Town of Fairhaven
Board of Public Works Meeting
October 5, 2026

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCVD 2026 OCT 20 AM10:32

Present
Brian Wotton, Commissioner
Robert Hobson, Commissioner
Anne Morton Smith, Commissioner
Hillary Rotondo, Commissioner
Marcus Ferro, Commissioner
Vincent Furtado, BPW Superintendent
Rebecca Vento, Business Manager

I. Call to Order

Mr. Wotton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Routine Matters

A. Signing of Departmental Bills

III. Approval of Minutes

A. September 28, 2026

Mr. Hobson motioned to approve the minutes of September 28, 2026. Ms. Smith seconded. Vote unanimous.

IV. Appointments

A. n/a

V. Items for Action

A. 2027 Annual Fees

The Annual Contractor Fees for 2026 were $500 each. At this time, I do not see any reason to increase the fees unless the Board feels otherwise.

1. Highway Contractor

Ms. Smith motioned to keep the 2027 Annual Fee for Highway Contractors at $500. Ms. Rotondo seconded. Vote unanimous.

2. Water & Sewer Contractor

Ms. Rotondo motioned to keep the 2027 Annual Fee for Water & Sewer Contractors at $500 each. Mr. Ferro seconded. Vote unanimous.

B. Wastewater Contract Operations

Mr. Furtado – This item is on the agenda again to answer any questions the Board may have. I also want to let the Board know that I was asked to attend the Budget Working Group meeting tomorrow night to discuss this matter and answer any questions. I understand that, collectively, they are contemplating sending out an RFP or something similar.

Mr. Wotton – What authority do they have to do that?

Mr. Furtado – They do not. The way the Board has been established, this Board serves the Town statutorily under Massachusetts General Law as the Sewer Commissioners. If the Budget Working Group decides after tomorrow night's meeting that they are going to pursue this, I would have to come back to this Board and let them know that they intend to pursue it.

Mr. Ferro – It feels like they always come to us when there is pain to dole out in terms of budgetary decisions. It seems like the BPW is always one of the biggest victims, despite the fact that the Department of Public Works is one of the most essential Town functions, other than public safety.

Mr. Furtado – Budget-wise, of the Big Three—Schools, Public Safety, and Public Works—we are the lowest-hanging fruit because there are certainly more advocates for those groups.

Mr. Ferro – It feels like they are musing aloud, without us being present, about privatizing one of the biggest functions in Town. I have also heard some discussion about regionalizing things. The treatment plant operations are done very well. I don't quite understand the process of how they got to the point of musing aloud about this major overhaul.

Mr. Furtado – The Town Administrator and Select Board member Trapilo met with Jamie Ponte from New Bedford to discuss the CSO. While they were there Veolia was brought up because they run New Bedford's plant, and that is how this was brought up. I just want to make it clear that contracting this out is not cheaper. We would still have to pay for the employees, their benefits, and a markup on top of that.

Ms. Smith – I just want to second what I think we all feel and what Mr. Ferro already brought up. It does not make any sense for the Budget Working Group to be discussing this when it is not under the purview of the Town Hall. I also had a conversation with the former Town Administrator of Plymouth, where they contracted with Veolia. It is public knowledge that the Town of Plymouth ended up suing Veolia and received a settlement of $24.8 million because the work was not properly performed, and it ultimately ended up costing the Town money. If the goal of this group is to save the Town money, then this does not make any sense to me.

Mr. Furtado – I looked up the number of communities that contract out their wastewater operations in Massachusetts. There are 17 communities that contract out these operations, out of 127 wastewater treatment plants in Massachusetts.

Mr. Wotton – New Bedford contracts out because they cannot maintain compliance with the State and have to hire a company to do the work. The Town of Fairhaven is one of the best around, and we have received numerous awards to show it.

C. Contract Agreement, Tata & Howard, General Engineering Services FY27 $35,000.00

Mr. Ferro motioned to Sign the Contract Agreement with Tata & Howard for FY27 General Engineering Services in the amount not to exceed $35,000. Mr. Hobson seconded. Vote unanimous.

D. Contract Agreement, Tata & Howard, 2026 ERP Training $2,200.00

Mr. Hobson motioned to Sign the Contract Agreement with Tata & Howard for 2026 ERP Training in the amount of $2,200.00. Ms. Smith seconded. Vote unanimous.

VI. Tabled Matters

A. Motorized Vehicle on Rail Trail

VII. Public Comments / Open Forum

VIII. Old Business / New Business

A. Superintendent

Superintendent Report for October 5, 2026

- Attend Department head meeting
- Scheduled to appear before Budget Working Group tomorrow to discuss Wastewater
- Scheduled to give BOH site tour Wednesday
- Chair monthly BBAC Meeting
- Meet with Union BA re grievance and wastewater contract ops
- Extension Request letter sent to EPA
- Unibank meeting re borrowing issues
- Submit FY 28 CPC Application
- Town Counsel re various issues
- AFSCME side letters to be signed 10/26

Mr. Furtado answered any questions the Board had regarding the Superintendent Report.

B. Board Members

Mr. Hobson – The David Drown Boulevard sign still needs to be installed. Could we get this done by Veterans Day? Whoever has been operating the mower down the Neck is doing an excellent job. There is still overgrown brush on David Drown Boulevard by the Pickleball Place. There is a pothole at the entrance to West Island Beach. The dead tree on Raymond Street still needs to be removed, and there is another dead tree by 97 Pleasant Street that needs to be addressed. Also, did Josh ever look into a barrel for the trash barrel at Union Wharf?

Ms. Smith – There will be a ribbon cutting for the Rail Trail on October 17 at 11:00 a.m., with ice cream from McGraw's Back Porch. I would like to get in touch with Josh to make sure the sign is installed so the Green Lanterns can plant around the sign in preparation for the ribbon cutting. There is an online survey for the Parks Survey, and the information session will be held on October 21 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall. I also wanted to thank the BPW for trying again with the trash barrel at the bus stop on Route 6 between 7-Eleven and Burger King. Hopefully, this time it will work out better than it did in the past.

C. Marine Resources Committee – BPW Related Matters

Mr. Hobson – The Marine Resource Committee has not met since our last meeting.

D. Community Preservation Committee – BPW Related Matters

IX. Set Date for the Next Meeting

Mr. Ferro motioned to set the date of the next meeting on October 19, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Wotton seconded. Vote unanimous.

X. Adjourn

Mr. Ferro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 p.m. Mr. Wotton seconded. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca L. Vento

Rebecca Vento
Business Manager

Minutes approved on October 19, 2026