

# MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 07/30/2025

SELECTMEN IN ATTENDANCE: Tabitha K. McCrohan, Clerk, Jennifer Vincent, Chair

TOPIC		ACTION
	Meeting Called to Order at 6:03PM in the Moitoza Pettey Hearing Room	
Personnel	<p>Board to interview Jennifer Florio as a finalist for the Principal Assessor position, Jen Florio discussed her research on Berkley, including reviewing the DLS gateway for revenue and parcel information. When asked about potential challenges, she identified learning Berkley's operational procedures and familiarizing herself with the Tyler software system as key areas of focus. She provided examples of collaborative work, citing her experience coordinating with multiple departments on tax rate classification hearings and building permits. Florio highlighted her obtaining her MIA certificate and her career progression from clerk to her current role since 2012. She expressed enthusiasm for learning new systems and willingness to work additional hours to master the software. The board indicated they have at least one more finalist interview scheduled for mid-next week before making their decision.</p> <p>Board to accept resignation of Amanda Rotondi from the Fiscal Task Force; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to accept resignation of Melissa Frappier as Treasurer Clerk; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to accept resignation of Clifford Pierre as Regional Health Inspector; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to discuss potential creation of Assistant Treasurer/Collector position</p> <p>The board discussed creating a new position to address staffing challenges in the treasurer's office following Melissa's resignation. Tabitha McCrohan proposed creating a temporary Assistant Treasurer Collector position (not to exceed 12-18 months) that would provide stability while waiting for legislation to pass allowing the appointment of a combined Treasurer Collector. This person would use funding already allocated for the appointed position and eventually transition into the Treasurer Collector role once legally available. Matthew Chabot expressed concerns about reposting the Treasurer Clerk position at current wages, citing it as ineffective given impending office restructuring. He outlined alternatives including creating higher-graded positions or moving payroll/benefits responsibilities to other departments, while noting budget appropriation constraints since funds were voted separately for treasurer and collector offices. The discussion expanded into broader staffing and compensation issues. Chabot identified four critical pillars for competitive employment: wages, hours (noting 20-hour positions are inadequate), benefits (particularly the 60/40 health insurance split that causes candidates to walk away), and professional development opportunities. He emphasized that Berkley's low health insurance subscriber rate, while protecting taxpayers from override pressures, reflects an unattractive compensation package. Jennifer Vincent advocated against more part-time "band-aid" solutions, calling for significant town hall changes to be presented to voters in November or May. The board ultimately tabled the discussion to allow for a finance team meeting and further evaluation of workflow and staffing needs.</p>	<p><b>Information only; no action taken</b></p> <p><b>Motion to accept;</b> TM moved; JV second; motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to accept;</b> TM moved; JV second; motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to accept;</b> TM moved; JV second; motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to table;</b> JV moved; TM second; motion approved</p>

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Appointments:	Board to vote to waive M.G.L. c.10 §58 one year oil requirement and appoint Stephanie Malloch to Berkley Cultural Council to expire June 30, 2027. review of matter; votes may be taken	<b>Motion to accept;</b> TM moved; JV second; motion approved
New Business:	<p>Board to review and authorize the Chair to sign Host Community Agreement Waiver Form for FreeMarket LLC:</p> <p>The board reviewed an HCA waiver request from Free Market LLC for their cannabis operation. Timothy Reed from Free Market explained that the waiver is needed for their product manufacturing license, which is an extension of their existing cultivation license and allows them to process cannabis into concentrated extracts. He clarified that this is largely a redundancy requirement from the state's Cannabis Control Commission, as their existing HCA already covers manufacturing activities. The facility includes a 1,000 square foot extraction area with four rooms for processing, and no new equipment or inspections are required since everything was already reviewed during their initial cultivation license approval. Matthew Chabot suggested checking with the planning board as a precautionary measure for any potential change of use concerns. though Timothy noted their original HCA explicitly states they would be producing and processing products. The board voted to authorize the chair to sign the waiver, with Timothy mentioning he would also inform the planning board chairman and that the final documentation would be submitted to the CCC within days.</p> <p>Board to discuss potential for easement or ownership interest transfer for the property at 52 Anthony St. involving 65 acres. Matthew Chabot explained that while not the entire parcel would be involved, even a small portion could provide beneficial connectivity between two town-owned properties: the Saint Yve's project at 48 Myricks Street and the BAA ball fields at 60 R Anthony Street. Matthew Chabot noted that with minimal easement interest, the town could create a pathway or nature trail connecting these properties, potentially leading to future mass trails development and recreational opportunities that would protect the Eastern Box turtle habitat while providing public access. Vincent asked Chabot to prioritize reaching out to express the town's interest and determine next steps, while acknowledging other current priorities. The board agreed to keep this opportunity on the table for future discussion, with Chabot offering to either contact the property owner directly or draft a letter indicating the board's interest.</p>	<p><b>Motion to accept;</b> TM moved; JV second; motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to table;</b> JV moved; TM second; motion approved</p>
Old Business:	<p>Board to approve 2025 License Renewal for Nouria Retail Energy, Inc. d/b/a Amatos Express. This item is being tabled as there is one final item that is needed before it can be approved.</p> <p>Board to review and potentially sign contract BOS 26-01 for Stormwater Testing and Reporting Services with Verdantas, LLC; The board reviewed and approved a contract for stormwater testing and reporting services. Matthew Chabot explained this is EPA-required annual testing of Berkeley's water for E. coli and other contaminants at high-priority locations previously flagged. He noted they received favorable quotes this year with some savings to the town, and for the first time in a long while, they found money within the general fund budget to cover this expense rather than needing to appropriate additional funds. Chabot mentioned there's likely to be a push for regionalization of these services among small towns facing similar budget challenges, potentially through organizations like SRPEDD, which could provide cost benefits through collective scheduling. The board made a motion for the chairman to sign both the contract and proposal, which was seconded and approved without discussion.</p>	<p><b>Motion to table;</b> JV moved; TM second; motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to approve;</b> JV moved; TM second; motion approved</p>

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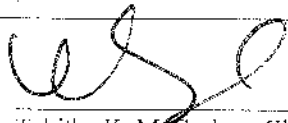
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	<p>Board to review and potentially sign contract BOS 26-02 for Library Planning and Design services with LLB Architects, LLC. for the Public Library Construction Program. Matthew Chabot explained this is a qualifications-based selection process required by Massachusetts public procurement law, not a competitive bidding process, meaning they cannot return to their first choice if negotiations fail with the selected firm. The contract has a base fee of \$115,000 with additional surveying and geotechnical services potentially adding \$38,000, though Chabot noted they may not need all those services and could potentially hire them separately. Annalisa Lewis joined via Zoom as the library project manager, confirming the tight December 31st deadline for the MBLCP level design work. She agreed that they need to move quickly given the timeline constraints. Tabitha McCrohan expressed concerns about the total project costs, noting they're spending \$150,000 on an OPM (Owner's Project Manager) and now up to \$170,000 on architects while discussing potential layoffs. The breakdown showed \$75,000 in donations versus significant taxpayer contributions. Matthew Chabot acknowledged the messaging challenges around project costs and suggested the MBLCP grant amount of \$90,000 was based on realistic project cost expectations. The board ultimately decided to table the discussion until the next meeting to allow more time to review the full contract details.</p>	<p><b>Motion to table;</b> JV moved; TM second; motion approved</p>
Meeting Mail:	<p>Board to discuss correspondence from the Berkley Conservation Commission regarding potential grade increase for administrative assistant.</p> <p>Matthew Chabot discussed a request from Conservation Commission Chair David Patrick for a compensation increase for the commission's administrative assistant. Chabot explained that the Conservation Commission operates solely from fees without general fund assistance, similar to other boards like ZBA and Planning Board. He noted that while he supports discussing the compensation increase, it would require creating an updated job description that enumerates additional responsibilities beyond the current duties to justify a grade increase. The administrative assistant currently works three hours per week with a maximum of five hours, and any increase would need to be funded through the commission's revolving fund. Chabot suggested creating a proposal with a grade increase, wage change form, and updated job description for board review, praising the employee's commitment to the role as noted in Patrick's letter.</p>	
Meeting Minutes:	<p>Board to approve Meeting Minutes of July 17th, 2025; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to approve Executive Session Minutes of July 2nd, 2025; review of matter; votes may be taken. Motion to enter -- roll call vote. Vincent, Ayc – McCrohan, Aye.</p>	<p><b>Motion to approve;</b> JV moved; TM second; motion approved</p>
Town Administrator Report	<p>Financial Management Review</p> <p>Matthew Chabot provided a brief update on the Department of Revenue (DOR) financial management review, explaining that DLS had sent the report back to them. He noted that the findings wouldn't be entirely new to those who have been following town issues over the past few years, with some items being duplicates from a 2005 review. However, he emphasized that the report will be incredibly beneficial to the fiscal Task Force and indicated plans to distribute it for future discussion. Chabot suggested that combined with their audit and other financial documents, this review will provide a comprehensive list of areas for improvement, and recommended leveraging their relationship with the Department of Revenue to request additional services to help the town get on track.</p>	<p><b>Information only;</b> no action taken</p>

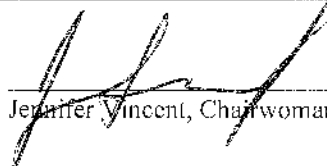
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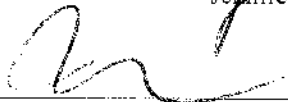
Executive Session:	<p>Board to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; review of matter; votes may be taken.</p> <p>Board to enter into Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; review of matter; votes may be taken.</p> <p>Board moved to enter executive session at 7:12PM not to return to open session.</p>	
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Tabitha K. McCrohan, Clerk



Jennifer Vincent, Chairwoman



Matthew Chabot, Town Administrator