

Received 3/18/26
9:08 AM Jodi Moore, ATC

BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING
6:30 P.M., TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026
DURHAM TOWN HALL 3rd FLOOR AND REMOTELY VIA ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
Zoom Recording

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/FnSr0XLT08ah5IBL5BxJ1Q92FoWNByXfau2-VzYGEAMRjx-pv6Z3ZKDKSt0UMc9B.sv2gAoleBnchfbew?startTime=1773181776000>

Passcode: Ic5?JG%+

Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order

Called to order at 6:30pm

Roll call

BOF: William Castro, Jim Martinelli, Phil Muzio, Nancy Cuomo, Eileen Buckheit, Molly Nolan

BOS: Brendan Rea; First Selectman, Rob Chadd; Selectman (left at 7:34 for Fire Dept Meeting), Tom Hennick; Selectman

Absent:

Staff: Beth Moncata, Finance Director

Others in attendance: Richard Parmelee, other members of the public

2. Approval of Agenda

- a. MOTION BY PHIL MUZIO SECONDED BY WILL CASTRO TO APPROVE THE MARCH 10, 2026 MEETING AGENDA. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED

3. Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes, referring to agenda items)

- a. Richard Parmelee made a public comment suggesting that audio on zoom meetings be improved for the public. Suggested that the town receive credit for solar power from Johnson Lane that is going to the school district

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. February 2, 2026 Special Meeting
 - i. MOTION BY NANCY CUOMO SECONDED BY WILL CASTRO, TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2026 MEETING AS PRESENTED

5. Invoices

- a. MOTION BY NANCY CUOMO, SECONDED BY PHIL MUZIO TO PAY AN INVOICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100.00 FOR NICOLE CHAREST FOR RECORDING SECRETARY SERVICES IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY.
 - i. Noted typo in the total on invoice. Reads \$100 total instead of \$37.50. Beth indicated she will confirm that \$37.50 is the correct amount and if not, the invoice can be revisited
 - b. MOTION BY EILEEN BUCKHEIT SECONDED BY PHIL MUZIO TO WITHDRAW THE PREVIOUS MOTION. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED
 - c. MOTION BY JIM MARTINELLI, SECONDED BY WILL CASTRO TO AMEND AND PAY AN INVOICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37.50 FOR NICOLE CHAREST FOR RECORDING SECRETARY SERVICES IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED
6. Board of Selectmen FY26-27 Proposed Budget and Discussion
- a. Brendan Rea presented BOS proposed budget,
 - i. noted that operating was reduced by \$91,550. Increase of \$238,752 over last year
Grant total operating: \$7,134,776.
 - ii. Debt Service down 2% based on Schedule.
 - iii. Capital and reserve reduced from requested amount by \$2.5 million. New total Capital and Reserve is \$2,012,447. 44% or \$615,217 increase over last year
 - iv. Grand Total town expense presented: \$9,276,539. 10% increase over last year
 - v. Total Local revenue requested: \$1,413,618. BOS proposed increase of \$35,000. Noted that last year \$1 million was taken from undesignated fund, this was not done for this budget. BOS reduced state revenue amount by \$5,780 based on proposed grant allocations. Total revenue decreased by \$948,867 primarily due to not taking money from undesignated fund
 - vi. Grand list real estate and personal property adjusted is 45% increase over current grand list due to re-eval. Motor vehicles down by 11%
 - vii. Proposed RSD13 net budget of \$43,343,129 with Durham's share being \$28,337,738. Education cost sharing would reduce to \$25,067,482, which is a 6% increase over last year
 - b. Discussion:
 - i. Eileen Buckheit noted that Educational Cost Sharing formula is currently under review by legislature, number may be adjusted
 - ii. Discussed adjusted grand list amount based on tax relief and veteran tax breaks. Also noted that Habsen and Moser's assessment increased over \$12 million, did not declare personal property. Lost exempt status for their manufacturing equipment and incurred a penalty for not filing. Briefly discussed recent zoning changes, housing prices and developments

- iii. Noted that the town has \$700,000 available at 17% in undesignated fund. Discussed potentially taking funds from undesignated funds
- iv. Discussed RSD13 budget and potential methods of reducing costs. Noted that salary and insurance are largest costs. RSD13 has laid off several employees.

c. Line By Line Discussion

i. Professional Services

- 1. Noted increase of \$26,000 in Information Technology due to licensing fee of equipment. Next year, line will decrease by \$26,000. \$26,000 increase will happen again in 3 years

ii. Town Commissions

- 1. 16.5 increase for Charter Review, one year expenditure
- 2. One year expenditure for America 250
- 3. Conservation Commission: Discussed capital request for purchase of land, operating decreased
- 4. Economic Development: Discussed need to meet with commission to discuss deliverables

iii. Building and Grounds

- 1. Telephone system and internet will be moving to comcast. Decrease in electricity due to solar credits

iv. General Expenses

- 1. Beth Moncata noted error in adjustment to salary, will be a lower number. Discussed payment of poll workers and other election workers. Noted that methods of calculating salary vary between towns and it is difficult to compare. Early Voting has increased hours

v. Public Works

- 1. 0.05 overall increase, Snow and Ice removal up to \$215,000. Increase in overtime rate and salt costs

vi. Public Safety

- 1. Noted that Valley Shore 911 Dispatch is billed by population and percentage of calls
- 2. \$13,000 for office staff and vehicles removed, increases in Vehicle Maintenance and Fire Gear

vii. Recreation Community Center and Facilities

- 1. Beth Moncata noted that the 11% increase is misleading due to including staff salaries and contracted services in general

viii. Miscellaneous

1. Briefly discussed future plans for Farmers' Market, Recreation Committee will discuss. Discussed allocating funds in case a new market master is found.
2. Noted that facility director needs more hours but may not be able to fund additional hours during this budget year

ix. Environmental Services

1. Budget came in after town meeting last year. Noted that \$354,000 is actual number, not an estimate. Discussed raising sticker fee

x. Capital and Reserve

1. Beth Moncata prefaced the conversation by suggesting the commission discuss bonding or alternative options to fund projects
2. Jim Martinelli noted that firetrucks are currently on a 3 year backlog. Discussed potentially bonding for fire apparatus and alternative options for funding vehicle replacement
3. Discussed other projects such as roads, culverts, and buildings which require large allocations of funds. It was suggested that some projects be prioritized for this year. Noted that culverts require 3 years to complete

xi. Assessment and Revaluation

1. Discussed at length variables that impact assessment value of homes and the mil rate. Brendan Rea noted that he will ask the assessor to attend a Board of Finance meeting

xii. Valley Shore Television Donation

1. Brendan Rea stated that the Town Updates done through Valley Shore do not cost the town anything, but the Town can elect to make a donation. An amount of \$5,000 was included in the budget request.

7. Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes, referring to items on agenda or any other topic)

- a. Richard Parmelee made a public comment in support of the Fire Department and in support of funding a new fire engine. Commented on the process of the RSD13 budget, noted that once the budget is approved, it must be paid. Commented that the town hall had ice which closed the accessible entrance for a period of time, which is not acceptable. Suggested the town hire an engineer to evaluate boards and commissions which use zoom to ensure the meeting audio is audible in the recording
- b. Phil Muzio made a public comment thanked the Board of Selectmen for their work

8. Adjournment

- a. MOTION BY NANCY CUOMO, SECONDED BY SEVERAL TO ADJOURN. ALL AYE, MOTION PASSED.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53pm

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Charest