



**Fairhaven Select Board, Finance Committee
& School Committee
Joint Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2026**

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2026 MAR 31 PM12:47

Select Board Members Present: Charles Murphy Sr., Andrew Romano, Natalie Mello, Keith Silvia and Andrew Saunders, Keith Hickey and Anne Carreiro

Finance Committee Members Present: Padraic Elliott, Stephen Levesque, Robert Grindrod, Peter Gardner, Pattie Pacella, Linda Gallant, Ken Blanchard, David Patterson and James Souza

School Committee Members Present: Brian Monroe, Nicole Pacheco, Kelly Ochoa, Stephanie Pickup, Erik Andersen, Donna McKenna and Tara Kohler

Not Present: Finance Committee members: Claire Millette, Steve Riley and Chris Fidalgo

Mr. Murphy called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:36pm

Mr. Monroe called the Finance Committee to order at 6:36pm and took roll call of members

Mr. Elliott called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:36p.m.

ACTION ITEM / BUDGET REVIEW DISCUSSION

Review FY27 Budget

Discussion of Department's FY27 Budget with the Finance Committee

Mr. Hickey introduced Library Trustee and Treasurer, Robert Kenworthy. Mr. Kenworthy addressed the Board regarding the history of the agreement between the Town and the Millicent Library and the calculation of the per capita Operating Expense (*Attachment A*).

Discussion ensued with members of the Select Board ("Board"), Finance Committee ("FinCom") and School Committee ("Committee") asking clarifying questions about the waiver process used by the Library to remain certified if funding is below the per capita threshold, consequences of not being certified, limits on residents using regional libraries, access to grant funds, the Library in terms of percent of the overall Town operating budget (1.5%), Library appropriation use, donation use, fundraising efforts for projects like air conditioning, and the standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners regarding increases year-over-year and in a three-year period.

Mr. Hickey said the Library reduced their FY27 budget request to \$926,032 which is \$15,000 less than the per capita calculation.

Mr. Monroe made an opening statement about the Fairhaven community identity, the legacy of Henry Huttleston Rogers and the obligations of the Town for Net School Spending requirements (NSS) under Massachusetts General Law. As of January 28, 2026, the Commonwealth established Fairhaven's NSS amount and the current budgeted amount would not meet this statutory obligation.

Discussion continued regarding the School's NSS and budget information. Mr. Hickey and Ms. Carreiro raised concerns about the completeness and transparency of the data presented, while Ms. Kohler and Mr. Monroe indicated they believed the information provided was timely and adequate. Discussion continued about potential penalties if the Town does not meet NSS, for example, not approving the Town's tax rate, loss of state aid and/or intervention by the Attorney General. Ms. Kohler wanted to be on record warning of the risk of not meeting NSS.

The consensus was on the importance of meeting NSS, uniting to send a message that an increase to Chapter 70

funds is needed as well as an increase to the per pupil minimum through a joint letter to the legislature. The Board agreed on the importance of educating constituents on the impacts with some expressing concerns over considering an override and what the amount would be, the potential department cuts and maintaining services. Ms. Kohler said she would draft a letter.

FinCom asked clarifying questions on school contracts, position reductions year-over-year and classroom costs. FinCom would like a list of cuts should an override be presented and fail. Discussion ensued regarding general fund unrestricted aid from the state, where funds can be taken to meet the deficit, review the capital budget and potential regionalization opportunities with other towns. Concerns were raised on the impact an override has on the tax levy. School Committee members expressed that the quality of the schools attracts people to Fairhaven, which in turn contributes to local economic activity.

Discussion ensued about further review of the budget and considering whether to postpone town meeting. Mr. Hickey will rework the FY27 budget per tonight's discussion around NSS and present to the Board on Monday for further review and discussion.

After discussion, the consensus was to educate taxpayers on the impacts of an override now and in the future so the voters can decide. Have clear information and examples.

Mr. Murphy gave a final thought that tough but thoughtful conversations and decisions are part of responsible governance. What matters is that we continue working together toward solutions that serve the best interests of the entire community.

Public Works Superintendent Vinnie Furtado addressed the Board saying he would make it work, cuts would have impacts to the Highway Department, curbing, the Tree Department, personnel, leaf pick-up, Park Department, grass cutting.

Review and Consider Voting Recommendations for Articles for the Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrants

This was tabled

Other budget items

No additional discussion.

School Committee adjourned at 9:29pm

Finance Committee adjourned at 9:29pm

Select Board adjourned at 9:29pm

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

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Millicent Library and Town Agreement, FY27 Funding Invoice to the Town, Library and Town Agreement History

Accepted on March 30, 2026

Fairhaven Public Safety Complex / Capital Plan in context with Proposition 2-1/2

March 19, 2026

Dear Select Board,

I have spoken during your public comment period in the recent past—and previously as a member of this Board—about the importance of context, transparency, and long-term vision when discussing any Proposition 2-1/2 override. Those principles are not optional; they are essential to maintaining public trust.

If the Town is going to ask taxpayers to support an override, then the Town has an obligation to present the **full financial picture**, not a partial one. That includes clearly communicating the foreseeable impact of major capital projects that are already on the horizon.

The proposed Public Safety Complex is not a hypothetical concept. It has been identified as the Town's **top capital priority for approximately 15 years**, Town Meeting has already appropriated \$50K to advance design and cost analysis and the (unofficial) Capital Improvement Plan on the Town website projects \$6.5M in borrowing in FY 2027 and another \$40M in FY 2028. Given that level of commitment/near term vision on this project it is no longer acceptable to treat the financial impact of this project as unknown or deferred. Taxpayers deserve to understand what this means now.

The Town currently carries approximately \$1 million in annual debt service—a relatively low level. However, constructing a Public Safety Complex in the range of \$46.5 million, financed over 30 years, would result in estimated annual debt service of approximately \$2.8 million to \$3.1 million. That represents a **near tripling of the Town's debt burden** and would require a voter-approved Debt Exclusion.

This is not a marginal financial decision—it is one of the most significant financial commitments the Town could make.

Based on Fairhaven's tax base and property values, a project of this size would translate to an estimated increase of approximately **\$90 to \$100 per year for every \$100,000 of assessed home value**. For the average homeowner, that equates to roughly **\$350 to \$450 annually**, or about a **9–11% increase** in the current tax bill. For many residents, especially those on fixed incomes, this is a meaningful and potentially burdensome increase.

I would encourage the Select Board to work through Town Administration to validate these projections as my own research has been very limited and I would encourage you to use your own projections for context alongside any messaging about Proposition 2-1/2.

There has been some suggestion that future debt roll-off could mitigate this impact. The facts do not support that conclusion. With current debt service at approximately \$1 million and declining only gradually, there is **no realistic scenario** in which this project can be absorbed without a substantial net increase to taxpayers. The notion that this could be offset in a meaningful way by existing debt coming off the books is, at best, overly optimistic and, at worst, misleading.

Given these realities, the Select Board should be presenting to the community clear, transparent projections that show:

- The estimated tax impact of a Public Safety Complex
- The timing of that impact
- How it interacts with any proposed Proposition 2-1/2 override
- The cumulative effect of all major capital obligations on taxpayers
- Potential for State Grants for a Public Safety Complex (i.e. S 1744, "An Act relative to the creation of the Massachusetts Public Safety Building Authority"). State if the Town currently believes such a grant should be a prerequisite to financing such a facility.

Anything less leaves voters without the context they need to make informed decisions.

It is also critical to recognize the cumulative burden on taxpayers. While the Wastewater Treatment Plant debt may be accounted for separately, it is funded by the same residents. Layering multiple large financial obligations without clearly communicating the combined impact is not responsible financial stewardship.

The Town must also avoid placing itself in a position where it asks voters to approve of an override now, only to return shortly thereafter seeking approval for a major Debt Exclusion. That sequence would undermine public confidence and raise legitimate concerns about whether the full picture was ever presented.

Transparency is not simply good practice—it is a responsibility. Voters should not be asked to make decisions in stages when the broader financial implications are already known or reasonably foreseeable.

Finally, the Select Board adopted a Financial Policy Document on September 5, 2024. That policy should not be treated as a formality. When presenting the final budget to Town Meeting, I believe the Board should require a clear summary of how the budget aligns with those policies—or a direct explanation of where and why it does not.

The decisions in front of the Town are significant. They require honesty, clarity, and full disclosure. Taxpayers deserve nothing less.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Espindola
14 John St.
(774) 263-1046



Town of Fairhaven
Massachusetts
40 Center Street · Fairhaven, MA · 02719
www.fairhaven-ma.gov

Select Board
Charles K. Murphy, Sr., Chairman
Andrew Romano, Vice Chairman
Natalie A. Mello, Clerk
Keith Silvia
Andrew B. Saunders

Town Administrator/
Keith R. Hickey

Tel: (508) 979-4023

MEMO

DATE: March 22, 2026
TO: Select Board
Finance Committee
FROM: Keith R. Hickey, Town Administrator

RE: Recommended Additional Budget Adjustments

The following outlines additional adjustments to the FY27 proposed budget and provides recommendations for Finance Committee and School Committee consideration.

Budget Adjustment Summary

Proposed Budget Adjustments

Eliminate a second truck driver position	\$ (50,000)
Reduce Health Insurance	\$ (100,000)
Reduce Library to Actual	\$ (15,000)
Eliminate Tourism	\$ (102,241)
Reduce Accounting PT Hours	\$ (12,000)
Reduce Police and Fire OT 25k each	\$ (50,000)
Amount Available Prior to Override	\$ (150)
Reinstate Beach Lot Attendants	\$ 22,500
Reinstate Leaf Pickup	\$ 20,000
Increase to Fairhaven School Budget	\$ 286,891
Additional Budget Adjustments	\$ -

A net adjustment of \$286,891 has been applied to increase the Fairhaven School Department budget to \$26,392,067. This revised amount is approximately \$43,334

above the Net School Spending calculation provided by the School Department last week. That calculation is

currently under review to confirm the accuracy of insurance and employee benefit assumptions.

Given the minimal variance above Net School Spending, further consideration should be given to the use of available non-lapsing funds to reduce reliance on operating appropriations.

Use of Non-Lapsing Funds

The current proposal results in a budget that slightly exceeds Net School Spending. In light of this, I recommend that the Finance Committee and School Committee consider utilizing a greater portion of available non-lapsing fund balances.

A four-year summary of these fund balances is included to provide context regarding their growth.

<u>Revolver Fund:</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
School Rental Fees	\$ 312,173	\$ 302,568	\$ 230,678	\$ 152,660	\$ 130,962
Preschool Tuition	\$ 198,652	\$ 146,716	\$ 125,616	\$ 126,894	\$ 125,935
<u>Special Revenue Fund:</u>					
Tripp School Lease	\$ 201,614	\$ 172,588	\$ 148,267	\$ 133,445	\$ 96,960
Circuit Breaker	\$ 1,113,914	\$ 866,211	\$ 550,571	\$ 438,329	\$ 458,104
<u>Trust Funds:</u>					
Fairhaven High School Trust	\$ 560,009	\$ 493,572	\$ 495,170	\$ 446,981	\$ 346,037
<u>Stabilization:</u>					
Stab-Sped Reserve School	\$ 521,175	\$ 504,642	\$ 456,572	\$ 404,494	\$ 434,644
Totals	\$ 2,907,537	\$ 2,486,297	\$ 2,006,874	\$ 1,702,803	\$ 1,592,642

Specifically:

Circuit Breaker Fund:

Circuit Breaker funds are intended to offset high-cost special education expenses, including tuition, services, and transportation associated with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

While maintaining reserves may be appropriate in stable budget conditions, the current fiscal environment warrants a different approach.

I recommend utilizing an additional \$250,000 from Circuit Breaker funds in FY27. This would:

- Reduce the fund balance to a level consistent with FY25.

- Allow for increased support of the School Department budget.
- Limit reliance on exceeding Net School Spending.

Other Non-Lapsing Funds:

Consideration should also be given to the intended use and growth of Rental Fee and Preschool Tuition funds. If there are no near-term obligations requiring continued accumulation, a portion of these balances could be used to offset FY27 costs.

Operational Recommendations

- **Beach Lot Attendants:** The Town generates approximately \$40,000 annually from the sale of beach decals. Staffing Beach Lot Attendants is necessary to enforce decal compliance and manage beach use. Additionally, fee-based access has been associated with reduced vandalism and inappropriate behavior.

Recommendation: Retain funding for Beach Lot Attendants.

- **Leaf Pickup Program:** The Department of Public Works has indicated that eliminating the annual leaf pickup program would likely result in increased illegal dumping of leaves, requiring additional cleanup efforts. These costs are estimated to exceed the proposed \$20,000 reduction.

Recommendation: Reinstate funding for leaf pickup services.

- **Request the Board of Public Works to Reconsider the Annual Trash Fee:** Prior to beginning the FY27 budget process, the Board of Public Works was asked to consider increasing the annual Trash Fee. Increasing the Trash Fee by \$10 would increase annual revenue by \$67,135.

Recommendation: Increase the Trash Fee by \$10 and use the additional funding to reinstate the second BPW employee reduction in the amount of \$50,000 and apply the balance of \$17,135 to and the balance to increase the school appropriation.

- **Maintain Animal Shelter Operations:** Several residents have expressed concern regarding the proposed closure of the Animal Shelter. In response, I met with two shelter volunteers who are in the process of forming a nonprofit organization with the goal of identifying a viable path to keep the shelter operational. I advised them that any formal arrangement would require approval by the Select Board.

One potential approach discussed would involve the Town continuing to provide a part-time Animal Control Officer, while leasing the shelter facility to a proposed "Friends of the Animal Shelter" organization for a nominal fee of \$1. Under this arrangement, the nonprofit would assume full responsibility for shelter operations. The volunteers expressed strong interest in this concept and will evaluate its feasibility with their group over the coming weeks.

Recommendation: Authorize the proposed “Friends of the Animal Shelter” group to assess their capacity to operate a volunteer-based animal shelter and require a formal response no later than May 1. This approach allows the Town to explore a potential partnership while maintaining flexibility in advance of any final decision regarding the shelter’s future.

Capital Planning Consideration – Tripp School

The lease for the Tripp School is scheduled to expire on April 1. The current lease provides only minimal annual revenue to the School Department.

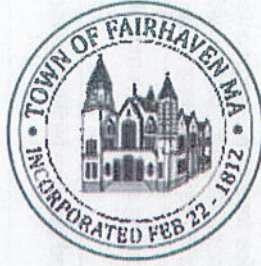
The Capital Improvement Plan includes:

- FY27: Roof replacement (\$700,000)
- FY28: HVAC upgrades (\$811,000)

Before proceeding with more than \$1.5 million in capital investments, the School Committee and Select Board should evaluate the long-term use of the building.

Recommendation:

Delay the roof replacement to FY28 to allow time for a comprehensive determination of the building's future use.



Town of Fairhaven Report of the Town Administrator February 9, 2026

Financial Updates

- The Town received a \$63,700 Community Compact Grant for the upgrade of the online permitting software currently used by the Building Department. The new software will also allow the Town to provide online permit renewals for the Board of Health, shellfish licenses, and a variety of other licenses.

Project Updates

- There are no project updates this week.

Personnel Update

- There are no personnel updates this week.

Miscellaneous Updates

- Anne Carreiro and I met with the North Fairhaven Improvement Society on Wednesday, March 18th and have been asked to speak at a West Island Improvement Association meeting in April. A date has not been determined.

Summary of March Storm Costs/Eligible Reimbursement and Expected Cost to the Town of Fairhaven

DEPARTMENT	SNOW REMOVAL (Outside the 48 Windows)	SNOW REMOVAL (TIME FRAME 12/26 6PM > 2/28 6pm = 48 hours)	CAT "B" EMERGENCY	CAT "E" EQUIPMENT DAMAGE/ SHELTER COSTS	JUSTIFICATION
FIRE			\$ 21,579.48		Overtime associated with staffing 2 - Engines to handle an increase in fire-related emergencies, shoveling hydrants in high-risk areas, assisting EMS crews in carrying patients, and transporting residents to shelters
FIRE				3,772.02	Damage to Fire Trucks - suspension failed, and springs failed while using chains to respond to calls.
FIRE/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT			\$ 2,527.50		UNIT 52 Equipment Cost - Plowing Public Safety Center and helped escort emergency vehicles 50 Hours * 50.55/hour
FIRE/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT			\$		Volunteer Hours - To be calculated (185 Hours total over 5 days) , Unit 52 Operation, EOC operations, Shelter Staffing
POLICE			\$3,411.09		Overtime associated with additional police for storm emergencies and Shelter assistance (\$2600.37) + Equipment usage for pickup with a plow to assist in Police Parking and escorting PD to emergency calls
SCHOOLS - PRIVATE CONTRACTOR	\$ 7,850.00	\$96,400.00			Private contractor agreement - snow plowing and snow removal operations.
SHELTER				\$ 891.52	Shelter Labor Costs for food workers and building facilities personnel + cost of food.
BPW LABOR OT COSTS	\$ 13,180.49	\$4,081.31			Overtime Costs for BPW Employees. Broken down for an inside and outside 48-hour window.
BPW EQUIP COSTS		\$48,996.67		\$ 99,898.09	BPW EQUIP Costs inside 48-hour area + Total Damaged BPW Equipment + Snow/Salt Purchase
BPW SNOW REMOVAL COSTS - PRIVATE CONTRS	\$ 150,405.00	\$468,210.0			Snow Removal Costs - Private vendors - 48 Hour window
POLICE DETAILS	\$14,775.00	\$17,105.50			Police Details for snow removal operations
SUBTOTALS	\$ 186,210.49	\$ 634,793.48	\$ 27,518.07	\$ 104,561.63	\$953,083.67

(no subject)

1 message

Fairhaven Cultural Council <culturalcouncil@fairhaven-ma.gov>
To: Amy Hart <ahart@fairhaven-ma.gov>
Cc: Alyssa Botelho <abotelho@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Fri, Mar 13, 2026 at 1:26 PM

Hello Amy!

I wanted to pass on to your office and the Select Board some great news! Three Fairhaven residents won a highly competitive grant award from the Mass Cultural Council, the Creative Individual Grant. They will receive \$5k for the year to keep practicing their art. More details are here:

<https://fairhavenneighborhoodnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/03-12-26-SnowEater.pdf>

Last year no resident won this grant! I have not checked the year before that yet.

Regards,



Beth Ann Gallagher
Chair, Fairhaven Cultural Council

www.fairhaven-ma.gov/cultural-council
culturalcouncil@fairhaven-ma.gov
40 Center St, Fairhaven, MA 02719



FAIRHAVEN CULTURAL COUNCIL



*Supporting arts and culture in Fairhaven, Massachusetts
and the South Coast community.*

The Fairhaven Cultural Council is a local agency supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency



Three Fairhaven artists receive state grants

By Beth David
Editor

The Fairhaven Cultural Council has announced that three Fairhaven artists received grants from the Mass. Cultural Council. Brian Cass (Music), Heather Martin (Visual Arts), and Kylie Serpa (Multidisciplinary) won Creative Individual Grants.

"This is a highly competitive grant to win," wrote Beth Ann Gallagher, Chair, Fairhaven Cultural Council.

According to Dan Blask, Program Manager, on the Mass. Cultural Council website...

"Mass Cultural Council believes that when creativity thrives, so does the Commonwealth. We are honored to announce 464 grants of \$5,000 each — a total of \$2,320,000 — supporting artists, culture bearers, and creative practitioners as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 Grants for Creative Individuals.

The program awards unrestricted grants to individuals in all creative fields: visual artists, literary artists, theater and dance artists, film/media artists, music artists, designers, traditional artists/culture bearers,

drag artists, cross-disciplinary artists, and more. We received 3,125 eligible applications to Grants for Creative Individuals. Grants were decided through a review process that includes geographic distribution, funding priorities, and scores from reviewers from the Massachusetts cultural sector.

Reviewers prioritized applications based on the program mission: to equitably advance creativity throughout the Commonwealth with unrestricted grants to individuals who demonstrate achievement of creative expression and commitment to their artistic/cultural practice. Approximately 96% of the grantees are receiving their first grant from Mass Cultural Council.

Brian Cass is a guitarist, producer, and music professor at Berklee College of Music. He performs locally with his rock and roll group, Brian & the Cassettes; and with The Overclock Orchestra.

Heather Martin is the owner of Rising Tide Pottery. They offer open studio memberships, workshops, classes, and more. Visit [\[risingtidepottery.com\]\(https://risingtidepottery.com\)](https://</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Kylie Serpa is a multidisciplinary artist who works in film,

This announcement reflects Mass Cultural Council's third year of Grants for Creative Individuals funding. The program was launched in FY24 after a year-long evaluation of our support for creative individuals as part of the Agency's Racial Equity Plan. We plan to offer the Grants for Creative Individuals to Massachusetts creatives every year, subject to the Agency's state budget appropriation and governing Council-approved spending plan.

The Grants for Creative Individuals are part of Mass Cultural Council's sustained effort to advance creativity in the Commonwealth. Sign up for the monthly Artist News e-newsletter to receive all updates, details, and deadlines for Mass Cultural Council's funding and support for creative individuals.

Learn more at <https://massculturalcouncil.org/>

See this year's list of recipients at <https://tinyurl.com/4k72ade6>

A lovely home built on a Housing Trust in Falmouth

1 message

Michelle Costen <michcosten@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 10, 2026 at 1:59 PM

To: Planning Chair <planningchair@fairhaven-ma.gov>, "Patrick J. Carr" <pj carr@a1crane.com>, selectboard@fairhaven-ma.gov, Keith Hickey <khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov>, Mark Sylvia <msylvia11@comcast.net>, buildingcommissioner@fairhaven-ma.gov

1:56 PM Tue Mar 10

41%

pictures of housing trust homes in Falmouth

← → pictures of housing trust homes in Falmouth

All regions Safe search: moderate AI images: show Any time All sizes All colors All types All layouts All Licenses



Falmouth Housing Trust - Building Dream...
falmouthhousingtrust.org



Past Projects - Falmouth Housing Trust
falmouthhousingtrust.org



Falmouth Housing Trust - Building Dream...
falmouthhousingtrust.org



Alderberry Lane - Falmouth Housing Trust
falmouthhousingtrust.org



Alderberry Lane - Falmouth Housing Trust
falmouthhousingtrust.org



Alderberry Lane - Falmouth Housing Trust

falmouthhousingtrust.org
1000 x 750

View File

Falmouth Housing Trust

1 message

michelle costen <michcosten@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 12, 2026 at 4:51 AM

To: Keith Hickey <khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov>, Planning Chair <planningchair@fairhaven-ma.gov>, "Patrick J. Carr" <pjcarr@a1crane.com>, buildingcommissioner@fairhaven-ma.gov, selectboard@fairhaven-ma.gov, ksilvia2@yahoo.com, Mark Sylvia <msylvia11@comcast.net>

Falmouth building homes that people can afford.

<https://www.falmouthhousingtrust.org/current-initiatives/>

Regards,

Michelle Costen

Fwd: SRPEDD-Housing Grants & Law Breaking

1 message

michelle costen <michcosten@gmail.com>
To: selectboard@fairhaven-ma.gov, buildingcommissioner@fairhaven-ma.gov
Cc: stevebouley <stevebouley@comcast.net>

Thu, Mar 12, 2026 at 10:19 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **michelle costen** <michcosten@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 12, 2026 at 10:18 AM
Subject: SRPEDD-Housing Grants & Law Breaking
To: Planning Chair <planningchair@fairhaven-ma.gov>, Patrick J. Carr <pj carr@a1crane.com>, Keith Hickey <khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov>, Mark Sylvia <msylvia11@comcast.net>

Hello,

Taking a look at some important considerations—

SRPEDD receiving grants and wants to “administer” housing grants for affordable housing, but it is in accordance with the current Real Estate Market Rate—

——Which is an inflated false market rate, because Real estate market value has been grossly over extenuated because of all the investors coming into our local towns and paying cash for houses for far over real market value price.

——This cash buying strategy, which is a monopoly (And Monopolies are illegal by the way) Grossly destabilized our housing market, and literally priced out hard-working people who are educated, and offer vital services to the community, from being able to purchase a house.

——We all know this is true. So we must also all know that the current median priced home in Fairhaven, is an inflated false median value

- as especially noted-over the last several years, beyond , what the real median Home price should be-

The fact is, median home values should coordinate with median income -

Because this housing monopoly has been recognized by the US Housing Administration. , there is a new Executive Order to no longer allow investors to come into small towns and buy our family homes for profit- Unfortunately, it's come a bit late. But better late than never-

——However, I have presented a way to the planning board, that can Right this Wrong- And help get us back to the real median home values, which will help make houses affordable again for the people who are in the median income. Which is most of our residents.

Did you know that it takes an income of at least \$219,000 a year to be able to afford a house that is selling for \$700,000? This is why we need to bring home prices back to normalcy, for the median income, that ranges between \$68,000 to \$130,000- This is a practical household income range for most of the residents in Fairhaven.

We have Community property that we own, and we have special financing that we can formulate into a community land trust

——I personally think that we can come up with an affordable housing plan that would be better than SERPEDD would offer at the going market rate, because the market rate, like I said before, is a false inflated market rate. And don't forget SERPEDD Pays their people to administer housing grants to local towns. Let's remove the middlemen-

Why don't we Administer our own Affordable Housing Initiatives? And receive Housing Grants directly, and not through SERPEDD-

——it's not difficult to follow municipal housing trust guidelines. And then once we follow them and formulate a plan, we have it reviewed by town council or another attorney who is an expert in community land trust.

—I truly recommend that the town of Fairhaven takes control of the housing affordable homeownership market through Community land trust, for the next 3 to 5 years in order to get houses to be forever affordable and back to the real median housing value.-

There should be far more concentration and focus on homeownership opportunities and options, then there should be on apartment complexes like they do in New Bedford. —Because, the rents are too expensive and they go up too often extravagantly. even when they are calling them affordable market rate rents—

The high percentage of Apartment living is transitional.—

— Living in homes brings more enduring Stability.

— Once upon a Time, Fairhaven was known for being a STABLE town With a healthy, cash flow,. Until our housing market was destabilized by Predator investor - (and not all investors are predators. I know a few investors who are very good people and care about the community)

But How did we ever get so Lawless?

And what will we do to fix this mess?

"Streamlining with the lawful tools that we have, doesn't mean we break the laws. We streamline within the laws"

People are breaking short term, rental bylaws, and builders are building on property without following the law. This is what's happening in our town.

Cutting through all the red tape, somehow has sent a message to developers, builders and Investors that it's OK to break the law. But it II Not OK-

—And this is what I have been talking about and writing about for the last several years- I Tried to warn the town because I could see the problems that we were going to have, which we now have.

It is amazingly clever, how people will ignore listening to someone who's speaking the truth. In fact, some people are so clever at it, that they just completely shut out their own Voice Of Conscience of right and wrong.-

For those who might not know and I'm sorry if you don't want me to say this, but I'm going to say it, ———

"The Voice of Conscience is how God speaks to us. The same God we pledge allegiance under"

—The truth is, the Community of Fairhaven must take control back to the people. through Community Land Trust-and really begin to listen again to the voice of conscience.

Don't let anyone railroad us Anymore-

Regards,

Michelle Costen

16 Powers -MAHT petition on the warrant-

1 message

michelle costen <michcosten@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 10:18 AM

To: Planning Chair <planningchair@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Cc: "Patrick J. Carr" <picarr@a1crane.com>, Keith Hickey <khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov>, selectboard@fairhaven-ma.gov, Mark Sylvia <msylvia11@comcast.net>

Powers of a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund in Massachusetts

Municipal affordable housing trust funds in Massachusetts have specific powers granted by state law. These powers enable the trusts to effectively manage and promote affordable housing initiatives. Below are the key powers:

1. Acquisition of Property

- Purchase or acquire real estate for affordable housing development.

2. Construction and Rehabilitation

- Fund the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing units.

3. Financial Assistance

- Provide financial assistance for affordable housing projects, including loans and grants.

4. Leverage Funding

- Leverage state and federal funds to enhance local affordable housing efforts.

5. Partnerships

- Collaborate with non-profit organizations, developers, and other entities to promote affordable housing.

6. Policy Development

- Develop policies and strategies to address local housing needs.

7. Community Engagement

- Engage with the community to assess housing needs and gather input on housing initiatives.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

- Monitor the use of funds and report on the effectiveness of housing initiatives.

9. Advocacy

- Advocate for affordable housing at local, state, and federal levels.

10. Zoning and Land Use

- Influence zoning and land use policies to facilitate affordable housing development.

11. Rental Assistance

- Provide rental assistance programs to support low-income households.

12. Homeownership Programs

- Create programs to assist first-time homebuyers and promote homeownership.

13. Long-term Affordability

- Ensure that affordable housing units remain affordable for the long term.

14. Emergency Housing Solutions

- Address emergency housing needs, including homelessness prevention.

15. Education and Outreach

- Educate the public about affordable housing issues and available resources.

16. Establishing Guidelines

- Set guidelines for the operation and management of the trust fund.

These powers enable municipal affordable housing trust funds to play a crucial role in addressing housing challenges and promoting affordable living options in their communities.

Regards,

Michelle Costen