

MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 10/29/2025

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

TOPIC		ACTION
	<p>Meeting Called to Order at 6:00PM in the Council on Aging Room</p>	
Personnel:	<p>Board to accept resignation of Joseph Callahan from the Taunton River Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to accept appointment of Elin Fournier to the position of Dispatch Supervisor; review of matter.</p> <p>Ms. Fournier was presented for by Chief of Police, Arthur Newhook, who described her unique qualifications for the position and her initiative in learning the responsibilities and duties of the supervisor role. Members of the Berkley Police Department and Berkley Fire/Rescue were present to witness her appointment and swearing in by Town Clerk, Heather Almy.</p> <p>Board to accept appointment of Suzanne Adam to the Berkley Cultural Council; review of matter. Motion to appoint approved</p> <p>Board to accept appointment of Craig Faria as Assistant Wiring Inspector; review of matter. Motion to appoint approved</p> <p>Board to approve job posting for Transfer Station Attendant; review of matter; votes may be taken. Motion to post approved</p>	<p>Motion to approve: MH motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p> <p>Motion to appoint: MH motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p> <p>Motion to appoint: MH motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p> <p>Motion to post: TM motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p>
Public Hearing:	<p>Pursuant to the General Bylaws of the Town of Berkley, Article 1, Section 2, the Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, October 29th, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. in the Berkley Council on Aging at the Town Office Building, 1 North Main Street, Berkley, Massachusetts, regarding proposed amendments to the aforementioned General Bylaws, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To amend the Berkley Zoning By-Law, being Article 21 of the Town's General By-Laws, by adding a new Section 9.3 thereto, entitled "Residential Development Overlay District (RDOD)," comprised of Sections 9.3.1, entitled "Purpose," 9.3.2, entitled "Establishment and Applicability"; 9.3.3, entitled "Site Plan Review," 9.3.4, entitled "Definitions," 9.3.5, entitled "Permitted Uses," 9.3.6, entitled "Dimensional Standards," 9.3.7, entitled "General Development Standards", 9.3.8, entitled "Invalidity and Severability," and 9.3.9, entitled "Exemptions," and to amend the "Town of Berkley Zoning Map" referenced in said Zoning By-Law, Section 2.2, to add said RDOD thereto, the complete text of the foregoing Zoning By-Law amendment and the supplemental amendment to the Zoning Map both being on-file with the office of the Town Clerk; or to take any other action relative thereto. 2. To amend the Berkley Zoning By-Law, being Article 21 of the Town's General By-Laws, by adding a new subsection 9.3.5.2(c), entitled "Special Permit of the Planning Board," to allow the following uses for the purpose of mixed-use development within the Residential Development Overlay District by grant of Special Permit from the Planning Board: bar or tavern, for-profit entertainment or recreation facility, medical or dental office, and veterinary office or hospital, or to take any other action relative thereto. <p>No public discussion during public hearing</p>	<p>Motion to open public hearing; MH motion; JV second; motion approved – unanimous roll call</p> <p>Motion to close public hearing:</p>

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MH motion, JV second; unanimous roll call

New Business:

Board to hold a public forum to review and discuss the remainder of the Special Town Meeting warrant, including the proposed expansion of the Berkley Board of Selectmen to a five-member board; authorization for the acquisition of fee or easement interests by the Board of Selectmen for 2 Riverside Drive and 52 Anthony Street; transfer from Perpetual Care and PEG Access funding to assist Town operations and transfer from appointed salaries to elected Treasurer/Collector; and the Citizens Petition for the acceptance of 42nd Street; review of matter; votes may be taken

The public forum opened with Tabitha McCrohan inviting comments and questions on two proposed bylaw changes, but the discussion quickly transitioned toward the main agenda: a broad, accessible walkthrough of every article on the upcoming town meeting warrant. The intent was to give residents and participants a thorough grounding in each proposal before any official votes were cast, with board members emphasizing the importance of community understanding and engagement.

This was followed by an introduction to the public forum's broader purpose: demystifying the town meeting warrant articles, particularly for citizens who may not follow every aspect of municipal law or finance. Leaders explained that this more proactive approach—engaging the public in detailed explanations and Q&A in advance—was something new for Berkley and something they hoped to continue into the future.

Attention then shifted to town finances and the structure of key positions. The transition from elected to appointed status for the treasurer and collector roles was discussed at length, with speakers explaining the rationale for requiring more credentials and full-time, in-person office hours. There was considerable detail about the budgeting logistics, particularly in light of state approval delays, and how the town had to move funds around to ensure current staff would be paid. Throughout, participants asked questions about salary lines, historical compensation, and why this restructuring made sense, with officials responding transparently about the challenges and anticipated benefits.

From there, much of the conversation focused on land use and zoning, specifically bringing the town into compliance with the MBTA Communities Law. The proposed overlay district behind Camping World—a site identified for multi-family zoning—was examined in detail, including the density and lack of affordability requirements, local oversight provisions, and various controls built into the proposed bylaw. Speakers made it clear that the intention was not to force development but to satisfy state mandates and retain local funding eligibility while shaping any potential changes according to Berkeley's character. Questions from residents and board members revealed concerns ranging from school impact and infrastructure to business flexibility in mixed-use zoning. Officials addressed these head-on, discussing both the technical requirements and the practical realities of development, landowner interest, and state compliance.

The expansion of the Select Board, from three to five members, was another topic that generated thoughtful commentary. Board members shared personal experiences about the breadth of their responsibilities, the value of representation, and the rationale for increasing board size—from easing conflicts of interest to qualifying for more grants and reflecting the

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diverse needs of the community. This conversation was intertwined with reminders about the small stipends board members receive and the unique demands of public service in a town with limited professional staff.

The forum also delved into potential acquisitions of easement interests, with discussions about connecting recreational properties and navigating complicated real estate and title arrangements with developers and homeowner associations. Board members and members of the public exchanged perspectives about duties, past communication lapses, and the need for ongoing dialogue to ensure future actions are legal and considerate of all parties involved.

Discussion surrounding Article 8 prompted representatives of the local HOA to clarify their understanding and stake in the property. They explained that according to their covenants, the lot at 2 Riverside Drive was meant to be conveyed to the HOA by the developer, a process that had only recently gained momentum as the HOA was formally documented and organized. The HOA president outlined steps already underway, such as legal review and the transfer of bank accounts, all reinforcing the argument that the property should remain a common area for the HOA members. The board acknowledged this perspective, clearly indicating an openness to further direct dialogue rather than hasty decisions in a public forum.

Town officials, including Matthew Chabot, referenced title certifications and described the due diligence already performed on the property. They shared their understanding that while HOA members had obligations to maintain the beach, the actual deeded rights remained with the developer, making its transfer to the town legally plausible. The conversation signaled some differences in legal interpretation, with the board expressing that they had prepared for clean title transfer without encumbrances, whereas the HOA representatives requested additional review and consultation with their legal advisors.

Rounding out the public forum was an overview of routine, but important, financial housekeeping: transferring funds between accounts for cemetery operations and cable-related services, fielding questions about technology access in different corners of town, and revisiting the nuances of making private streets into public ways in reference to the 42nd Street citizens' petition. These segments illustrated both the routine work of municipal governance and the complexity that can come with even seemingly simple changes.

Throughout the public forum, participants stressed transparency, careful planning, and the town's ongoing efforts to balance fiscal responsibility with evolving state and local needs. The session ended with reminders about the upcoming special town meeting, encouragement for full resident participation, and a clear sense that these conversations are foundational to Berkley's future decision-making.

Board to review and sign MIIA Health Benefits Trust Renewal Proposal for Retiree Health Plans for the Calendar Year 2026; review of matter; votes may be taken

Brief discussion ensued regarding the increase in rates for the retiree plans, MC gave assurances that the initial budget was for 20% increases to said plans, so 12% was almost a welcome relief.

Board to discuss and potentially establish a Screening Committee for the Treasurer/Collector recruitment, including size, membership, charge, and timeline; review of matter; votes may be taken

The Board weighed whether to form a formal screening committee for hiring the new treasurer-collector, with the chair suggesting that a committee would ensure those most affected by the hire had a voice in the process. However, concerns were raised about the practicalities, as past experience suggested committees required public postings, could be slow, and often functioned behind the scenes due to the confidential nature of personnel matters. Others, including Tabitha McCrohan, favored a more streamlined approach,

Motion to approve; TM moved; JV second; approved

Motion to not formally establish screening committee: TM moved; MH second; approved JV dissent

Meeting Mail:

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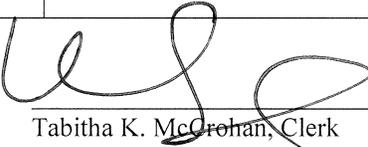
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	<p>proposing that the Town Administrator and those with direct knowledge of the department could handle the initial applicant review and bring finalists to the board more quickly. After further discussion, the board reached consensus that, given the urgent need to fill the position before critical financial deadlines, it would be best to forgo a formal screening committee this time. Instead, they agreed that the hiring process should remain nimble but could still gather suggested interview questions or candidate priorities from interested department heads, ensuring relevant input without the delay and complexity of a full committee. This compromise balanced the need for efficiency with the desire for stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Board to discuss and potentially act upon the application process for Mosaic Opioid Recovery Partnership matching grants, review current and proposed RIZE Foundation proposals, and more broadly consider priorities and long-term strategy for opioid funding expenditures in the Town of Berkley; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>The Board discussed whether the town should participate in the Mozaic Recovery Partnership, a regional grant opportunity aimed at enhancing opioid recovery resources. While the grant was designed to foster broader collaboration across municipalities, input from the town's police department and other stakeholders indicated it might not align well with the community's needs. The town's existing approach, highlighted by its active problem-oriented policing (POP) unit, was seen as more personal and effective, offering direct, individualized support to local families affected by opioid addiction. Additional feedback from the coordinator and others suggested that Mozaic's model was better suited for larger cities facing different challenges. Ultimately, the board agreed that, although there could be indirect regional benefits, the town's resources and opioid settlement funds would be more impactful if kept focused on tailored local programs. This decision reflected confidence in current initiatives and a desire to ensure funds were used where they could make the greatest difference for Berkeley residents.</p> <p>Board to review and approve citation recognizing Manuel Menezes for his eighteen years of faithful and dedicated service to the Marine Corps League; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to discuss and potentially approve expenditure of Celebrations Committee – Gifts and Donations account for Lights On expenditures; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>The discussion turned to the issue of how to manage and use donations that had been given to the now-dissolved celebrations committee, particularly with the upcoming "Lights On" event requiring purchases. Since the celebrations committee no longer formally existed, there was uncertainty about how to properly authorize spending from its accumulated gifts and donations. Town officials, including Matthew Chabot, explained that the Board of Selectmen retains the authority to approve expenditures in line with the original spirit of the donations, as long as they are used for community celebration purposes like "Lights On." It was agreed that any spending should be transparent and documented, and, going forward, new donations should be directed to the board of selectmen with clear instructions if donors wish to earmark funds for specific events. The Board ultimately decided to formally vote on the use of these existing funds for "Lights On," ensuring both proper oversight and respect for donors' intentions.</p> <p>Board to review and potentially authorize engagement with volunteer consultant services to assist with process improvement and technology efficiency review across town departments; votes may be taken</p>	<p>Motion to approve; JV moved; TM second; approved</p> <p>Motion to approve; MH moved; JV second; approved</p> <p>Information only; No action taken</p>
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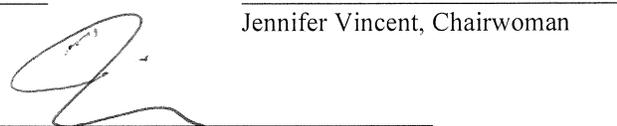
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<p>Meeting Minutes:</p> <p>Town Administrator Report:</p> <p>Adjournment:</p>	<p>During this portion of the meeting, the Board explored the opportunity to engage an experienced volunteer consultant who would help the town assess and improve its processes and technological efficiency. The proposer described this as mutually beneficial: the consultant would bring private-sector expertise to analyze operations and offer recommendations, while gaining municipal experience for their own professional development. Board members responded positively, noting that leveraging specialized volunteer talent could be invaluable for modernizing workflows, increasing staff satisfaction, and identifying cost-saving measures. There was particular interest in the collaborative, iterative approach described—meeting with different departments to set priorities and figuring out which proposals were actually feasible. The Board agreed that the next step should be to review the proposal in detail and discuss a practical timeline for implementation, keeping in mind the current demands on staff and the ongoing town meeting preparations.</p> <p>Board to approve Meeting Minutes of October 9th, 2025; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to approve Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 9th, 2025; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>In his report, the Town Administrator highlighted several important upcoming events for the community, including the Veterans Day ceremony to be held on the Berkeley Common and the Council on Aging's traditional Veterans Day dinner. He also reminded everyone about the upcoming Special Town Meeting at the Middle School, emphasizing the availability of text notifications to keep residents informed. Beyond event announcements, the Town Administrator commended the Berkeley Police Department—especially Lieutenant Kevin Realini—for securing a significant traffic safety grant, which will provide new equipment at no additional cost to the town. He noted that supplementing local resources with state and federal grants has become increasingly critical, particularly as budget constraints persist. The report closed with praise for the Departments' continued efforts to seek funding opportunities that benefit the whole community.</p> <p>Motion to adjourn at 7:52 PM</p> <p>*Next Scheduled Meeting is Wednesday, November 12th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.*</p>	<p>Motion to approve; TM moved; JV seconded; Approved</p>
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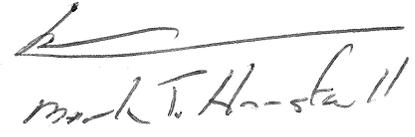
Tabitha K. McCrohan, Clerk



Jennifer Vincent, Chairwoman



Matthew Chabot, Town Administrator



Mark T. Hunsell