



FAIRHAVEN SELECT BOARD
Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2026

FAIRHAVEN TOWN CLERK
RCUD 2026 APR 14 AM 8:45

Present: Charles Murphy Sr., Andrew Romano, Natalie A. Mello, Keith Silvia, Andrew Saunders, Keith R. Hickey and Anne Carreiro

Mr. Murphy opened the Select Board meeting at 6:30pm

Mr. Murphy made a statement about Public Comment not being included on the agenda for tonight's meeting—it is consistent with the Board's practice for meetings outside of regularly scheduled sessions, there will be an opportunity for comments for items on the agenda tonight.

ACTION / DISCUSSION

FY27 Budget Discussion / Proposition 2 ½ Override Discussion

Mr. Hickey summarized the Finance Committee's work to date and asked the Board to consider voting on the other budget categories and holding on the School budget until the joint meeting March 31st. He distributed budget sheets (*Attachment A*) and a proposed override warrant article listing the proposed department, line item and amount with a total proposed override of \$760,149 (*Attachment B*).

Discussion ensued about the process, Town Meeting, the override article, whether to review each line item on the budget, changes in budget lines, Net School Spending (NSS) calculation, clarification on department notes, future considerations for joint budget meetings, consideration of collateral consequences to bylaws (for example, potential litigation costs), feedback to the Board about an override, educating on the impacts of an override, how much and gaining the public trust. Ms. Mello referred to the idea in an email from Bob Espindola of a two-tier approach (*Attachment C*).

Public Comment:

Zach Aubut of Mill Road (Precinct 6) spoke in support of the proposed override to restore the Animal Control Officer position, allowing voters to decide, also creating a bylaw to dedicate funds directly to the animal shelter rather than the general fund. He discussed increasing school spending with declining enrollment, calling for a broader review of the school budget. Additionally, he questioned the impact of eliminating Tourism, recommended a similar analysis for the Animal Shelter, and asked about the status of a reported gift intended for the shelter.

Jim Anderson of Precinct 1, Green Street addressed the Board, he said his questions were answered and asked how to convince voters. He said the wind mills have an expense and there will be a looming cost for the turf fields at Fairhaven High School, they have a limited life and will need to be replaced soon.

Michelle Costen of Spring Street spoke about fiscal responsibility at both the local and state levels, noting housing challenges and the financial impact of short-term rentals. She expressed concern that the Town is not addressing the root causes of the deficit and raised allegations of potential mismanagement. She urged the Board to advocate for the state to use its rainy-day fund, questioned the lack of state response, and asked why the Town has not pursued federal assistance or intervention to secure state funding.

Mr. Murphy encouraged everyone to write to the governor to increase local aid to Fairhaven.

Mark Alves of Beach Street, a 100% disabled veteran, acknowledged that while tax increases are unpopular, they can be necessary. He noted Fairhaven's relatively low tax rate compared to neighboring New Bedford and described the proposed increase as minimal. He emphasized that certain costs, like trash services, are unavoidable and that supporting social services requires accepting higher taxes.

Donna Bernardo addressed the Board, she said she volunteers at the Animal Shelter and the problem will still exist with wild animals like injured coyotes and rabid raccoons, if animals are not cared for people will suffer and it is unfair to pass it on to another town.

Patrick Carr of Pleasant Street addressed the Board and asked for clarification about statements heard about the lowest tax bracket in the area and comparisons to other towns, if the cost of the water and sewer increasing, it makes it equal to or more than other towns. He cited examples of variables using assessed taxes and property values and mentioned business assessments and tax rates. Mr. Carr mentioned other considerations like seniors on fixed incomes, fuel costs, trash fees, revenue from trash fees, whether the trash fee can be reversed, should the trash fee be raised to get past this deficit and reverted back, impacts on businesses, the Tripp School roof repairs and building use. The cost of living adjustments for school employees and any consideration of freezing raises. He suggested looking into what is not needed at the schools and other departments. He questioned the need for school transportation and the costs associated.

Mr. Hickey cautioned on further discussion and that a calculator was being put on the website to enter assessed value and calculate the budget impact on a property. Mr. Romano pointed out that property sale prices are not what tax rates are determined by. Ms. Carreiro added that net school spending (NSS) would still a problem if the school budget is reduced.

Review and Consider Voting Recommendations for Articles for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Hickey asked the Board to consider their recommendation per article and to hold on three articles: General Fund Operating Budget FY27, General Fund Operating Budget Override and the General Fund Capital Plan. Mr. Hickey provided context to articles the Board needed clarification on.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Measurer of Wood and Bark. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Town Report. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Report of Committees. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Transfer Budget Funds for FY26. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Setting Salaries of Town Officers for FY26. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Supplemental FY26 Snow and Ice Appropriation. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Union Wharf Construction Appropriation. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Water Enterprise Fund Operating Budget. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Sewer Enterprise Fund Operating Budget. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Town Cable Enterprise Fund Operating Budget. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, School Cable Enterprise Fund Operating Budget. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Water Enterprise Fund Capital Plan. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Water Enterprise Fund Borrowing. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Sewer Enterprise Fund Capital Plan. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Other Appropriations, Funding of Articles. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Other Appropriations, Increase and Fund COLA base for Retirees. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Community Preservation Committee Appropriations FY27. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Revolving Funds. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Adopt Chapter 22I of the Hero Act. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Adopt Chapter 22J of the Hero Act. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Civil Service Revocation-Fire Chief. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Discussion ensued on the article titled *Fairhaven Affordable Housing Trust*, the Board discussed the language in Section 4, Composition. Bob Grindrod addressed the Board and suggested more analysis before implementing and asked for more information to be presented at Town Meeting. Mr. Hickey confirmed Town Counsel has reviewed and provided examples of boiler-plate language that was used in the bylaw.

Motion: Mr. Romano motioned to remove the article titled, Fairhaven Affordable Housing Trust from the warrant until it is vetted. Ms. Mello seconded.

Discussion on the motion ensued, concerns raised regarding waiting and leaving out median income range people, the cap of \$15M in the article cannot be exceeded without a Town Meeting vote and there is a check-and-balance due to needing Select Board approval.

On the Motion: Mr. Romano motioned to remove the article titled, Fairhaven Affordable Housing Trust from the warrant until it is vetted. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion failed (2-3-0) Mr. Saunders, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Silvia opposed.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Fairhaven Affordable Housing Trust. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed (3-2-0) Ms. Mello and Mr. Romano opposed.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Adoption for the article titled, Amend Bylaws c. 169 § 13 Removal of Snow and Ice. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Yield to Petitioner for the article titled, Citizen's Petition-Municipal Housing Trust Fund. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Yield to Petitioner for the article titled, Citizen's Petition-Amend Bylaws c. 56 § 13. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to recommend Yield to Petitioner for the article titled, Citizen's Petition-Amend Bylaws c. 56 § 14. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to accept the open session minutes of March 19 and 23, 2026 as presented. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is a joint meeting with the Finance and School Committee tomorrow, March 31st starting at 6:30pm, the School Committee will join at 7pm. The next regularly scheduled Select Board meeting will be on ***Monday, April 13, 2026*** at 6:30pm.

Mr. Murphy asked for a moment of silence to remember the brave men and women of our military who have been killed or wounded in action, we also hold in our thoughts their families, who also carry the weight of their sacrifice.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Summary Budget dated 3/30/26
- B. Proposed Override Warrant Article
- C. Bob Espindola email: Two-Tiered approach to Proposition 2-1/2 Override Question on the ballot
- D. Michelle Costen handout: A lovely home built on a Housing Trust in Falmouth; Falmouth Housing Trust; Fwd.: SRPEDD-Housing Grants & Law Breaking; 16 Powers-MAHT petitions on the warrant

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

Accepted on April 13, 2026

Town of Fairhaven

Summary of Department Request, Town Administrator Adjustments and Additional Cuts for Budget Without an Override

LINE	Function/ Dept. #	Department Name/Function Totals	FY26 Approved Budget	FY 2027 Dept Request	FY 2027 Recommended Budget	TA Recommended Changes	FY 2027 Proposed Budget W/O Override	Additional Cuts Needed for Budget Without Override	Impact of Budget Adjustments to Proposed Budget Not Needing an Override
GENERAL GOVERNMENT (MISC.)									
1	114	Moderator Salary	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	
122/195/40: Select Board/Town Report/Engineering									
2		Salaries & Wages	\$352,693	\$328,644	\$328,644	\$0	\$328,644	\$0	
3		Operating Expenses	\$31,440	\$31,290	\$31,290	\$0	\$28,790	(\$2,500)	Reduction in G/F Reserve Fund Transfer
153 Human Resources									
4		Salaries & Wages	\$151,065	\$194,437	\$141,508	(\$52,929)	\$141,508	\$0	
5		Operating Expenses	\$78,695	\$62,925	\$47,925	(\$15,000)	\$47,925	\$0	
113/131 Town Meeting/Finance Committee									
6		Salaries & Wages	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	
7		Operating Expenses	\$6,400	\$5,075	\$5,075	\$0	\$3,575	(\$1,500)	
8		Reserve Fund	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	
9	151	Legal	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$0	\$275,000	(\$25,000)	
192 Facilities Management									
10		Salaries & Wages	\$178,426	\$190,092	\$190,092	\$0	\$187,488	(\$2,604)	
11		Operating Expenses	\$79,777	\$78,279	\$74,279	(\$4,000)	\$66,675	(\$7,604)	Repairs & Maint. Bldg. \$5,000 Contracted Services \$3,000 Electricity \$3,604
155 Consolidated Information Technology									
12		Salaries & Wages	\$371,169	\$413,546	\$413,546	\$0	\$413,546	\$0	
13		Operating Expenses	\$221,760	\$255,450	\$205,450	(\$50,000)	\$203,260	(\$2,190)	
General Government Salaries & Wages			\$1,055,353	\$1,128,719	\$1,075,790	(\$52,929)	\$1,073,186	(\$2,604)	
General Government Operating Expenses			\$793,072	\$808,019	\$739,019	(\$69,000)	\$700,225	(\$38,794)	
Subtotal General Government			\$1,848,425	\$1,936,738	\$1,814,809	(\$121,929)	\$1,773,411	(\$41,398)	

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GENERAL GOVERNMENT (MUNICIPAL FINANCE)									
135 Accounting									
14		Salaries & Wages	\$205,498	\$233,911	\$233,911	\$0	\$233,911	\$0	
15		Operating Expenses	\$64,480	\$79,310	\$79,310	\$0	\$77,710	(\$1,600)	Eliminate Acctg Seminars
16	145	Treasurer/Collector							
		Salaries & Wages	\$256,307	\$262,390	\$262,390	\$0	\$262,390	\$0	
17		Operating Expenses	\$63,155	\$65,815	\$55,815	(\$10,000)		\$0	Elimin. Partial Tax Title Funding, Postage \$14,500 prop tax bills, \$12,000 for excise, remainder boat reg. & misc.
18	141	Assessors							
		Salaries & Wages	\$144,395	\$160,659	\$160,659	\$0	\$160,659	\$0	
19		Operating Expenses	\$43,121	\$71,550	\$71,550	\$0	\$71,550	\$0	Recertification
			Municipal Finance Salaries & Wages	\$606,200	\$656,960	\$0	\$656,960	\$0	
			Municipal Finance Operating Expenses	\$170,756	\$206,675	(\$10,000)	\$205,075	(\$1,600)	
			Subtotal Municipal Finance	\$776,956	\$863,635	(\$10,000)	\$862,035	(\$1,600)	
GENERAL GOVERNMENT (TOWN CLERK/ELECTIONS)									
20	161/163	Subtotal Salaries & Wages	\$168,127	\$210,312	\$210,312	\$0	\$209,563	(\$749)	Additional Elections
21	161/163	Subtotal Operating Expenses	\$44,652	\$62,524	\$62,524	\$0	\$61,655	(\$869)	Additional Elections
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT									
175-00 Planning Board									
22		Salaries & Wages	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
23		Operating Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
175-01 Planning and Economic Development									
24		Salaries & Wages	\$129,567	\$121,157	\$121,157	\$0	\$121,157	\$0	
25		Operating Expenses	\$8,171	\$5,290	\$5,290	\$0	\$5,290	\$0	

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	175-02	Economic Development Committee							
26		Salaries & Wages	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
27		Operating Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
28	176	Board of Appeals	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
29		Salaries & Wages	\$3,500	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$0	\$0	\$3,900	\$0
		Operating Expenses					\$0		
30	171	Conservation Commission	\$75,683	\$78,718	\$78,718	\$0	\$0	\$78,718	\$0
31		Salaries & Wages	\$6,150	\$6,150	\$6,150	\$0	(\$135)	\$6,015	\$6,015
		Operating Expenses							
32	122	Buzzards Bay Action Committee	\$1,800	\$1,870	\$1,870	\$0	\$0	\$1,870	Assessment
		Subtotal Planning & Development	\$205,250	\$199,875	\$199,875	\$0	\$0	\$199,875	
		Planning & Development Salaries & Wages	\$19,621	\$17,210	\$17,210	\$0	(\$135)	\$17,075	
		Planning & Development Operating Expenses	\$224,871	\$217,085	\$217,085	\$0	(\$135)	\$216,950	
		TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$2,034,930	\$2,195,866	\$2,142,937	(\$52,929)	(\$3,353)	\$2,139,584	
		General Government Salaries & Wages	\$1,028,101	\$1,104,428	\$1,025,428	(\$79,000)	(\$41,398)	\$984,030	
		General Government Operating Expenses	\$3,063,031	\$3,300,294	\$3,168,365	(\$131,929)	(\$44,751)	\$3,123,614	
		Subtotal General Government							
		PUBLIC SAFETY							
	210/292	Police Department/Animal Control	\$5,046,875	\$5,063,454	\$5,063,454	\$0	(\$103,935)	\$4,959,519	Reduction in Overtime/Reduce Animal Control to PT
33		Salaries & Wages	\$409,680	\$416,707	\$413,707	(\$3,000)	(\$29,700)	\$384,007	Eliminate Animal Control
34		Operating Expenses							

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	220/225/29:	Fire Department/Emergency Management							
35		Salaries & Wages	\$3,613,442	\$3,736,115	\$3,721,286	(\$14,829)	\$25,000	\$3,696,286	Reduction in Overtime
36		Operating Expenses	\$322,460	\$339,924	\$336,274	(\$3,650)	\$0	\$336,274	
241		Building Department							
37		Salaries & Wages	\$237,253	\$246,334	\$246,334	\$0	(\$8,325)	\$238,009	Reduction on PT inspection staffing hours
38		Operating Expenses	\$4,481	\$4,331	\$4,100	(\$231)	(\$525)	\$3,575	
298		Marine Resources							
39		Salaries & Wages	\$177,993	\$188,029	\$188,029	\$0	(\$10,036)	\$177,993	Reduce PT staffing hours
40		Operating Expenses	\$38,017	\$37,787	\$37,787	\$0	\$0	\$37,787	
244		Weights & Measures							
41		Salaries & Wages	\$7,140	\$7,140	\$7,140	\$0	\$0	\$7,140	
42		Operating Expenses	\$300	\$400	\$400	\$0	\$0	\$400	
		Public Safety Salaries & Wages	\$9,082,703	\$9,241,072	\$9,226,243	(\$14,829)	(\$97,296)	\$9,078,947	
		Public Safety Operating Expenses	\$774,938	\$799,149	\$792,268	(\$6,881)	(\$30,225)	\$762,043	
		Subtotal Public Safety	\$9,857,641	\$10,040,221	\$10,018,511	(\$21,710)	(\$127,521)	\$9,840,990	
		EDUCATION							
43	300	Fairhaven Public Schools	\$25,656,166	\$26,912,487	\$26,531,685	(\$380,802)	(\$1,618)	\$26,530,067	Added \$424,891
44	301	Greater New Bedford Vocational	\$2,631,268	\$2,928,534	\$2,928,534	\$0	\$0	\$2,928,534	
45	302	Bristol Aggriel HS	\$332,694	\$291,510	\$291,510	\$0	\$0	\$291,510	
		Subtotal Education	\$28,620,128	\$30,132,531	\$29,751,729	(\$380,802)	(\$1,618)	\$29,750,111	
		PUBLIC WORKS							
46	421	Administration Division	\$88,732	\$93,748	\$93,748	\$0	\$0	\$93,748	
47		Salaries & Wages	\$8,375	\$8,925	\$8,925	\$0	\$0	\$8,925	
		Operating Expenses							

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	403/420	Highways Division							
48		Salaries & Wages	\$1,364,760	\$1,381,546	\$1,361,771	(\$19,775)	(\$100,000)	\$1,261,771	Eliminate (2) Truck Drivers and OT
49		Operating Expenses	\$721,252	\$912,892	\$793,892	(\$119,000)	(\$55,451)	\$738,441	Reduce Curbing & Resurfacing
50		Snow & Ice	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$60,000	
650		Parks Department							
51		Salaries & Wages	\$162,805	\$160,272	\$139,321	(\$20,951)	(\$22,500)	\$116,821	Add \$22,500 for lot attendents
52		Operating Expenses	\$56,500	\$149,033	\$109,033	(\$40,000)	(\$15,000)	\$94,033	
294/295		Tree Department							
53		Salaries & Wages	\$0	\$9,200	\$9,200	\$0	\$0	\$9,200	
54		Operating Expenses	\$68,945	\$120,345	\$65,095	(\$55,250)	(\$10,000)	\$55,095	Reduction in tree removal and plantings
55	431	Sanitation - Operating Expenses	\$1,776,332	\$1,855,513	\$1,855,513	\$0	(\$25,000)	\$1,830,513	Eliminate Hazardous Waste Day & leaf pickup
56	424	Street Lighting	\$62,000	\$62,000	\$50,000	(\$12,000)	\$0	\$50,000	Budget Closer to Actual Expense
		Public Works Salaries & Wages	\$1,616,297	\$1,644,766	\$1,604,040	(\$40,726)	(\$122,500)	\$1,481,540	
		Public Works Operating Expenses	\$2,753,404	\$3,168,708	\$2,942,458	(\$226,250)	(\$105,451)	\$2,837,007	
		Subtotal Public Works	\$4,369,701	\$4,813,474	\$4,546,498	(\$266,976)	(\$227,951)	\$4,318,547	
		HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT							
57	510	Board of Health							
58		Salaries & Wages	\$172,559	\$181,603	\$181,603	\$0	(\$8,994)	\$172,609	
		Operating Expenses	\$17,500	\$17,550	\$17,450	(\$100)	\$0	\$17,450	
		Subtotal Board of Health	\$190,059	\$199,153	\$199,053	(\$100)	(\$8,994)	\$190,059	
		COMMUNITY SERVICES							
		541 Council on Aging							

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59		Salaries & Wages	\$154,338	\$155,829	\$155,829	\$0	\$0	\$155,829	
60		Operating Expenses	\$35,247	\$35,247	\$35,247	\$0	(\$1,491)	\$33,756	
543		Veterans Services							
61		Salaries & Wages	\$94,302	\$99,606	\$99,606	\$0	\$0	\$99,606	
62		Operating Expenses	\$545,022	\$545,022	\$452,886	(\$92,136)	\$0	\$452,886	Budget Closer to Actual Expense
63	611	Millicent Library	\$770,528	\$926,032	\$926,032	\$0	\$0	\$926,032	Adjusted to Actual
640		Recreation Department							
64		Salaries & Wages	\$302,971	\$272,017	\$272,017	\$0	\$0	\$272,017	
65		Operating Expenses	\$51,900	\$60,400	\$60,400	\$0	\$0	\$60,400	
189		Tourism Department							
66		Salaries & Wages	\$58,105	\$76,532	\$76,532	\$0	(\$76,532)	\$0	Eliminate Department
67		Operating Expenses	\$41,309	\$25,709	\$25,709	\$0	(\$25,709)	\$0	
68	691	Fine Arts - expenses	\$850	\$800	\$800	\$0	(\$600)	\$200	
69	670	Historical Commission - expenses	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$0	(\$5,200)	\$10,000	
692	692	Memorial/Veterans Day - expenses	\$2,500	\$3,500	\$2,500	(\$1,000)	\$0	\$2,500	
690	690	Cultural Council	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$0	(\$350)	\$900	
690	190	Commission on Disability - expenses	\$900	\$650	\$650	\$0	(\$200)	\$450	
690	191	Belonging Committee	\$900	\$700	\$700	\$0	(\$400)	\$300	
74		Community Services Salaries & Wages	\$609,716	\$603,984	\$603,984	\$0	\$76,532	\$527,452	
		Community Services Operating Expenses	\$1,465,606	\$1,614,510	\$1,521,374	(\$93,136)	(\$33,950)	\$1,487,424	
		Subtotal Community Services	\$2,075,322	\$2,218,494	\$2,125,358	(\$93,136)	(\$110,482)	\$2,014,876	

Town of Fairhaven

Summary of Department Request, Town Administrator Adjustments and Additional Cuts for Budget Without an Override

LINE	Function/ Dept. #	Department Name/Function Totals	FY26 Approved Budget	FY 2027 Dept Request	FY 2027 Recommended Budget	TA Recommended Changes	Additional Cuts Needed for Budget Without Override	FY 2027 Proposed Budget W/O Override	Impact of Budget Adjustments to Proposed Budget Not Needing an Override
NON-DEPARTMENTAL									
75	911	Contributory Retirement	\$4,334,352	\$4,536,937	\$4,536,937	\$0	\$0	\$4,536,937	Actual FY27 amount
76	924	Group Insurance	\$5,445,000	\$6,261,750	\$6,261,750	\$0	(\$690,146)	\$5,571,604	Reduced an additional \$250k
77	913	MA Employment Security	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	Anticipated Layoffs
78	925	Town General Insurance	\$1,234,320	\$1,383,500	\$1,383,500	\$0	\$0	\$1,383,500	Estimated amount
79	918	Medicare Taxes (Employer Share)	\$502,000	\$521,000	\$521,000	\$0	\$0	\$521,000	
80	122	Wind Turbine Electric Expense	\$625,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$0	(\$33,403)	\$516,597	
81	122	Salary Reserve	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Non-Departmental Salary & Wages			\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Non-Departmental Operating Expenses			\$12,240,672	\$13,403,187	\$13,403,187	\$0	(\$723,549)	\$12,679,638	
Subtotal Non-Departmental			\$12,340,672	\$13,403,187	\$13,403,187	\$0	(\$723,549)	\$12,679,638	
DEBT SERVICE									
82	710	Debt Service	\$945,820	\$1,017,891	\$1,017,891	\$0	\$0	\$1,017,891	
Subtotal Debt Service			\$945,820	\$1,017,891	\$1,017,891	\$0	\$0	\$1,017,891	
GRAND TOTAL			\$61,462,374	\$65,125,245	\$64,230,592	(\$894,653)	(\$1,294,866)	\$62,935,726	
GRAND TOTAL BREAKDOWN									
Salaries & Wages - Town			\$13,616,205	\$13,867,291	\$13,758,807	(\$108,484)	(\$358,675)	\$13,400,132	
Operating Expenses - Town			\$6,039,549	\$6,704,345	\$6,298,978	(\$405,367)	(\$211,024)	\$6,087,954	
Educational Services			\$28,620,128	\$30,132,531	\$29,751,729	(\$380,802)	(\$1,618)	\$29,750,111	
Non-Departmental Costs			\$12,240,672	\$13,403,187	\$13,403,187	\$0	(\$723,549)	\$12,679,638	

Town of Fairhaven

Summary of Department Request, Town Administrator Adjustments and Additional Cuts for Budget Without an Override

LINE	Function/ Dept. #	Department Name/Function Totals	FY 2027 Dept Request	FY 2027 Recommended Budget	TA Recommended Changes	FY 2027 Proposed Budget W/O Override	Additional Cuts Needed for Budget Without Override	Impact of Budget Adjustments to Proposed Budget Not Needing an Override
	Overlay	\$300,000	\$350,000	\$350,000		\$350,000		
	Debt Service	\$945,820	\$1,017,891	\$1,017,891	\$0	\$1,017,891	\$0	
	Grand Totals	\$61,762,374	\$65,475,245	\$64,580,592	(\$894,653)	\$63,285,726	(\$1,294,866)	

PROPOSED OVERRIDE WARRANT ARTICLE

ARTICLE

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds such additional sums of money considered necessary to defray the Town's expenses for a twelve month period beginning July 1, 2026 and appropriate the same to several departments provided, however that the vote taken hereunder shall be expressly contingent upon approval by the voters at an election of a Proposition 2½, so-called, override question, in accordance with G.L. c. 59, §21C, allowing such funds to be raised in excess of the limit otherwise imposed by said law, and/or take any other action relative thereto.

Department	Line Item	Amount of Override
Public Safety Salaries and Wages	Animal Control Wages	\$67,532
Public Safety Operating Expenses	Animal Control Operating Expenses	\$9,000
Public Safety Salaries and Wages	Police Overtime	\$25,000
Public Safety Salaries and Wages	Fire Overtime	\$25,000
Community Services Salaries and Wages	Tourism Department Wages	\$76,532
Community Services Operating Expenses	Tourism Department Operating Expenses	\$25,709
Public Works Highway	Wages	\$50,000
Fairhaven School Department		<u>\$481,376</u>
Total Override Recommended		<u>\$760,149</u>

Proposed Motion - Move that the additional amounts of money listed in the warrant under Article __ be raised and appropriated for the several purposes therein itemized, each item being considered a separate appropriation, the same to be expended only for such purposes; provided however that the vote taken hereunder shall be expressly contingent upon approval by the voters at an election of a Proposition 2½, so-called, override question in accordance with G.L. c. 59, §21C, allowing such funds to be raised above the limit otherwise imposed by said law.

Please consider a Two-Tiered approach to Proposition 2-1/2 Override Question on the ballot

1 message

Bob Espindola <bobespindola02719@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 10:35 AM

To: selectboard@fairhaven-ma.gov, Keith Hickey <khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov>, pell6290@comcast.net, Amy Hart <ahart@fairhaven-ma.gov>, Ann Espindola <annespindola@gmail.com>

Select Board,

As someone who finds myself in a position where I want to support an override to help get the Town back on track (provided the Town closes the gap on some of the messaging I have referred to lately about Capital Improvement Planning and Financial Policy Adherence) I worry that providing an option for an override that would fund the full amount that the department heads requested would set up for a likely failure at the polls.

I do recognize, however, that this is purely speculation on my part and it occurred to me this morning that there is a simple way that the Town could find out exactly how committed the taxpayers in Fairhaven to the idea of an override (if at all).

With that in mind, I wonder if the Board would consider, at a future meeting, the concept of a Two-Tier Override approach, similar to what Malden did this year? I believe this approach would be successful in Fairhaven, provided the questions are phrased in a way to not confuse the voters and the messaging about how to vote ahead of voting day is done well.

While some would argue that leadership should guide the community in a certain direction, I would argue that the Two-Tiered approach is the ultimate way to truly find out how the community feels about an override without making any assumptions about what you think they feel and without having to strategize to pick an option you think is most likely to pass, (which could end up selling the supporters of proposition 2-1/2 short, to some degree). This approach would not cost the Town anything (other than effort in explaining, which I am not underestimating), and it would allow the Town to gauge voter interest in a way that a single override option would not. I think learning more about what the voters want could be very valuable tool in shaping guiding policy decisions moving forward.
the language used along with a link to the Malden page that describes what I am talking about and to their messaging.

I, for one, would like to see this option discussed during a future Select Board meeting, as you finalize the ballot question for the override.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your consideration. I truly appreciate the work you are all doing to work through this very difficult time.

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

<https://www.cityofmalden.org/1227/Proposition-2-Override-Proposal-Fiscal-Y>

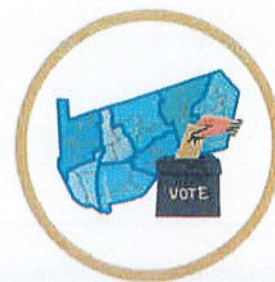
Proposition 2½ Override Election Information

On **March 31, 2026**, Malden voters will be asked to consider two separate Proposition 2½ override questions, **Question 1A** and **Question 1B**. These questions are designed to provide additional funding to help stabilize the City's budget and support essential city services.

BALLOT LANGUAGE

Questions 1A and 1B are separate questions. You may vote for or against each question independently. Each question requires a majority of those voting on that question to pass. If both questions pass, Option 1B will prevail as the question with the higher dollar amount.

The proposed funding would support ongoing services across all City departments, including public schools, public safety, the public library, public works, and general government.



1A

Shall the City of Malden be allowed to assess an additional \$5,400,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of stabilizing the City's budget and to support ongoing city services across all departments, including public schools, public safety, public library, public works and general government, for which the monies will be used for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026?

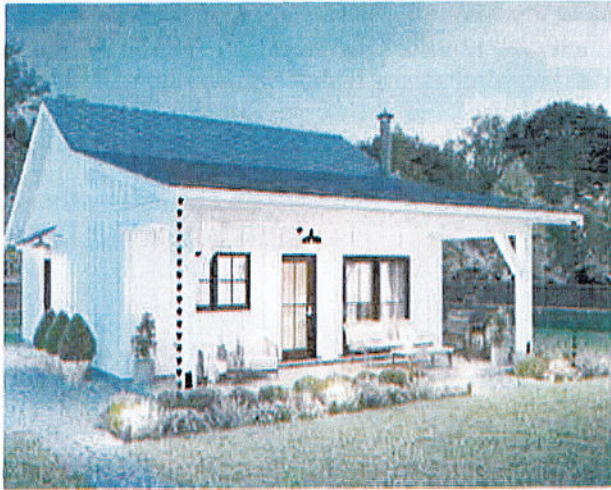
- Yes
- No

1B

Shall the City of Malden be allowed to assess an additional \$8,200,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of stabilizing the City's budget and to support ongoing city services across all departments, including public schools, public safety, public library, public works and general government, for which the monies will be used for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026?

- Yes
- No

How to Create Affordable Home-Ownership Opportunities.



The Creation of an Affordable Home Ownership Initiative that is unique to the Town of Fairhaven, can become tangible, by agreeing to adopt & apply the laws that are already available to us, in the following outline-

— Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund (MAHT)

MGL c.44 s. 55c. Adopting a MAHT - learn the benefits. (we currently have a petition in place to adopt a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund, to go on the TM warrant, May 2, 2026) MAHT's -Proven to help communities thrive-

— Community Preservation Funds (CPA). MGL c.44B s.5f -

Financial flexibility and how we can streamline and appropriate funds with no deferment, into an adopted MAHT-

— — — **Appropriating 20% and more CPA funds to MAHT for Affordable Housing, opens the door to more State funding) We can use up to 60-70%-This would be a wise way to appropriate CPA funds for the next 3-5 years. As it will offer our Town a financial return, in many ways- Proven to help Communities Thrive-**

— Community Land Trust (CLT)- Option Benefits for Median Income-No Rental Increases - MonthlyAffordability, Equity, Town Revenue, Stability and Sustainability- A Homeownership Option. CLT's Proven to help Communities Thrive.

— Zoning Waivers /Emergency Zoning. As related to Housing Affordability- What are they? And how Can local town Planning Boards, and Building commissioners, apply and approve zoning waivers - that are crucial to help solve a housing crisis ? (For Active discussion) Appropriate Zoning Proven to help Communities Thrive

— — — Affordable Housing Bank Initiatives, special interest rates and finance programs. Proven to help communities thrive- A Future discussion

pictures of housing trust homes in Falmouth

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