website. Ms. Eldredge reported that they are working on the final design plans for the Great Sand Lakes sewer design. More information will be available on the website including a list of addresses that will be impacted and contact information for any questions.

Also presented in the packet is an updated project list. A couple of projects have been completed and others have been moved into the contract awarded stage. Brooks Academy Museum is on track, and we will have submissions for designers set for August 20th. If anyone has any questions about the project list, a color-coded copy has been provided in the packet.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Howell reviewed the existing public comment policy.

No public comment was heard.

NON-RESIDENT TAXPAYERS MEETING PRESENTATIONS

1. Fire

Fire Chief Dave LeBlanc was present and appreciated the opportunity to speak tonight. Harwich Fire Department has 41 fulltime personnel. The administration sector includes himself, Deputy Chief, Fire Prevention Officer, EMS Officer and a fulltime Executive Assistant to the Fire Chief.

Chief LeBlanc reviewed the staffing levels and what happens with staffing when an ambulance leaves the station and returns, which is generally 2 hours. Staffing is supplemented with overtime in these situations. Staff is a challenge for not only Harwich, but with departments around them and will become a greater challenge because of housing. The department saw a lot of retirements this year as well as promotions throughout the department. What the Fire Department really needs are paramedics, which are in short supply. The department remains thankful to the taxpayers for their support of buildings and apparatuses. Harwich has a great building maintenance program through the DPW, who also maintains the fleet. In 2024, the Fire Department did 5000 runs, with 2600 of them being EMS transports to the hospital. The total was about 3700 medical calls, 78 fires, 319 fire prevention inspections and 143 permits issued, all of which create revenue that goes back into the general fund for the town. Chief LeBlanc said that for those who aren't here year-round, but have an alarm system in their house, there is a town bylaw that requires these homes to have a lockbox. He asked those who don't have a lockbox and need one, to visit the Fire Department website to see how to get one and for those that have a lockbox in place, to please make sure that the keys in the lockbox are correct.

2. Police

Police Chief Kevin Considine was present and said that he started in Harwich in 1996 as a summer police officer. He was made Police Chief last year and was the first in house Police Chief in 24 years. It is very important for him as Police Chief to not only know the department, but to know the community and what goes on year-round. Policing on Cape Cod is a challenge unlike anywhere else in the Commonwealth. The department has 35 total officers as well as a civilian animal control officer, 2 civilian staff and 5 special officers. Chief Considine said that Harwich no longer has summer officers because of liability as well as police officer reform regulations in the state. While the department continues to have some vacancies, Chief Considine was proud to report that 2 of the 4 vacant positions will be going to the police academy in September, which is a 22-week program. This will leave the department with 2 open positions that will be filled shortly. In the police field, it is a struggle to fill the positions, and he encourages anyone that knows anyone to apply. There were 16,222 calls for service in the calendar year of 2024. Harwich is pretty much in the middle of the number of calls with respect to the 15 cape towns. There has been a total of 2,875 calls so far this summer, which has been busy. The department continues to have a great replacement program for police cruisers as well as the technology and equipment in the cruisers. In the next few years, they will be looking to upgrade the radio and computers in dispatch. The department will also be working to upgrade their computer system to a cloud-based system. Quality of life issues remain the main calls that are received. They are speeding complaints, traffic issues, issues in the Harwich Port district and issues on beaches at night. Since COVID, the department has seen an increase in activity at beaches in the port area, which translates to neighborhood quality of life issues. Public safety departments have had a solid plan in place for the last 3 years regarding the July 4th holiday. Chief Considine said that his officers are committed and connected to the community and that no one should ever be ashamed to call the police or fire departments. Finally, Chief Considine reported that the citizens police academy will be returning in the fall and will run from September to November on Thursday nights for 3 hours running for 10 weeks. Applications for the program will be released near the end of August.

Mr. Howell said that Harwich has between 33-34 square miles of property and about 11,500 residents that have stated Harwich as their primary home. In the summer, the population goes over 40,000. Police and Fire provide coverage for the town 24 hours a day. The town has been extremely successful in revitalizing Harwich Port, but with that success also comes some challenges.

A resident from Park Street was present and commented that she has called the Police Department about speeding on that road. She noted that there is one speed limit sign at Brooks Park and no others all the way down Oak Street past the golf course. She cannot see how many times people have come close to being hit and feels that it doesn't seem like anyone is doing anything. If you walk on the other side of town, there are 2 signs in the crosswalks that reference files. This resident feels that people use Park Street to cut over from Pleasant Lake Avenue. She also reported that large trucks use their Jake breaks that are so loud. Mr. Howell responded that he has had the conversation with Chief Considine regarding the absence of speed signs. As soon as the summer is over, they will be doing a ride along to assess the situation. Chief Considine added that Harwich in general is thriving, and he has never seen so much traffic as he has this year. He does want the public to know that the police are out there, and that Harwich has one dedicated traffic officer. There are 50 other streets that have the same request as Park Street. If you call the station with traffic concerns, the information is put on a list that is reviewed weekly and then officers are assigned to those areas. DPW can also help with signage. As far as speed limit signs go, per Massachusetts guidelines, they are placed at the beginning and end of a road. The town can put up additional signs. Chief Considine assured the residents that some of his top concerns have been traffic safety, speeding and crosswalks. There is a lot of real estate to cover, and the departments answer a lot of other calls as well.

A resident was present and asked how they can get a flashing light installed at the bike path at Brooks Park. DPW Director Link Hooper was present and stated that the intersection referenced as well as the crossing of Route 124 has no bike crossings for a reason. They are both complicated intersections. MassDOT has a trail modernization program that is supposed to fund 1.2 million dollars' worth of improvements to the Old Colony rail trail that goes from the roundabout to the Chatham line. Both intersections are complicated and will be addressed with the upcoming project that will be funded in 2027 by MassDOT.

A resident from Depot Road was present and asked if there has been any thought given to the Depot Road and Route 28 intersection because it is very dangerous. Mr. Hooper responded that they have looked at that intersection at least 3 times and that Route 28 is under MassDOT jurisdiction. Any work that is designed must be done to code. Because of the speed and the line of site, the only option would be for a full signal light.

3. Recreation

Recreation and Youth Director Eric Beebe was present. The Recreation Department is responsible for all the recreation programming, both active and passive for youth, adults and seniors. The

department also handles all the booking and reservations for fields, parks and memorial squares in Harwich. One of the biggest jobs of the department is to staff the town beaches. In the fall, winter and spring, they have a staff of about 3.5 people, which goes up to about 60 in the summer. They have a full staff this year to make the beaches as safe as possible. Beach staff is both CPR and first aid trained. Lifeguards are trained through the American Red Cross. There are staff members available to train the lifeguards. Along with managing the beaches, the department offers a full slate of summer programs. All the programs for the last year or so have been running through the MyRec online booking system. Throughout the rest of the year, there are many other passive and active recreation programs as well as a daily afterschool program that runs all year long. Mr. Beebe reviewed the projects that have been funded by Community Preservation funds including funding for AED devices at every lifeguard stand that can be used throughout the town in the off season. Another completed project was to resurface the Brooks Park courts, and the last big project was new fencing at Senior Memorial Softball Field. Funding has also been received for projects that will get underway soon, including a shade structure in the field behind the Community Center, a new infield at Brooks Park and finishing the new restroom at Sand Pond.

4. Department of Public Works

Department of Public Works Director Link Hooper was present and agreed that this is the busiest that he has seen the Cape. Mr. Hooper started his career with the town in 1991 running equipment in the DPW area. To work for the town has been a real privilege as well is leading the men and women of the department. The DPW consist of 39 fulltime employees in 7 divisions. In some form or another the DPW does something for everyone. Mr. Hooper read the mission statement of the DPW and said that if anyone has a request for service to call the department. There are 22 town owned beaches and of those there are 7 or 8 that get cleaned with a beach rake. Harwich has 88 trash cans deployed at 38 locations that are picked up daily and, on the weekend, they are picked up twice a day. There are 11 public restrooms that are cleaned twice a day. The restroom facilities are opened before Memorial Day and closed the day after Columbus Day. If someone has recycling or trash to dispose of and don't have a transfer station pass, you can access the disposal area with a one time \$10.00 user fee. At the disposal area you can also pick up free compost, wood chips and manure that you shovel yourself. Typically, there is a summer shut down on road work, but because of the sewer project, work has been allowed to happen on side streets. There is one noticeable sidewalk project from Bank Street to Saquatucket Harbor that will be happening. This fall will have mainly utility work done for the project and it will be a 3-season project.

A resident asked if Mr. Hooper handles potable water at the golf course. Mr. Hooper responded that he did not. The resident said that supposedly 20-30 years ago, someone died because they were drinking water out of the spigot. The water lines were replaced with a filter and that company is now out of business. When you go to the golf course, there is no potable water. If you bring water to the course with you and run out, there is no place to refill unless you go back to the clubhouse. Mr. Howell responded that these concerns should be for the groundskeeper of the golf course.

A resident from the corner of Long Road and Bank Street was present and said that she is alarmed by the speed down Bank Street, Long Road and Lovers Lane. She stated that the town that she lives in for most of the year has changed most of their signage to 25 MPH and that the police are involved and that they have a safe town. The other thing this resident asked about are the sidewalks on Bank Street and if there could be a curb installed. Mr. Hooper responded that the speed issue should be discussed with the Police Department as DPW does not handle enforcement. Mr. Hooper agreed that Bank Street has substandard sidewalks. At one time, there was a proposal for sidewalks, but Mr. Hooper was unsure where that landed. He assumes that the project was be north of a million dollars. Modern design criteria requires a 3' grass strip of a grade separation to the road. This sidewalk was done prior to those requirements. There are no plans for reconstruction of the Bank Street sidewalk in the road maintenance plan.

A resident from Black Loch Drive was present and noted that recently on a Facebook group, someone had posted a picture of an overflowing trash can on the beach, which showed a lot of cans. He asked if Mr. Hooper had any thoughts about putting an additional recycling can in addition to the trash cans. Mr. Hooper responded that he would like to see the picture that the resident is referenced. They did try this with the trash cans and found that trash ended up in the recycling bin and it made it not worth doing. Trying to recycle anything except for cans these days in a commercial quantity is impossible.

A resident from Cross Street was present and commended the Select Board as volunteers to make the town as great as it can be. He wanted to follow up on pedestrian traffic and the state law that says that people need to walk on the left side of the road. This resident wanted to know if signage could be put up with the information to walk left and ride right. Mr. Howell responded that the town would be having that discussion. Mr. Hooper responded that the DPW puts the signs where the Police Department requests them. Regulatory signs get replaced and advisory signs are placed in coordination with the Police Department.

A resident from Depot Road West was present and said that he has heard rumors that there are improvement plans for Route 28 sidewalks. Mr. Hooper responded that there are multiple projects in the queue including the Dennis-West Harwich transportation improvement program for 18 million dollars. The entire project will pick up where Dennisport left off and will modernize signals at Upper County Road and Division Street and go to Herring Run. It is designed to mimic what was done in Dennisport with brick sidewalks and lighting on both sides of the road. Mr. Hooper said that the last he knew, the plan specifications and estimate of the design contract was due Friday. He believes that this will be bid sometime this fall before October 1st. The town has opted to install dry sewer pipe as part of this project.

A resident from Grassy Pond Road was present and had questions about the intersection of Miles Street, South Street and Forest Street. There is a telephone pole that no matter what she does when she is turning, she ends up in the other lane. This resident asked about the possibility of moving the pole. Mr. Hooper responded that it took 3 years to get that pole into its current location and that he knows the turn is tight. There are plans to put asphalt in that area. The

resident responded that she crosses the yellow line when pulling into the road and that it is a tight turn. Mr. Hooper responded that there are no plans to address this issue at this time.

A resident from Forest Street was present and said that she walks around the golf course on South Street and passed the public safety building on Sisson Road. She noted the lack of sidewalks. Mr. Hooper responded that there is the safe routes to school project that will be going to bid in December which will improve the sidewalks around the Elementary School. Where this resident is talking, there are no plans for sidewalks or lighting. The resident responded that there are a lot of telephone poles with no streetlights and that she usually takes a flashlight or her phone. Mr. Howell responded that there is a zoning bylaw in place regarding lighting and that there are a lot of people that don't want to see more lighting. He understands what this resident is asking for but noted that it is a balance, and that the town looks at accident records when making these kinds of decisions. He added that it is not likely that we will add more lights unless we see that there are incidents due to lack of lighting. Mr. Hooper added that the Select Board has a policy prohibiting the installation of new streetlights that is still enforced. Mr. Howell noted that this policy goes back about 30 years.

A resident from Red River Road was present and noted that on their street there are 2 telephone poles that are quite far apart and the wire hangs about 8' off the ground between the poles. Last year the street cleaner got wrapped up in the wire and this year a firetruck got tangled in it. Mr. Hooper responded that the town does not own the pole but that he would investigate this issue and see what could be done.

Mr. Howell commented that he is extremely grateful that so many town staff showed up for tonight's meeting.

5. Youth Services

Director of Youth and Family Services Ashley Symington was present. Ms. Symington is a counselor by trade, a licensed mental health counselor through Massachusetts and a nationally certified counselor through the National Board of Certified Counselors. As a department of 1, she is tasked with providing mental health and wellness support to youth and families in town. Ms. Symington reviewed the different kinds of programs that happen with her department, noting that most of the programming is run through the school year. She handles elementary, middle and high school ages as well as some adult programs. Additionally, Ms. Symington uses animal assisted therapy in her sessions.

6. Golf

No one from golf was present but staff did provide a one-page sheet that was provided in the packet and copies available for the public. Cranberry Valley is an 18-hole championship golf course that was designed and opened in 1974. There is a full-service restaurant on-site operated by Jake Rooneys. Many programs are offered throughout the year and there is an affordable

annual pass for both residents and non-residents. Some upcoming projects include an irrigation upgrade in FY26 and a bunker renovation in FY29.

Mr. Handler commented that all the town's department heads are all-stars, and that the town couldn't be run without them. He noted that Cranberry Valley does about 44,000 rounds of golf a year and for the staff to take care of the course in the way that they do needs to be noted tonight.

Mr. Howell said that concerns brought up earlier about the potable water will be brought to the golf departments attention.

7. Brooks Free Library

Brooks Free Library Director Ginny Hewitt was present. Brooks Free Library is the municipal library for the Town of Harwich and is governed by an elected board of trustees. The board always welcomes public comment and the agendas and packets for their meetings are on the town and library website. Ms. Hewitt said that non-residents can use the same services as residents and that anyone can get a library card. People can apply for an e-card that is offered through the Clams consortium. This card gives access for e-books only. If you visit the library, you can get a full access card that gives access to all online and physical resources. Also available to be checked out are outdoor game sets as well as movies, board games, puzzles, etc. The library also offers a quiet space and equipment if anyone needs to print or scan documents. Library staff is trained, experienced and ready to help including find accurate and reliable resources for information. Any inquiry or information that is taken out is kept confidential. There is a section of books in the library on sensitive topics that do not need to be checked out. These resources can be taken and returned as needed. The library also has internet stations that can be used where no documents, images or any other data can be saved. After the user's session ends, the information is deleted and is not available to the next user. Staff members are happy to provide technology assistance during open hours. The library also offers drop-in technology assistance on Wednesday's from 1:00-3:00. There are also options to book a 30-minute librarian appointment. Ms. Hewitt talked about the vision impaired technology assistance program and the fact that the library offers year-round programs, both recurring and one-time special programs. The library also offers passes to 17 different museums and attractions, that are paid for by the Friends of Brooks Free Library. If anyone would like to support the friends, please visit their bookstore on the lower level of the library; Monday through Friday from 1:00-3:00 and Tuesday and Saturday from 10:30-12:30. Ms. Hewitt noted that Brooks Free Library provides access to e-books, downloadable audio books, online magazines and movies. The library is open Monday-Thursday from 10:00-7:00, Friday and Saturday from 10:00-4:00 and can be reached at brooksfreelibrary.org or 508-430-7562.

8. Assessing

Assessing Director Carlene Jones was present. The Assessing Department, in coordination with the Department of Revenue, certify the value on properties which generates the tax bill. With the regular tax bill also comes a personal property tax bill for people whose primary home is not

in Harwich. The assessing office also maintains the property records cards. Ms. Jones encouraged everyone to review their property card to ensure accuracy. If there is something on the form that a homeowner doesn't agree with, they can file for an abatement. The abatement request period runs from January 1st through February 1st.

A resident from West Harwich was present and said that it seems like the property values are going up all the time and the town is not growing in terms of housing. This resident is trying to pull together why the tax rate goes up, but the population isn't. Ms. Jones responded that usually when the values go up, the tax rate goes down and that the numbers follow the market. The numbers are based off the sales. The assessed value is what the house should sell for today. Ms. Jones added that their office does offer exemptions for full time residents, just not 2nd homeowners.

This same resident had questions about stop signs, noting that many times there are branches that are covering the sign. He wanted to know if the branches could be cut. He also talked about intersections in town that don't have streetlights. Mr. Howell responded that the town looks at public safety records on crash incidents when deciding about lighting placement.

Mr. Howell said that the town is under an obligation by the state to implement a sewerage of the entire town based on the embayment's and what has been identified. About 15 years ago, that project was priced out at 300 million dollars with 8 different phases. In today's dollars, it is probably about 500 million dollars, and this is not a voluntary endeavor. When owners open their tax bills, that amount is not just what it costs to run the town but includes a certain component that has to do with the bonding of these projects. A lot of other towns haven't implemented certain projects yet, and they haven't hit the tax rate. Harwich is at the end of the line for something that has been going on for 50-60 and is quite expensive.

A resident was present remotely and wanted to clarify that the personal property tax bill is for non-residents only. Ms. Jones confirmed this to be true. The resident asked what the proceeds of the taxes are used for. Ms. Jones responded that the money goes into the general fund for the town. The resident asked what the rationale for non-residents is having to pay the personal property tax bill and residents do not. Ms. Jones responded that it is because of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 2 and Section 18,

9. Wastewater

Waterworks Consultant Dan Pelletier was present and stated that the phase 3 sewer project going on in East Harwich will continue through to 2026. The best place to find information is on the town website as well as following the Select Board meetings. There was 50 million dollars appropriated for the phase 3 sewer project. The next project in line as indicated earlier is the DOT project that will be bid sometime before December. The town will be installing a dry sewer pipe in West Harwich from the Dennis town line to the Herring River bridge. Also in the works is the Phase 3A sewer project which will be north of Great Sand Lakes along Queen Anne Road. That project is currently in the final stages of design and construction contracts should be issued

prior to June of next year, with construction to begin sometime that fall. Although these projects are a lot of money, the town has benefited greatly from the Cape and Islands Water Protection Fund and several other programs through the state. Another exciting project that was finished this year was the Cold Brook Eco Restoration Project. Harwich is in the early stages of exploring another eco-restoration project with Brewster and Harwich Conservation Trust. Funding that was approved from the last town meeting was to continue efforts to review the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, as well as to locate and identify an effluent recharge site for treated wastewater.

A resident from Bay Road was present and asked when sewers would go live in that area. He had heard that there was a problem with a house on Williamsburg that connected to phase 2 and that the solution was to rush phase 3 going live and hook that house up there. This resident also thanked the traffic detail officers for helping him navigate getting in and out of his property during the construction. Water/Wastewater Superintendent Jason Trepanier was present and responded that the rush to go live is to clear up an issue on Bay Road, which will go live by the end of this week.

A resident from Park Street asked when the other sewer phases would be happening. Mr. Howell explained the balance that is trying to be accomplished with the sewer project and trying to make it absorbable for the taxbase and working on the most egregious areas in town in terms of nitrogen that we are trying to remediate. The town has a deadline of 22 years from now for project completion.

Mr. Pelletier reviewed the CWMP revisions, and the new state adopted Title 5 and watershed permit regulations. The town had to stop and pivot the project and has filed a notice of intent for permitting. The money that was most recently appropriated in May will help answer any where and when questions. He does not anticipate that the areas identified in the 2016 CWMP will change greatly. The town needs to think about folding the construction projects in along with balancing the ongoing debt.

Mr. Howell noted that there are other department heads available both present in the room and remotely that are available for any questions.

A resident from Depot Road West was present and asked if the Select Board looks at the golf course to be a revenue producing asset for the town or more of an amenity for taxpayers. Mr. Howell responded both. The town needs to be able to put money into its current state and upgrading, but that part of the fee structure that someone pays to use the course goes into a fund that allows the town to make capital improvements.

Health Director Carrie Schoener was present and introduced herself to the audience. She welcomed anyone to call or visit the Health Department with any questions.

Water/Wastewater Superintendent Jason Trepanier was present. He reported that the department has 16 fulltime employees and the oversee 10,100 water services within the town.

On a daily basis in the off season, they pump about 1 million gallons of water a day. In the summer, that number rises to about 4.5-6.5 million gallons per day. Mr. Trepanier noted that the Select Board builds the wastewater collection systems and then his department runs them. He added that PFAS have been a hot topic of discussion lately and that recent samples are all non-detect, which is good. For more information about water quality, please visit www.harwichwater.com and look at the consumer confidence report. Some projects of note are the 12" water main that will be installed from the Harwich/Dennis line to the Herring River bridge. The 2nd phase of that project will be the Water Department running the line from the Herring River bridge to South Street. Public outreach will be done after the project is bid and we have a start date. There will be no construction on Route 28 during the summer months. Another significant project will be the painting of the water tank on Pleasant Lake Avenue.

Natural Resources Director Stephanie Sykes was present and welcomed anyone to visit the up and running shellfish lab at Wychmere Harbor. Staff is typically there from 9:00-12:00, Monday through Friday. There are a little over ½ million oysters and clams in the lab now. Their department also handles water quality, and the herring runs. While Ms. Sykes is a department of 1, she has wonderful seasonal staff, interns and volunteers.

Harbormaster John Harker was present, who has been on the job for 4 months. The harbor has had a very exciting and busy season so far. Mr. Harker noted that his department manages almost 600 moorings, 214 town slips and manages 5 different board ramps. They do upwards from 4,000 to 18,000 cubic yards of dredging every year. The department is also responsible for the Herring River as well as 3 harbors, Pleasant Bay, Round Cove and the ponds. Mr. Harker has a staff of 4 as well as 4 boats that manage all these locations. In the summer, their office is open from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Cemetery Administrator Robbin Kelley was present. Harwich has 16 cemeteries with over 100 acres. The DPW has 2 staff members that help maintain the cemeteries. One of the cemeteries is an arboretum with 110 different species of trees and plants. If anyone would like a tour, she asked them to contact her director. Ms. Kelley also sells burial plots.

Conservation Administrator Amy Usowski was present remotely. The Conservation Department has 2 fulltime staff, 1 parttime year-round executive assistant and 1 parttime summer seasonal shorebird monitor. The shorebird season is wrapping up for this year. While the town did have piping plovers on their properties, there were no tern nests. The Conservation Department is responsible for upholding the wetlands protection act and wetlands protection bylaw. The department manages over 1000 acres of conservation land with help from the DPW, Harwich Conservation Trust, AmeriCorps Cape Cod and citizen volunteers. They also manage the 100 plot community gardens. For the past 2 years, they have partnered with the Health Department on the people's garden initiative. Conservation also helps the Planning Department with the open space and recreation plan and hazard mitigation plan. Finally, the department leads free public education opportunities throughout the year, collaborating with numerous other departments.

Community Center Director Carolyn Carey was present and noted that the Community Center turned 25 this year. The building is home to the Recreation Department, Council on Aging, Cemetery Department, Veteran's Affairs Officers and Meals on Wheels program. There are over 100 clubs and organizations that use the building on a regular basis. In addition, there is a weight room in the building. She welcomed everyone to stop by to see the building.

Town Clerk Emily Mitchell was present. She wanted to highlight that their office is often the primary point of contact for people seeking town records in any town department. In partnership with the IT Department, they are working on a records digitization project. There will be 75,000 records that will be sent to the vendor in year 1. Their office is a great contact to help point people in the right direction for town hall matters.

Mr. Howell again thanked Mr. Kelleher for putting this meeting together. He added that Harwich has terrific department head's who represent a whole bunch of terrific employees. He appreciates everyone bring present tonight and doing what they do.

10. Questions and Comments

A resident from Ginger Plum Lane was present and stated that Earle Road is her beach. She thanked the board for bringing this meeting back. This resident noted that she has experienced a challenge this year with the handicapped wheelchairs on the beach. Their family goes to the beach later in the day and they have found that access to the handicapped beach wheelchairs ends at 4:30 p.m. when the lifeguards leave. This resident is asking for a solution so that the chairs can be accessed when needed. Mr. Howell responded that there would be a follow up discussion after this meeting regarding this issue.

A resident was present (no address given) and stated that there is a fire pit to the property next door to them that she has concerns about. She stated that she emailed the Fire Chief as well as the fire prevention team and has received no response. She asked the board if it is acceptable to them that she calls and sends emails and is not given a response. Mr. Howell responded that is not acceptable. The resident said that she also sent the email to Acting Town Administrator Meggan Eldredge (pointed in her direction) on Saturday night. This resident again stated her frustration that no one has gotten back to her. Mr. Howell responded that he would go over this matter with staff tomorrow.

A resident from West Harwich was present and said that she would like to see these meetings continue and wanted to make a comment about fire safety. This resident has noticed several places that have made her nervous during a hot summer. She has looked at the town website about the locations of fire pits and feels that information is hard to find or non-existent.

A resident from Black Loch Drive was present and asked what requirements there are to be on an appointed committee in Harwich. Mr. Howell responded that when looking at regulatory matters, it has been an unwritten rule that you need to have some skin in the game if you are going to be making decisions about zoning bylaws and things. There are many other opportunities

in town and Mr. Howell encouraged people to pick up the citizens interest form. This resident asked if there are any committees that meet primarily remotely. Mr. Howell responded that the board is looking at a range of remote options, starting with employees. There is no policy in place as how now. The resident feels that remote participation would make it a lot easier.

The board collectively thanked everyone for coming and participating in the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes from July 28, 2025

Mr. Kelleher move to approve the Select Board meeting Minutes as printed from July 28, 2025, 2nd by Mr. Handler and approved 5-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and possible vote to authorize the Acting Town Administrator to sign documents related to the Great Sand Lakes (Phase 3A) Sewer Extension Project including but not limited to State Revolving Fund and permit applications.

Mr. Handler moved to authorize the Acting Town Administrator to sign documents related to the Great Sand Lakes (Phase 3A) Sewer Extension Project including but not limited to State Revolving Fund and permit applications, 2nd by Ms. Doucette.

Ms. Eldredge noted that this request is to authorize her signature on any future documents.

Mr. Piekarski said that he would not be comfortable approving anything without the board seeing it first. Mr. Howell agreed.

Mr. Handler withdrew his motion and Ms. Doucette withdrew her 2nd.

OLD BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and possible vote on legal services request for proposals

With the way that this document is currently written, Mr. Howell does not see how we could separate out labor counsel, land counsel and general counsel. He envisions 3 different service areas that we could award either all together or independent of each other, whichever is in the best interest of the town. Ms. Eldredge referenced page 6 of 22 of the documents, which outlines what Mr. Howell is seeking. Mr. Howell responded that the document doesn't read the way that he wants it to. He wants to outline each specific category.

Mr. Handler asked if the Select Board is looking at doing an assessment of current counsel, with his feeling that the town should do an internal assessment of what we currently have. Mr. Howell responded that current town counsel said that they would be willing to come in and make a presentation. He is not sure that they would want to come in during the middle of the RFP process. Mr. Handler says that he views this as 2 separate conversations so that the Select Board

can get on the same page as to how they think current legal counsel has served them and what the board can do better to limit the use of counsel. Mr. Handler commented that the board has received copies of current counsel's bills for services and that he has put together a document on how town counsel has been used including breakdowns of categories. He would like to flush out the cost benefit.

Mr. Kelleher thought that this was charter driven. Mr. Howell said that the board has to appoint, it doesn't say that they can just mindlessly issue a contract to someone. If the town is going to put something out, it might as well be what we want to see. Mr. Howell added that he would like to see what we used to do, that it is not just about cost containment.

Mr. Handler feels that this would be a good exercise all the way around.

Ms. Doucette had no comment.

Mr. Piekarski would like to see the board have a greater conversation.

B. Discussion regarding Finance Director position

Provided in the packet was the recruitment posting from the last round. Ms. Eldredge provided this document for the board to see if there is anything that should be changed before moving to the next step. There have been no responses received to the RFP for the Finance Director search. Ms. Eldredge knows that the Collins Center would do the search without question.

Mr. Howell asked if Ms. Eldredge had circled back to Groux White. Ms. Eldredge responded that she has that that she has received 2 no answers and no positives.

Mr. Piekarski asked if Ms. Eldredge could provide the board with information on the Collins Center. She responded that she would.

Mr. Howell asked the board to review the information as provided in the packet and provide input in general on the recruitment posting.

Mr. Kelleher asked if Groux White gave any reason why they were not interested. Ms. Eldredge said that she would reach out and ask them again.

CONTRACTS

- A. Discussion and possible vote to award a contract to Fall River Electrical Associates, Co., Inc. in the amount of \$119,000.00 for the replacement of the generator at 204 Sisson Road.

Ms. Eldredge reviewed the contract as outlined in the packet.

Mr. Piekarski asked if this is a whole building generator. Ms. Eldredge responded that it is.

Mr. Kelleher said that he has always been the opinion that the town could use a portable generator.

Mr. Handler moved to award a contract to Fall River Electrical Associates, Co., Inc. in the amount of \$119,000.00 for the replacement of the generator at 204 Sisson Road, 2nd by Mr. Kelleher and approved 5-0-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Ms. Eldredge reviewed the backup material regarding the memorandum of agreement with the Cape Cod Commission from 2024. This extension is a no cost item for the town.

SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPORT

Mr. Handler said that the town has received a recommendation for Paul Doane to be the Historic District and Historical Commission representative on the Community Preservation Committee. He asked Mr. Howell if this should come before the interview committee. Mr. Howell responded that it should. It is up to the interview committee to see if the request flies and that both of their committee expiration terms should match. Mr. Handler asked that staff schedule the interview.

Mr. Howell reported that the board would be recessing open session to re-enter into executive session and would not be returning to open session.

CORRESPONDENCE

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Handler moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the Select Board and re-enter into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m., 2nd by Mr. Piekarski and approved 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Clarke
Executive Assistant

