



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

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

SELECT BOARD REORGANIZATION AND SEATING

Reorganization of Select Board

Mr. Hickey opened for nominations.

Motion: Ms. Mello motioned to nominate Andrew Romano as Select Board Chair. Mr. Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to nominate Rick Trapilo as Select Board Vice Chair. Mr. Trapilo seconded. The motion failed (2-3-0) Mr. Romano, Ms. Mello and Ms. Kuechler opposed.

Motion: Mr. Romano motioned to nominate Natalie Mello as Select Board Vice Chair. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed (4-0-1) Mr. Trapilo abstained.

Motion: Mr. Romano motioned to nominate Pam Kuechler as Select Board Clerk. Mr. Saunders seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Review and Consider Adoption of Select Board Protocols

Discussion ensued about the protocols with revisions proposed by Town Counsel and whether the Board would make any amendments. Ms. Mello asked for a grammatical amendment to protocol eight changing libel to libelous.

The Board discussed its public comment protocol, including whether to maintain the current two-minute time limit. The discussion also addressed the Chair's discretion to recognize members of the public to speak outside of the designated public comment period, the role of public input during public hearings and specific agenda items, and the timing of public comments related to agenda items. Board members discussed whether comments on agenda items should generally be received during the public comment period and considered during the Board's deliberations, while maintaining Board discussion of agenda items unless the Chair recognizes a member of the public to speak.

Motion: Ms. Mello motioned to accept the adoption of Select Board Protocols as amended. Mr. Trapilo seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ann Espindola of John Street addressed the Board via zoom regarding the odors from the wastewater treatment plant in the neighborhood. She has reported it to the Board of Health via their online form and asked for the Board or Town Administrator to do what they could.

APPOINTMENTS / COMMUNITY ITEMS

Reappointments to Boards, Committees and Commissions

Mr. Romano opened for discussion on reappointments. He acknowledged that this agenda item has been rescheduled and that he has also received questions on the process.

Discussion ensued about new Board members not having knowledge of the process and suggesting the Board postpone to September so that the state's response to the Town Meeting vote on limits can be compared to the slate of candidates before the Board. Some on the Board consider all positions as open and did not want to reappoint without knowledge of participation or a candidate's background to ensure members have the subject matter knowledge and information of the committee. Members also need time to consider what board or committee they want considering the future change to limit the number of boards a member can be appointed to. The

consensus of the Board was finding the best people, revamping the application process and to advertise and promote opportunities in the weekly Town Administrator video.

Ms. Kuechler volunteered to work with Ms. Hart on preparing a process for a future agenda.

Doug Brady of Pleasant Street asked to Board to clarify if this applied to all members or just the reappointments. Mr. Romano said it would be for those with terms that expired and going forward.

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to extend current appointments to September 14, 2026. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Appointment Request: Livable Streets: John Loughnane, 1-year term

Mr. Loughnane addressed the Board about his application, interests and qualifications to join the Livable Streets Committee. He said he has been attending the meetings for about two years.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint John Loughnane to the Livable Streets Committee for a term to end September, 2026. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Proclamation: Americans With Disabilities Act 36th Anniversary

Ms. Kuechler read the proclamation recognizing the 36th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) being signed into law in 1990.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to issue a proclamation for the 36th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act being signed into law in 1990 as presented. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Mr. Romano recused himself and exited the Banquet Room

Event Request: N. Fairhaven Improvement Association: Music Night in the Gazebo (Benoit Square), July 19, 2026 The Board reviewed the request.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to approve the event request from the North Fairhaven Improvement Association for the use of a portion of Adams Street on July 19, 2026 as presented. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed (4-0-1) Mr. Romano recused.

Event Request: N. Fairhaven Improvement Association: Holiday Lighting (Benoit Square), December 4, 2026 The Board reviewed the request.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to approve the event request from the North Fairhaven Improvement Association for the use of a portion of Adams Street on December 4, 2026 as presented. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed (4-0-1) Mr. Romano recused.

Mr. Romano returned to the Banquet Room

Request from Historical Commission and Historical Society to use the Academy Building for a Summer Art Exhibit by Susan Darwin on June 27, July 11, July 18 and July 25, 2026

Rick Martin of the Historical Society addressed the Board regarding the request made to them by Ms. Darwin. Ms. Darwin addressed the Board via zoom and offered to answer any questions.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to approve the request by the Historical Commission and Society to use the Academy Building for a summer art exhibit in the Academy Building on June 27, July 11, July 18 and July 25, 2026 with the applicable custodian fee as presented. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Historical Commission Request to Discuss the Rogers' School Bell

Eleanor Chew of the Historical Commission addressed the Board about a suggestion from John Medeiros' to use the Rogers School Bell in community events and parades. The Commission formed a working group to research the feasibility and are seeking the Board's opinion on the use of a trailer to store and display the Rogers School Bell during parades and other community events.

Discussion ensued regarding costs associated, potential for private donations to fund a trailer, liability, the bell's value, logistical considerations, ownership of the bell and whether to establish a process for requesting use of the bell. The Board asked Ms. Chew to provide a list of use and process suggestions to bring back to a future agenda.

Doug Brady addressed the Board via zoom and said this bell is a different and not the Oxford School bell.

Establish a Special Committee to Review Town Bylaws for the Town Charter

The Board discussed the need for a special committee to review the bylaws now that the Charter was vote in. Discussion included deadlines, what the terms should be and the membership breakdown of the committee.

Cathy Melanson of Adams Street addressed the Board and recommended the Board use the members of the Charter Committee due to the time they spent reviewing the bylaws to draft the Charter and they have the knowledge.

The opportunity will be advertised online and appointments will be on the July 13, 2026 agenda.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to establish a Special Bylaw Review Committee as outlined with five members, applications to be received by July 8, 2026. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

ACTION / DISCUSSION

Consider Select Board Representative for SRTA (Southeastern Regional Transit Authority)

The Board discussed interest in this opportunity.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Natalie Mello as Select Board Representative for SRTA (Southeastern Regional Transit Authority). Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Consider Select Board Representative for SRPEDD (Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District)

The Board discussed interest in this opportunity and Mr. Romano suggested the same representative also take the SMMPO.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Rick Trapilo as Select Board Representative for SRPEDD (Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District). Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Consider Select Board Representative for SMMPO (Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization)

The Board discussed interest in this opportunity.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Rick Trapilo as Select Board Representative for SMMPO (Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization). Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Consider Select Board Liaison Assignments

The Board discussed the for liaisons, what the role is, whether attending the meetings is required and the potential to work with the Chairs to support and manage expectations. Discussion included interests per member for each liaison opportunity.

Bob Grindrod of Center Street addressed the Board and said the state statute for the Library Trustee calls for the Select Board Chair to be the liaison.

Mr. Trapilo asked about the Atlas Tack Working Group (ATWG) that Keith Silvia was liaison to. Brief discussion ensued about the prior Board pausing the ATWG meetings to wait for the MassDEP report.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Andrew Romano as Select Board liaison to the Belonging Committee, Cable Advisory Committee, Fair Housing Coordinator, the Dog Park Study Committee, the Millicent Library and the Sustainability. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Ms. Kuechler motioned to appoint Andrew Saunders as Select Board liaison to the Lagoa Friendship Pact Committee, the Livable Streets Committee, the Marine Resources Committee and the Sister City Committee. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Natalie Mello as Select Board liaison to the Bristol County Advisory Committee, Buzzards Bay Water Quality Working Group, Commission on Disability, Historical Commission and the Public Safety Complex Committee. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Pam Kuechler as Select Board liaison to the Economic Development Committee and the Rogers Reuse Committee. Ms. Mello seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to appoint Rick Trapilo as Select Board liaison to the Harbormaster Renewal Plan Committee. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Discussion on Funding Tourism Department Through Donations

The Board continued discussion from the June 15, 2026 meeting regarding the request that the Select Board consider accepting donations to fund the Tourism Department in FY27.

Discussion included the overall process, concerns about the structure and expectations.

Cathy Melanson of Adams Street addressed the Board as Chair of the Economic Development Committee and said the work of Discover Fairhaven is important, the Town should continue the three events for this year and work on a plan for 2027. She suggested the use of volunteers and sponsors.

Discussion continued about the role of staff, the need to run events with volunteer support and whether there are organizations willing to step up and run the three events left for 2026.

Erin Carr of Marina Dr. in Mattapoisett addressed the Board via zoom and said the community appreciates Discover Fairhaven and the override vote as voter dissatisfaction with larger budget items. Donation funding tourism would be a temporary measure and an opportunity to unify the Town with a shared goal.

The Board discussed whether the item would continue to future agendas if no motion was made. The agenda is set through the Chair, any request for future discussion would be made through the Chair.

Discussion ended and no motion was made.

Discuss Proposal to Establish a Budget Working Group

Mr. Trapilo addressed the Board regarding a proposal to establish a working group to study changes in government structure, new revenue opportunities and other possible cost saving measures in preparation of the FY28 budget (*Attachment A*). He reviewed his requests for financials and potential deficits of three to four million dollars in each of the next fiscal years. Mr. Trapilo said his packet contains a proposed charge and said he sees this as a data driven group of people with varied experience to create a business model for Fairhaven.

Discussion ensued about the terminology used, working collaboratively with the Town Administrator and Select Board, addressing changes, efficiencies, opportunities for regionalization and reorganization of department structures as part of the charge of this group. Others on the Board discussed the challenges with budgets driven by unfunded state mandates that have consequences to municipalities if not undertaken. Public education is needed as

part of the process. A suggestion to revamp the budget and joint meeting process with the Finance Committee, the School Committee and large department budgets. The Board discussed reestablishing a budget working group to meet regularly.

Eleanor Chew of Main Street addressed the Board and said a 10-page document was referred to and given to the Board tonight that the public does not have access to and suggested the Board pause discussion to allow the public access to the document being referred to. Mr. Trapilo agreed to have the item tabled to the July 13, 2026 agenda and he will gather additional financial documents for the discussion.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to table the discussion on establishing a budget working group to the July 13, 2026 meeting. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Discuss / Review Local Aid Letters from 2025

Mr. Romano referred the Board to the letters sent in 2025 and said it also contained Mr. Trapilo's draft letter (*Attachment A*). Mr. Trapilo addressed the Board regarding a proposal to engage surrounding towns and other municipal leaders in an effort to increase State revenues distributed to communities throughout Massachusetts. He said there was no visibility into towns supporting the efforts and suggested the Select Board work with the School Committee and go to each board to galvanize support from Wareham to Westport, Acushnet to Lakeville.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Kuechler suggested reviewing the work and strategy of the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASSUPT) and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). The Board discussed the challenges at the state level and need for increased local aid. Mr. Romano suggested Mr. Hickey reach out to the MMA for an update. Mr. Hickey expressed a concern that a push for efforts now would fall short to affect the FY27 budget and offered to reach out to the MMA for suggestions and also bring the concern up at the MMA Conference in January which would be FY28 budget season. Mr. Romano asked for a calendar showing follow-ups.

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to table item D7 to a future date to be determined by the Town Administrator unless requested by Select Board member Rick Trapilo. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Mr. Romano asked for clarification on reappointments due to a resignation from the Economic Development Committee from Nils Isaksen. Mr. Hickey said he understood Mr. Isaksen's concern to be about what the Board's action would be if they were implementing what was passed at Town Meeting.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Hickey reviewed his report to the Board (*Attachment B*)

Mr. Trapilo asked if the Board should rescind and re-vote on the Public Safety Complex based on the clarification and suggestion about a Request for Proposals (RFP). Mr. Hickey will add to the July 13, 2026 agenda.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS / COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Saunders:

- Marine Resources (MRC) met at the same time as Livable Streets.
- Marine Resources discussed a shellfish mitigation fee that was calculated according to the formula by the Conservation Commission. The MRC will review the standards and comparable towns to make a future recommendation to the Select Board for future projects.

Ms. Mello:

- The Millicent Library met. Kathy Lopes was made a Library Trustee leaving an opening for a Select Board appointee; the vacancy has been posted.
- Ms. Mello supports a start time of 6:00pm for future Select Board meetings

Mr. Trapilo:

- Mr. Trapilo attended the West Island Father's Day breakfast and was approached for help with traffic control, sidewalk crossing and speed cushions. The issue was reported to Mr. Hickey who has been in touch with Public Works, Police and Fire as well as the resident who reported on the status.

Ms. Kuechler:

- Ms. Kuechler attended the West Island Father's Day Road Race, the event had great energy, there were about 1,700 participants and the race was in honor of its late founder Allen Days. Kudos to the race committee.

Mr. Hickey said Homecoming is June 27, 2026

Mr. Romano:

- Based on the consensus of the Board, the meetings will start at 6:00pm going forward starting with July 13, 2026.
- The performance review for the Town Administrator is due. Mr. Romano is working with the Interim HR Director and the review will be on the July 13, 2026 agenda in Executive Session, Open Session to announce the results and consider an amendment to the Town Administrator's contract.
- Upcoming events: Homecoming on June 27th, Fairhaven's Got Pride on June 28th and the July 4th parade.

MINUTES

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to accept the open session minutes of June 15, 2026 as presented. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

CORRESPONDENCE

Email: Michelle Costen: The Public's Rights- A need for Balance

Motion: Mr. Saunders motioned to enter the Select Board correspondence as listed into the record. Ms. Kuechler seconded. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled Select Board meeting will be on **Monday, July 13, 2026** at 6:00pm

The Select Board adjourned at 9:34pm

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Town Administrator Report
- B. Correspondence: Email: Michelle Costen: The Public's Rights- A need for Balance

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

Accepted on July 13, 2026

Rick Trapilo Information requests and Proposals

1 message

Rick Trapilo <rtrapilo@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Fri, Jun 19, 2026 at 7:49 AM

To: Keith Hickey <TownAdmin@fairhaven-ma.gov>, Anne Carreiro <acarreiro@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Cc: Amy Hart <ahart@fairhaven-ma.gov>

Dear Mr. Hickey and Ms. Carreiro,

Would you please distribute this email and attachments to my fellow Select Board members. I do not wish to create any Open Meeting Law violations.

1. Three-Year Financial Forecast and Net Position Projections

For our scheduled meeting on Monday, June 22, at 9:00 a.m., I am attaching the basic information that I would like to develop into a financial management tool to help guide our Board. This would be a 1 page executive summary.

According to the report presented at Town Meeting, our projected deficit over the next three years ranges from \$3.1 million to \$4 million. However, I do not fully understand which variables are included in those projections. Likewise, projected balance sheet information, including our net position, is vital, especially considering the new operational and capital projects recently presented by our Police and Fire Chiefs.

I firmly believe that revenue forecasts and balance sheet projections should serve as fundamental management tools for Town leadership and should be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

2. Efficiency Working Group Concept

Attached is my concept for a focused working group that would support our Town Administrator in identifying solutions to close the gap between expenditures and revenues without requiring an override.

I have reviewed the August 2022 DLS report twice and believe it contains several valuable recommendations. However, in my opinion, those recommendations alone do not fully address the magnitude of our projected deficit.

3. State Aid Petition Initiative

I have also attached a proposal for a petition designed to draw the Governor's attention to the urgent need for a substantial increase in State Aid. This would be a joint effort between Select Boards and School Committees from communities throughout the South Coast region, including Westport, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Lakeville, Wareham, and others.

I have great respect for the letters and advocacy efforts undertaken during the past year. However, I believe this proposal would create a more visible and impactful statement when personally presented at the State House in partnership with our local legislative delegation.

Securing a significant increase in State Aid represents one of the best opportunities for generating meaningful additional revenue in the near term.

I am committed to serving as one member of a team. I welcome all ideas and suggestions that will help the Town of Fairhaven build a sustainable financial future.

Sincerely,

Rick Trapilo
Select Board

3 attachments

 EWG MR HICKEY62226.docx
25K

 Petition to the Honorable Govenor Select Board .docx
17K

 Petition to Govenor Schools.docx
16K

Suggested official charge for the committee

The Fairhaven Taxpayer Value & Efficiency Committee shall be a temporary advisory committee appointed by the Select Board for the purpose of reviewing municipal and school-related cost drivers, identifying opportunities for operational savings, improved service delivery, regionalization, shared services, outsourcing where appropriate, revenue enhancement, asset management, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

The Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Town Administrator and Select Board, with copies to the Finance Committee, School Committee, and Town Meeting as appropriate. The Committee shall not direct employees, negotiate contracts, interfere with collective bargaining, or make binding personnel decisions. Its role should be advisory, analytical, transparent, and focused on protecting both essential services and the taxpayer

Protect services. Respect employees. Defend taxpayers. Modernize town government.

Recommended structure

How many people?

I would recommend **9 voting members**, plus non-voting liaisons.

Nine is large enough to have expertise, but small enough to actually work.

Voting members

1. **One retired municipal manager, town administrator, or finance professional**
2. **One CPA, accountant, auditor, CFO, or budget professional**
3. **One business owner or operations manager**
4. **One resident with public safety experience, such as retired police, fire, EMS, emergency management, or dispatch**
5. **One resident with education, school finance, or school administration experience**
6. **One resident with procurement, construction, facilities, engineering, or public works experience**
7. **One technology/data/process-improvement person**
8. **One senior citizen or fixed-income taxpayer representative**

9. One at-large resident with no town employment or vendor conflict

Non-voting liaisons

These people should participate but not control the group:

- Town Administrator or designee
- Finance Committee liaison
- School Committee liaison
- Select Board liaison
- Town Accountant/Finance Director, when needed
- Department heads, invited when their area is being reviewed

This gives the group credibility without making it look like town insiders are reviewing themselves.

Who should not serve?

To keep public trust, the committee should avoid appointing people who have direct conflicts.

That means no current town department heads, no current union representatives negotiating with the town, no active vendors, no immediate family members of senior town officials, and no one currently bidding on town work.

Town employees could still provide information and attend meetings, but the voting members should be independent.

How long should the group be in place?

I would make it a **12-month task force**, with a possible **6-month extension** by Select Board vote.

That is long enough to do real work but not so long that it becomes another permanent committee.

Timeline

First 30 days: organize

- Appointing members

- Elect chair and vice chair
- Adopt rules
- Set meeting calendar
- Create public website page
- Request department-level budget data
- Identify top 10 cost drivers

First 90 days: quick-hit review

The committee should issue a **90-day preliminary report** with obvious savings or revenue ideas.

Examples:

- Unused buildings
- Duplicative software
- Insurance review
- Energy costs
- Vehicle replacement practices
- Overtime patterns
- Legal spending
- Procurement practices
- Vacant positions
- Grant opportunities
- Shared purchasing

Six months: department review report

By month six, the group should produce a more detailed review of:

- Police
- Fire/EMS
- Schools

- Public Works
- Facilities
- Administration
- IT
- Insurance
- Debt/capital planning
- Outside contracts

Twelve months: final report

The final report should include:

- Short-term savings
- Medium-term reforms
- Long-term structural changes
- Regionalization opportunities
- Privatization/outsource options where appropriate
- Services that should remain public
- Recommendations requiring Town Meeting approval
- Recommendations requiring union negotiation
- Recommendations requiring state approval
- Estimated savings ranges

What should the committee actually study?

1. Regionalization and shared services

The committee should study whether Fairhaven can share or regionalize certain services with nearby communities such as Acushnet, Mattapoisett, Marion, Rochester, New Bedford, or other South Coast towns.

Areas to study:

- Emergency dispatch
- Animal control
- Public health services
- Veteran services
- Procurement
- IT/cybersecurity
- Assessing services
- Inspectional services
- School transportation
- Special education transportation
- DPW equipment sharing
- Fleet maintenance
- Fire training
- EMS mutual aid expansion
- Harbor/waterfront services
- Grant writing

Massachusetts already supports efficiency and regionalization grants for local governments, including areas like city/school efficiencies and fire department efficiencies, Fairhaven should aggressively pursue state support instead of leaving money on the table.

If two towns each own expensive equipment that sits unused most of the week, taxpayers are paying twice for the same capacity. We should at least study whether shared services can save money without reducing service.

2. School cost review

Education is one of the town's largest responsibilities. We need to protect classrooms while reviewing administration, transportation, utilities, procurement, special education costs, facilities, and opportunities to share services.

Areas to examine:

- Transportation contracts
- Special education transportation
- Administrative overhead
- Building utilization
- Energy costs
- Vendor contracts
- Substitute staffing costs
- Out-of-district placement trends
- Shared purchasing with the town
- Shared HR/payroll/IT where possible
- School facility maintenance coordination with town facilities
- Grant opportunities
- Enrollment trends versus staffing trends

3. Police and fire review — focus on deployment, overtime, and shared services

People want police and fire protection. The goal should not be “cut public safety.” The goal should be:

“Make sure every public safety dollar is going to front-line protection.”

Areas to review:

- Overtime trends
- Minimum staffing requirements
- Call volume by time of day

- EMS revenue recovery
- Ambulance billing collection rates
- Mutual aid patterns
- Dispatch structure
- Fleet replacement
- Fire prevention fees
- Training costs
- Administrative duplication
- Civilianization of non-sworn tasks
- Use of technology for reporting and scheduling
- Regional dispatch or shared emergency communications
- Grant funding for equipment

4. Public Works and facilities

Areas to examine:

- Equipment utilization
- Shared equipment with nearby towns
- Fleet maintenance
- Snow and storm response costs
- Road paving planning
- Tree work contracts
- Building maintenance
- Energy efficiency
- Water/sewer billing and collections
- Asset management
- Fuel costs

- Preventive maintenance
- Outsourcing seasonal work
- Bringing certain contracted work in-house if cheaper

The committee should compare:

What does it cost town employees to perform the task?

versus

What would it cost to outsource?

versus

Could we share this with another town?

5. Town-owned buildings and land

Fairhaven has had discussion around the Rogers School building and ongoing costs if unused property is not sold or repurposed.

Every unused town building should have a plan: use it, lease it, sell it, partner on it, or explain publicly why taxpayers should keep carrying it.

The committee should create a full inventory of:

- Vacant buildings
- Underused buildings
- Leased buildings
- Maintenance costs
- Insurance costs
- Utility costs
- Deferred repairs
- Potential sale value
- Potential lease revenue
- Community use value
- Legal restrictions

6. Privatization and outsourcing

We should compare public, private, and shared-service models for non-core functions and choose the best value for taxpayers.

Possible outsourcing candidates:

- Certain landscaping
- Custodial services in some buildings
- Seasonal maintenance
- IT support/cybersecurity
- Payroll processing
- Grant writing
- Specialized legal work
- Some inspection services
- Fleet repairs where outside shops are cheaper
- Certain billing/collection services
- Energy management
- Facilities assessments

7. Staffing review:

workforce planning

vacancy review

attrition-based savings

right-sizing through retirements

cross-training shared administrative support

What should the group produce?

Each recommendation should be put into a simple scoring system.

Recommendation scorecard

For every idea, the committee should report:

1. **Estimated annual savings**
2. **One-time implementation cost**
3. **Effect on service quality**
4. **Effect on public safety**
5. **Effect on employees**
6. **Legal or union issues**
7. **Town Meeting approval needed?**
8. **School Committee approval needed?**
9. **Time to implement**
10. **Risk level**
11. **Public acceptance**
12. **Recommended action**

Example categories:

Category	Meaning
Green	Easy savings, low risk
Yellow	Worth studying, some tradeoffs
Red	Not recommended
Blue	Needs Town Meeting, union, or state action

To: Governor of Massachusetts

From: The Select Boards of Town of Fairhaven, Acushnet , Mattapoisett, Dartmouth, Westport, Rochester, Marion, Wareham

Subject: Request for Increased State Aid Through Chapter 70 and Other Available Funding Mechanisms

Dear Governor,

On behalf of the residents of our beloved communities, the Select Board respectfully requests your assistance in increasing state financial support to municipalities such as ours through Chapter 70 education funding, unrestricted general government aid, and any other available state funding programs.

Like many communities across the Commonwealth, our communities face significant financial challenges. Rising costs associated with education, public safety, infrastructure, employee benefits, and other essential municipal services continue to outpace local revenue growth. At the same time, our residents are struggling with the increasing cost of living and have limited capacity to absorb additional local tax burdens.

We are committed to responsible fiscal management and prudent stewardship of taxpayer dollars. However, even with careful budgeting and cost-control measures, municipalities cannot continue to meet growing service demands without stronger partnership and support from the Commonwealth.

We respectfully ask that your administration and the Legislature consider:

1. Increasing Chapter 70 education aid to better reflect the actual costs of educating our students.
2. Expanding Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) to help municipalities address rising operational expenses.
3. Providing additional support for municipal infrastructure, public safety, and capital improvement projects.
4. Reviewing existing state aid formulas to ensure communities such as Fairhaven receive equitable and sustainable funding.
5. Identifying any additional state resources, grants, or funding opportunities that can help municipalities maintain essential services while eliminating the need for local tax increases.

Massachusetts' cities and towns serve as the foundation of the Commonwealth's success. When municipalities are financially healthy, residents benefit from strong schools, safe neighborhoods, reliable infrastructure, and vibrant local economies.

We respectfully urge your administration to make increased municipal aid an immediate essential responsibility. Doing so will help communities continue providing the high-quality services our residents expect and deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the residents of the Commonwealth. We look forward to working collaboratively with your administration to strengthen municipal finances and support the communities we serve.

We are ready to meet with you to discuss our requirements for immediate financial support .

Respectfully submitted,

The Select Board

Date: _____

Petition to the Governor and Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Request for Increased State Aid for South Coast Communities Through Chapter 70 and Other Municipal Funding Programs

To: Governor of Massachusetts, Members of the Massachusetts Legislature, and the Commonwealth's Budget Leadership

From: The School Committees, Select Boards, City Councils, and Municipal Leaders of the South Coast Region of Massachusetts

Petition for Fair and Increased State Support

We, the undersigned municipal and school leaders representing communities throughout the South Coast of Massachusetts, respectfully petition the Commonwealth to provide increased financial assistance through Chapter 70 education funding, Unrestricted General Government Aid, and other available state funding mechanisms.

South Coast communities are facing unprecedented fiscal pressures. The costs of educating our children, maintaining public safety, supporting infrastructure, complying with state mandates, and providing essential municipal services continue to rise at rates that far exceed local revenue growth. At the same time, many of our residents are struggling with inflation, housing costs, and increasing financial burdens, making significant local tax increases increasingly difficult and unsustainable.

While our communities remain committed to fiscal responsibility and prudent management of taxpayer dollars, local governments cannot continue to absorb these escalating costs without additional support from the Commonwealth.

We Respectfully Request:

1. Increased Chapter 70 Education Aid

The current funding levels do not adequately reflect the true costs of delivering a high-quality education. We urge the Commonwealth to increase Chapter 70 funding to ensure every South Coast student has access to the educational opportunities they deserve.

2. Increased Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA)

Municipal governments require greater flexibility to address rising operating costs and maintain critical services without placing additional burdens on local taxpayers.

3. Additional Assistance for Special Education and Transportation

Special education costs continue to grow at unsustainable rates. We request expanded state reimbursement programs and transportation assistance to help districts meet their legal and moral obligations to students.

4. Greater Support for Public Infrastructure and Capital Needs

Roads, bridges, water systems, school facilities, and public buildings throughout the South Coast require significant investment. Additional state support will help preserve these vital assets while reducing pressure on local budgets.

5. Review and Modernization of State Aid Formulas

We ask the Commonwealth to evaluate existing funding formulas to ensure they accurately reflect the economic realities and service demands facing South Coast communities today.

Why This Matters

The South Coast region has long been a vital contributor to the economic strength, culture, and history of Massachusetts. Yet many of our communities continue to face financial challenges that threaten educational excellence, municipal stability, and economic growth.

Without increased state assistance, municipalities and school districts may be forced to consider reductions in services, deferred maintenance, larger class sizes, and increased pressure on local property taxpayers.

We believe that investing in South Coast communities is an investment in the future of the Commonwealth. Strong schools, safe neighborhoods, modern infrastructure, and financially stable municipalities benefit all residents of Massachusetts.

Our Call to Action

We respectfully urge the Governor and Legislature to make increased support for South Coast communities a priority in future state budgets and legislative initiatives. We ask for meaningful action that recognizes the unique challenges facing our region and provides the resources necessary to maintain essential services while protecting taxpayers.

Together, we can ensure that the South Coast remains a place where families thrive, students succeed, businesses grow, and communities prosper.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Undersigned School Committees, Select Boards, City Councils, and Municipal Leaders of the South Coast Region of Massachusetts

Communities Supporting This Petition:

Date: _____

Signatures: _____

This petition may be circulated among South Coast communities including New Bedford, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Mattapoisett, Marion, Rochester, Wareham, Westport, Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and other South Coast municipalities.



Town of Fairhaven
Report of the Town Administrator
June 22, 2026

Financial Updates

- The Town of Fairhaven will receive an additional \$100,000 for sidewalk improvements from the Commonwealth's supplemental spending bill. The bill was expected to reach the Governor's desk by the end of last week.
- The Tax Collector is in the process of disposing of property in tax title. Department heads are being asked if they have an interest in the properties that have been approved by the court to dispose of. If there is no interest in retaining the property, the property is required to be listed with a real estate agent for one year, and then can be auctioned.

Project Updates

- At the June 15th Select Board meeting, the Public Safety Building Committee requested authorization from the Select Board to expend up to \$50,000 for appraisal, architectural and creation of an RFP on the former Citizens Bank Building located at 4 Plaza Way. On Tuesday morning I received an email questioning the Town's requirement to comply with Mass. General Law related to acquisition of property. I spoke to the Police and Fire Chief as well as counsel about the inquiry. What was determined is there are exceptions in state law that apply in this specific instance but I would prefer to revise the RFP that was issued for this specific purpose several years ago and reissue the RFP seeking existing buildings that meet the specifications for a Police Department. The RFP process will be ongoing during the month of July.

Personnel Update

- The Town Planner interview committee has interviewed a qualified candidate this week. A conditional offer has been made. If accepted my recommendation to hire will be on the Board's July 13th meeting agenda.

Miscellaneous Updates

- I have sent a letter of interest to Fox 25 requesting Fairhaven be considered to host one of the live broadcasts in 2027. Zip Trip are held on Friday mornings during the summer, often from approximately 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., with residents gathering to celebrate their community. Broadcasts often generate statewide exposure, tourism interest, and positive publicity by telling the community's story to viewers across Massachusetts.