

MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 01/07/2026

SELECTMEN IN ATTENDANCE: Jennifer Vincent-Chair, Tabitha K. McCrohan-Member, Mark Horsfall-Member

TOPIC		ACTION
	Meeting Called to Order at 6:00PM in the Moitza-Petty Hearing Room	
Personnel:	Taken Out of Order:	
	Board to consider and approve the hiring of Stephen Crowley for the open position of Transfer Station Attendant; review of matter; votes may be taken.	Motion to approve: MH motioned: JV second. Motion approved
Appointments:	Taken Out of Order:	
	Board to consider removal of Tom Fernandes from the Berkley Conservation due to his long-term absence while tending to family matters.	Motion to approve: MH motioned: JV second. Motion approved
	Board to consider appointment of Mark Horsfall to the GATRA Advisory Board; review of matter; votes may be taken	Motion to appoint: TM motioned: JV second. Motion approved
Public Hearing:	Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter c.140 §59, a public hearing will be held on Wednesday, January 7th, 2026 at 6:05 pm by the Board of Selectmen, in the Moitza – Petty Hearing Room at 1 N. Main St., Berkley, at which time the Selectmen will consider an application submitted for a Class III Motor Vehicle License (storage purposes) for property located at 17 Blossom Ln in the Town of Berkley.	Roll Call to Close Public Hearing: Vincent – Aye McCrohan-Aye Horsfall-Aye
	Those attending the hearing will have the right to present written and/or oral comments. Following the hearing, the Board may deliberate and take action on the application, which may occur at that time or at a subsequent meeting.	Motion to deny: JV motioned: MH second. Motion approved
	The board opened a public hearing regarding an application for a class three motor vehicle license (auto salvage business) at 17 Blossom Lane. Multiple residents, including abutters, expressed concerns about water contamination, traffic safety, increased noise, and risk to property values, noting the residential nature of the neighborhood and potential zoning violations. The zoning officer confirmed the area is residential and commercial operations like auto salvage are not permitted under current bylaws. Board members acknowledged the property’s historical license, but emphasized that the prior owner had not been actively operating, the license had expired, and Berkley’s zoning/environmental requirements have changed. Recommendations from legal counsel and precedent in other Massachusetts towns not allowing new salvage operations were discussed. Ultimately, after deliberation, the board closed the hearing and voted to deny the motor vehicle license application for 17 Blossom Lane, citing incompatibility with zoning and environmental concerns.	
New Business:	Discussion and possible action regarding building permit fees; discussion of a potential effective date, and identification of fee adjustments that may require action at Annual Town Meeting. The board discussed the need to update the town’s building permit fee schedule, noting that the existing fees were outdated and lagged behind those of neighboring communities. They reviewed and compared fee structures with other towns, highlighting that many have recently simplified and raised fees, often tying them to project valuation. Key changes proposed and approved included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating and simplifying the fee schedule to make it easier to administer and understand. 	

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- Increasing the commercial new construction and alteration fees from 1% to 1.5% of total build cost.
- Applying the 1.5% rate for commercial alterations and new buildings, with residential alterations and new buildings also being adjusted.
- Instituting a practice of reviewing building permit fees every three to five years to ensure they keep up with inflation and costs.

The board also considered input from the building inspector and regional comparisons, recognizing the importance of balancing reasonable fees with encouraging compliance for smaller residential projects. They emphasized the need for clear, updated documentation and planned to publish the revised fee schedule on the town website.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to adopt the new building permit fee schedule, with changes becoming effective March 1.

Motion to approve: JV motioned: MH second. Motion approved

Board to review and potentially approve Agreement between Lakeville & Berkley for Lakeville Animal Shelter; The board discussed the agreement between Lakeville and Berkley for using the Lakeville animal shelter to house stray and surrendered Berkley dogs for 2026. It was noted that the Lakeville Select Board had approved the contract renewal, and that due to increased operational costs and required inspections, the annual fee for Berkley would be \$500. Additionally, the daily boarding fee would increase to \$25 (paid by animal owners). Board members confirmed that the annual amount is included in the current budget and that, overall, the cost remains lower than alternative arrangements. There were no concerns or objections raised. The board made and unanimously passed a motion to accept and approve the updated agreement and costs with Lakeville.

Motion to approve: JV motioned: TM second. Motion approved

Review of traffic analysis for the Berkley-Dighton Bridge, Porter Street, Padelford Street, and Myricks Street, and discussion of potential revisions to Spring 2026 count locations; The board reviewed traffic count locations for the 2026 study, referencing data from the prior year and feedback from department heads and public safety. They noted some duplication in the previous list and identified the Church Street/Myers intersection as a particular pain point due to ongoing traffic and safety concerns. The discussion included whether to move existing count locations to better capture problematic areas and the need to refine the traffic data to inform future planning.

Ultimately, the board voted to approve the updated traffic count locations—including an emphasis on Church Street and the Myricks/Church intersection—and authorized Matthew Chabot to finalize and submit the revised list for the upcoming traffic study.

Motion to approve: TM motioned: JV second. Motion approved

Review and possible approval of a grant application for St. Yves Field, including authorization for the Chair to execute and submit the application on behalf of the Town of Berkley; The board discussed submitting a grant application to the Lynn Foundation to help fund playground equipment at the CNS field. They noted that project costs had changed several times, with the latest estimate at \$400,000. The grant request was set at up to \$300,000 to cover the remaining funding needed alongside existing resources.

Discussion included whether the grant application should be submitted by the town or a nonprofit, with consensus that a town submission could strengthen the proposal and streamline oversight. There was also mention of ongoing coordination among the board, the project team, and the foundation to ensure all requirements and timelines were met.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to support and submit the grant application to the Lynn Foundation for the playground project at CNS field.

Motion to approve: TM motioned: MH second. JV abstain Motion approved

Discussion and possible action regarding the recommendation of the Financial Advisory Committee for the expenditure of Opioid Settlement funds in the amount of \$53,000 for the Problem Oriented Policing program; review of matter; votes may be taken

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	<p>Discussion and possible action regarding the recommendation of the Financial Advisory Committee for the expenditure of Opioid Settlement funds, in an amount to be determined, for the purchase of a LIFEPAK cardiac monitor/defibrillator for Berkley Fire & Rescue; review of the matter; votes may be taken.</p> <p>Board briefly discussed the merits of supporting public safety initiatives through grant funding before moving on each item in turn. Motion to approve the recommendation of FAC in the amount of \$53,000 for Problem Oriented Policing and \$22,863 for the purchase of the cardiac monitor/defibrillator</p> <p>Review and discussion regarding hosting Somerset Berkley Regional High School students to explore potential for new street light installations in the Town of Berkley; High school students approached the board about installing new street lights in town to improve safety, highlighting a recent tragic accident involving a classmate. The students were prepared to organize, do the groundwork, and fundraise as needed. In response, the board and department heads explained the complexities involved: the town has no funding in its budget for new street lights, most existing lights are maintained by residents paying directly, and new installations often require collaboration with the utility company (TMLP) and property owners where poles are located. Officials encouraged the students to gather more detailed information-- such as identifying specific locations and confirming property-owner consent--and to explore creative funding solutions, possibly involving nonprofits or continued student-led fundraising. The board praised the students' civic engagement and suggested reaching out again with a formal proposal or additional questions after further research.</p> <p>Discussion regarding potential policy proposals to clarify Board operations, communication protocols, and workload management as the Board of Selectmen expands to five members; The board discussed preparations for expanding from a three to a five member Board of Selectmen. Members highlighted the need to update communication protocols and workflow management to ensure the board functions effectively with more participants. Several options for handling agenda item requests, work assignments, and document flow were reviewed, including a "chair as coordinator" model and collaborative agenda systems (such as using shared electronic boards). There were concerns that a single powerful chair could create bottlenecks, so alternatives involving distributed authority and shared responsibility were favored. The board stressed the importance of continuity and starting to practice new protocols before the expansion happens, so that new members can be integrated smoothly. Key roles (such as the town administrator's) and a culture of open communication were also emphasized to avoid confusion and maintain efficiency as the board grows. Also add to February 28, 2026 agenda formalizing the role of the Town Administrator.</p> <p>Board to receive an informational update regarding MassDOT's designation of a portion of Myricks Street (Route 79) as a Critical Rural Freight Corridor as part of a statewide freight planning effort. The designation reflects existing truck traffic patterns and regional connectivity and does not alter zoning, land use, or local authority; MassDOT identified a total of approximately 7.6 miles (out of 74 considered) as officially designated for freight traffic. This designation is significant because it may help the town access additional state or federal funding for related infrastructure improvements.</p> <p>The discussion included review of affected roadways and intersections, observations about current truck-travel patterns, and resident concerns with heavy traffic, especially related to local auctions and industrial activity. Board members noted that understanding these designated corridors is important for planning, infrastructure maintenance, and potential grant opportunities. They acknowledged the need to monitor freight volume and traffic impacts going forward as part of ongoing town planning efforts.</p>	<p>Motion to approve: JV moved; MH second, approved</p> <p>Motion to approve; TM moved, MH second, approved</p> <p>Discussion only, no votes taken</p> <p>Motion to move to Feb 28 2026 agenda: JV motioned; MH second. Motion approved</p> <p>Discussion only, no votes taken</p>
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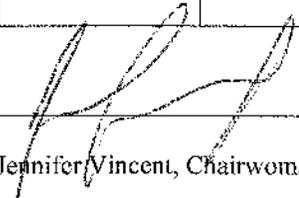
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<p>Town Administrator Report:</p>	<p>Board to approve Meeting Minutes of December 10th, 2025; review of matter; votes may be taken</p>	<p>Motion to approve: JV motioned: TM second. Motion approved</p>
	<p>Board to approve Executive Session Minutes of December 10th, 2025; review of matter; votes may be taken</p>	<p>Motion to approve: TM motioned: MH second. Motion approved</p>
	<p>Inclement weather closure protocol; The board and department heads discussed the town's protocol for handling inclement weather closures, particularly for public-facing services such as the transfer station, town hall, and library. They reviewed challenges from a recent storm event, noting staffing shortages and the need to prioritize public safety while managing limited resources.</p> <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions about closing town facilities should be made as early as possible --- ideally the night before a predicted storm event---to provide timely notice to residents and staff. • Department heads agreed to coordinate closure announcements so that all public-facing services communicate unified, consistent messages. • The protocol allows flexibility based on real-time conditions, but defaults to erring on the side of caution for safety. • Communication channels (website, text alerts) were emphasized for effective public outreach. • The group recognized the strain such closures place on employees and committed to improved internal collaboration for timely decision-making going forward. <p>A motion was made to have Matthew Chabot lead further department-head discussions and finalize a clear, unified inclement weather closure and communication protocol for the town.</p>	<p>Roll Call Vote: JV aye TM aye MH aye</p>
	<p>MassDOT LEAP award Berkley sidewalk project. Berkley received a MassDOT LEAP program award, providing the town with technical assistance for the planned sidewalk project connecting Berkley Middle School to the Berkley Common area. This support will help the town develop a shovel-ready plan, prioritize project steps, and determine the most effective use of an existing \$25,000 state earmark. The board emphasized that LEAP's involvement is a major first step toward securing additional funding and moving the sidewalk project forward to implementation.</p>	

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<p>Executive Session:</p>	<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>Motion to approve: MH motioned: TM second. Motion approved Roll Call Vote: JV aye TM aye MH aye</p>
<p>Adjournment:</p>	<p>Adjournment at 7:52 PM</p> <p>*Next Scheduled Meeting is Wednesday, January 28th, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.*</p>	


Jennifer Vincent, Chairwoman


Tabitha McCrohan, Member


Mark Horsfall, Member


Matthew Chabot, Town Administrator