

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER  
SELECTBOARD/ BUDGET MEETING

JANUARY 6, 2026

Draft

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm by Owen Astbury, Chair

Present:

Selectboard Members: Norman (Nope) Martin and Steve Tarleton,

Treasurer: Melissa Spear,

Clerk: Nancy Robinson

Visitors: George Spear

Zoom: The Wideman's

Additions to agenda: None

Budget worksheets for the General, Highway and Wastewater Accounts were given to the board. Melissa and Nancy have been collecting budget information and completing worksheets. All accounts were reviewed line by line with additions or changes made as necessary.

**General Account:** Reviewed revenue and expense lines except payroll and associated lines. Health insurance costs have increased. Increased computer line as new computers may be needed for the treasurer and assessor's offices. This line accounts for several programs (website, NEMRC, VISION, IT assistance etc.)

Information came in today regarding Uncollectable Ambulance Accounts, at this time amount is increasing from approx. \$13,000 to over \$45,000. This information was sent to the town as a placeholder, accounts are still open and payment may come in which will reduce what the town is invoiced for in July. Nancy will follow up to make sure that all accounts are for Bridgewater addresses. 4 of the normal 7 social petitions have come in, deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup>.

A suggestion was made to place Southgate House Maintenance, Southgate House Repairs and Southgate House Sinking fund lines in consecutive or line order. Melissa can make this change.

**Highway Account:** Reviewed revenue and expense lines except for payroll and associated lines. A highway surplus of \$31,585 was applied to offset expenses. Most of budget lines were level funded. Continuing to add funds to offset costs of building a new sand/salt shed. Will finalize numbers with Randy at the next budget meeting.

**Wastewater Account:** The annual contract for running and maintaining the plant is increasing to over \$7,500 a month. Supplies, chemicals and sludge hauling are also increasing. Estimated budget amount is approx. \$146,000 up from \$115,000 for this year. Discussion of number of billable units and need to determine that town is equitably billing for all units. A draft letter was reviewed which will be sent to business and apartment owners asking for confirmation of the number of rental or business units that they currently have. Owen moved to send out letters with revisions (date to be returned) to business and apartment users. Nope seconded the motion and motion carried.

January 6, 2026 minutes cont.

There was also discussion of an account surplus from FY 25 of over \$46,000 which came from 2025 town appropriation and audit adjustments, that could be used to offset the expenses. Owen moved to use \$25,000 of the surplus to offset expenses to keep the per unit costs down. The remaining balance (\$21,303.53) would be put into the sinking fund. Nope seconded the motion and motion carried.

Nancy presented the board with a preliminary draft warning, meeting will be at the Community Center on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 am. Election of Moderator, approval of social service articles, budget, tax due date and election of officers. Any petitioned articles are due to the town clerk on or before January 15, 2026.

Discussion ensued of the use of the General Fund surplus of \$202,628. Melissa suggested putting an article on the warning to use all or some of these funds to set up an Emergency Fund to assist with future disaster events. Board agreed with this suggestion, will wait for final budget numbers to determine if any of the surplus should be used to lower the amount to be raised by taxes and then decide if they want to place the article on the warning. Nancy will get the article language from either VLCT or Sec. of State's office.

Brief discussion of using the tabulator machine for annual school vote which will include an article this year for a bond vote for building a new school.

Owen asked that an executive session be put onto next week's regular meeting agenda for discussion of personal and salary items.

Being no further business or discussion, Owen moved to adjourn at 5:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Robinson*

Nancy Robinson,  
Clerk