



FAIRHAVEN SELECT BOARD

Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2026

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2026 OCT 14 AM 8:05

Present: Andrew Romano, Natalie A. Mello, Pam Kuechler, Richard F. Trapilo and Keith R. Hickey

Not Present: Andrew Saunders

Mr. Romano opened the Select Board meeting at 6:00pm

PUBLIC COMMENT

Patrick Carr of Pleasant Street addressed the Board and suggested a bi-weekly meeting of permitting department heads and chairs of permitting boards to review new applications and help applicants through the process. This would help follow the master plan and follow the laws the state is sending out. Mr. Carr said he wanted to bring this to the Board to consider a future agenda item for discussion.

APPOINTMENTS / COMMUNITY ITEMS

Use of Town Hall Request: Economic Development Committee: Olde-Tyme Holiday: December 12, 2026

The Board reviewed the application and Cathy Melanson addressed the Board to clarify event details and the surrounding organizations that are participating.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to the use of Town Hall by the Economic Development Committee as presented. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Temporary Street Closure: Olde-Tyme Holiday, December 12, 2026: Center Street from Main Street to Green Street; William Street and Walnut Street from Washington Street to the Library

Ms. Melanson reviewed details for the Board, she is also working with the Police Department and Public Works to care for the street closures.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to approve the application for temporary street closures on Center Street from Main Street to Green Street; on William Street and on Walnut Street from Washington Street to the Library as presented by the Economic Development Committee and in coordination with the Fairhaven Police Department. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Special One-Day All Alcohol License: Olde-Tyme Holiday: December 12, 2026, 10:00AM-5:00PM

The Board reviewed the application. Ms. Melanson said the location of the food truck may be the corner of William and Center and not on the lawn.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to approve a Special One-Day All Alcohol License for the Economic Development Committee and Travelers Alehouse from 10:00AM to 5:00PM on Saturday, December 12, 2026 as presented. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Review Open Volunteer Opportunities

Mr. Romano read the list from the Board's packet and pointed out the social media post that lists all the positions that are up for reappointment at the October 14, 2026 meeting. The deadline to apply and be on that agenda is noon on October 8, 2026 (*Attachment A*).

ACTION / DISCUSSION

Fire Chief Request to use \$3,569 from the Grant Matching Funds Article 8 of the Special Town Meeting of November 19, 2024

Mr. Hickey asked the Board to pass over this item due to the grant not being awarded yet and to clarify with Chief Correia. If the grant is awarded, the item will be on a future agenda.

Discussion on Revised Draft of a Petition Letter for Increased State Aid

Mr. Trapilo opened up for questions from the Board. Discussion ensued about word choice of "petition," after discussion, the Board's consensus was to change "petition" to "urgent need." Discussion included strategic timing,

the budget season, the sense of urgency to act and galvanize support from South Coast towns from Wareham to Fall River, consult with the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) on timing.

The Board recessed briefly due to a fire alarm and returned at 6:35pm

Mr. Romano called the meeting back in session at 6:35pm and thanked the Fairhaven Police and Fire Departments for a quick response to the alarm.

Discussion continued about the Board moving forward in the spirit of collaboration, contacting South Coast board leaders and Town Administrators for support and signatures.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to approve the local aid letter as amended and Select Board members Rick Trapilo and Andre Romano work with the Town Administrator to distribute the letter to communities on the South Coast seeking their support in requesting additional funding from the Commonwealth. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Discussion on Draft Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Ms. Mello asked for this to be tabled to the October 13, 2026 meeting so that the draft policy the IT Director shared can be reviewed with department heads and final recommendations to the Board.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to table item C3. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Discussion on a Process for General Counsel and Labor Counsel Review and Selection

Mr. Hickey asked the Board to discuss and determine the next steps on how to move forward with this process and interviews. He told the Board he summarized the responses and rates and asked each firm to confirm the accuracy. He is waiting to hear back from two of the firms.

Discussion ensued on the process, the challenge with changing, institutional knowledge of existing counsel, the value based on what the firms can provide, how to summarize the responses and whether to include the fees prior to the interviews. The Board's consensus was to view a summary assessment of the proposals without the rates, conduct the interviews and look at the rates once the interviews were complete once the Board deliberates. Mr. Romano spoke in opposition to the RFP process and changing counsel at this time.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to have the Town Administrator collect information related to a time that would be available for the Select Board to convene to interview the four firms that put in their RFP to set that meeting and additionally, as the Town Administrator to provide a summary minus the amounts of their proposals until the actual meeting and interviews. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed (3-1-0) Mr. Romano opposed.

Vote to Call the State Election, Approve and Sign State Election Warrant for November 3, 2026

The Board reviewed the request.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to call the State Election and approve the Election Warrant for November 3, 2026 as presented. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Consider Dissolution of Inactive Town Committees: Dog Park Study Committee and Fairhaven Buzzards Bay Water Quality Working Group

The Board reviewed the item.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to amend the previously adopted reactivation of the Dog Park Study Committee and to rescind the motion of July 15, 2024 that created the Fairhaven Buzzards Bay Water Quality Working Group. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Hickey reviewed his report (*Attachment B*).

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS / COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Kuechler:

- Economic Development met, Ms. Melanson summarized the meeting for Ms. Kuechler and added that there will be ribbon cuttings at new local businesses.
- Ms. Kuechler contacted Congressman Keating's office regarding Atlas Tack and the EPS, she spoke with a legislative aid for this area who will reach out to the EPA. She will provide an update once she hears back.
- Ms. Kuechler suggested that Board act through the Chair and Town Administrator regarding requests for joint meetings or information from the School Committee and Town departments. Conversations should be collaborative and with the Select Board respecting the statutory differences of the School. In order to provide the community with a clear message and show the Board is working together through this process and difficult conversations, bringing the ideas to the table for discussion first and then having the request go through the Chair and Town Administrator.

Ms. Mello:

- Ms. Mello said she understood the frustration of seeing communications not discussed as a Board and supports moving forward in a collaborative nature.
- Ms. Mello met with Mr. Hickey to review Executive Session minutes, the work started when she was Clerk for the Board and Ms. Kuechler supports Ms. Mello continuing the reviews. A future agenda will have review and release of executive session minutes.
- Ms. Mello met with Mr. Hickey and Beth Luey of the Historical Society and Historical Commission regarding the use of the Academy Building jointly by the Commission and Society for some storage and meetings, this will be on a future agenda item for a proposal to be reviewed.

Mr. Trapilo:

- SMMPO held a disaster planning discussion and will be reaching out to Mr. Hickey to share their plans.
- Mr. Trapilo asked Mr. Hickey if anything can be done about trash on Huttleston Avenue at the bus stop bench.
- Mr. Trapilo attended the West Island meeting, he thanked Mr. Hickey and Mr. Furtado for their discussion and Mr. Osuch for his information on the wastewater treatment plant and process and the impacts of rainwater into the system. He asked Mr. Hickey and Ms. Mello to consider a follow-up meeting in two months.
- The Budget Working Group will be meeting with Public Works, they have submitted requests for information. They will be putting a list of priorities together to send to Mr. Hickey. Discussion also included not working independently in silos and how to work together as a cohesive town.

A suggestion was made to look at areas where growth can happen. Mr. Trapilo said they want to look at efficiency, growth and maybe cost-cutting. Also, look at collaborating with New Bedford and other ways for existing businesses, like Titleist, to expand and grow or see how the Town can support the businesses. Mr. Trapilo said to understand the financial problems requires financial information. He shared the DLS bulletins that go to mayors and selectmen (their term) and a potential discussion with the School Committee regarding ways to save money with a waiver on educational minimums in the bulletin. He did send an email as Rick Trapilo to the School Superintendent asking for information. Mr. Trapilo explained his requests for information and will send to the Chair in the future.

Mr. Romano:

- Mr. Romano summarized that as Select Board members, communications from a member is tied to the member as a Select Board member. The community has asked for change and the Board will need to discuss and move forward even when there is disagreement.
- The Library met about projects like the heating system. The Library Director is available to meet with Board members to tour the Library building.
- Halloween costumes can be dropped off for the Sustainability collection.
- He attended ribbon cuttings with the EDC and at the skate park.

MINUTES

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to accept the Open Session minutes of September 14, 2026. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to accept the Executive Session minutes of September 14, 2026. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled Select Board meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 13, 2026** at 6:00pm and Town board reappointment meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 14, 2026** at 6:00PM

The Select Board adjourned at 7:56pm

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Social Media post regarding open positions for reappointment and appointment
- B. Town Administrator Report

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Select Board Clerk (ah)

Accepted on October 13, 2026

A

TOWN HALL HOURS -- MONDAY 7:30am - 6:00pm -- TUESDAY 7:30am - 4:30pm -- WEDNESDAY 7:30am - 4:30pm -- THURSDAY 7:30am - 4:30pm -- **FRIDAY 7:30am - 11:30am** -- **BPW Recycle Center Hours**
CLOSED ON MON, WED, FRI: --- TUES & THURS 8am-11:55am, 12:30pm-3:30pm; -- SAT 8am-2:00pm - SHELLFISHING OPEN - Effective Oct. 8

 (508) 979-4023

 

- HOME
- GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
- BOARDS & COMMITTEES
- PAY BILLS ONLINE
- COMMUNITY RESOURCES
- NEWS & NOTICES
- CONTACT

MENU

NEWS

- HOME
- ELECTIONS & VOTING
- GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
 - ACCOUNTANT
 - ANIMAL OFFICER
 - ASSESSORS
 - BUILDING DEPARTMENT
- CABLE ACCESS CHANNEL 95 & 97
- HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
- HUMAN RESOURCES
- MARINE RESOURCES

VOLUNTEER FOR A BOARD OR COMMITTEE

🕒 SEPTEMBER 28, 2026 | 📁 NEWS

Town Of Fairhaven
Fairhaven Town Hall
40 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA
02719

(508) 979-4023



OPEN POSITIONS Town Boards & Committees

Volunteer for a Town Board, Committee or Commission!
Share your skills, ideas and passion.
Help shape the future of Fairhaven by getting involved!

Apply Now!

DEADLINE
Noon Oct. 8th



Your town. Your voice. Your community.

Below is a list of all open and vacant positions:



MATTAPOISETT	Art Curator – 1 year term
RIVER VALLEY	1 open seat
WATER DISTRICT	
PARKS AND	Bell Committee – 1 year term
GROUND	4 open seats
DIVISION, BPW	
LAND USE &	Belonging Committee – 1 year term
PLANNING	7 open seats
RECREATION	
DEPARTMENT	Cable Advisory Committee – 1 year term
SEWER /	5 open seats
WASTEWATER	
SANITATION	Community Preservation Committee – 1 year
TAX COLLECTOR	term
TOWN	2 open seats
ADMINISTRATOR	
TOWN CLERK	Economic Study Committee – 1 year term
TREASURER	3 open seats
TREE DEPARTMENT	
WATER DIVISION,	Marine Resources Advisory Committee – 1
BPW	year term
TOWN CALENDAR	5 open seats
CONTACT TOWN	
HALL	Rogers Re-use Committee – 1 year term
MINUTES, AGENDAS	(currently on hold)
& RESOURCES	4 open seats
NEWS	
TOWN MODERATOR	Sustainability Committee – 1 year term
TRASH & RECYCLING	7 open seats
	Commission on Disability – 3 year term
	1 open seat
	Conservation Commission – 3 year term
	2 open seats
	Cultural Council – 3 year term
	3 open seats



Council on Aging Board – 3 year term

1 open seat

Historical Commission:

3 open seats – 3 year term (Full Members)

3 open seats – 1 year term (Associate
Members)

Lagoa Friendship Pact Committee – 2 year
term

2 open seats

Millicent Library – 4 year term

1 open seat

Zoning Board of Appeals – 3 year term

1 open seat (associate member)

If you are interested in any of the above
opportunities, please [click here](#) for more
information and to complete the volunteer
application.

If you are currently serving on one of these
boards or committees and are wondering if
you are up for reappointment, please [click
here](#) to view the current terms. If you are up
for reappointment, you must submit a new
volunteer application by clicking the link
above.

PREVIOUS

[town report –](#)

[september 25, 2026](#)

NEXT

[Fairhaven Town](#)

[Report – October 2,](#)

[2026](#)



Quick Links

[Town Administrator](#)

[Town Clerk](#)

[Fairhaven Fire Department](#)

[Fairhaven Police Department](#)

Fairhaven Town Hall
40 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

(508) 979-4023

Subscribe To News Via Email

Enter Your Email Address To Subscribe To
News From The Town Of Fairhaven, MA
And Receive Notifications Of New Posts
By Email.

SUBSCRIBE

Join 235 Other Subscribers





Town of Fairhaven

Report of the Town Administrator

September 28, 2026

Financial Updates

- I will be attending the MMA's Fiscal Summit on October 1st. The meeting will discuss the fiscal challenges facing municipalities across the Commonwealth.
- I met with City of New Bedford's Director of Data Management Christina Cotsoridis to continue discussions to identify opportunities to regionalize some municipal services. I anticipate those conversations to continue in October.

Project Updates

- The four decorative street lights are currently being installed around the Millicent Library property.
- A representative from the New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School informed me that they will be finishing the storage shed located in the COA/Recreation parking lot in October, now that they have completed their work on the High School storage building.
- The Senior Center kitchen renovations have been completed. Below are the before and after pictures. This project was completed at no cost to the Town. Funding was received through grants.



Personnel Update

- Most Town employees who manage staff attended an Employment Practices Seminar on Tuesday afternoon September 22nd. The seminar provided an update on understanding workplace discrimination, harassment, wrongful termination and hostile work environment situations

Miscellaneous Updates

- The Atlas Tack Working Group Chari and I will participate in a conference call on Monday, September 28th to discuss a party who is interested in purchasing the Atlas Tack property. I will update the Board on the discussion at your meeting.