

**MINUTES OF TOWN OF BERKLEY SELECTMEN'S MEETING OF 01/28/2026**  
 SELECTMEN IN ATTENDANCE: Jennifer Vincent-Chair, Tabitha K. McCrohan-Member, Mark Horsfall-Member

TOPIC		ACTION
<b>Call To Order</b>	Board of Selectmen - Called to Order at 6:02PM in the Moitoza-Petty Hearing Room	
<b>Personnel</b>	<p>Board to review submitted conflict of interest disclosures filed pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A, Section 19, for the following department heads: Town Administrator, Police Chief, and Treasurer/Collector, and to determine whether any conflicts exist and, if so, to issue written determinations as required by law; review of matter; votes may be taken.</p> <p>The Board reviewed conflict of interest disclosure forms submitted by the Town Administrator, Police Chief, and Treasurer/Collector, each of whom participates in the preparation of departmental budgets that include their own compensation. Upon review, and recognizing that elected officials are exempt from this requirement in the context of voting on their own budgets, the Board determined and now finds that no prohibited conflict of interest exists that would preclude these appointed officials from participating in the budget process. Matthew Chabot explained that, although he strongly disagrees this presents a true conflict, he recommended all affected appointed department heads file disclosures with their appointing authority (the Personnel Board) as a precaution, while noting that elected officials who vote on their own budgets are exempt from this requirement.</p>	<b>Discussion only.</b> <b>No votes taken</b>
<b>Appointments</b>	Board to appoint Mary Kate Moreau to the Berkley Conservation Commission; review of matter. The Board voted to appoint Mary Kate Monroe to the Berkley Conservation Commission for a term ending June 30, 2026, following her presentation of her environmental science background and professional experience in environmental consulting, with Selectman Horsfall recusing himself due to involvement in a related Conservation Commission matter.	<b>Motion to appoint:</b> TM motioned: JV second. Motion approved
<b>New Business:</b>	<p>Board to authorize the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen to execute all General Contractor contract documents and related instruments necessary for the construction of the Berkley Community School. The Board voted to authorize the Chair to execute all general contractor contract documents and related instruments for the Berkley Community School project and to award the general contract to Great Builders in the amount of \$74,200,000.</p> <p>Board to review and authorize the Berkley Highway Department to incur snow and ice expenditures in excess of the amount appropriated for the purpose, and to take any related action necessary to address winter storm response obligations. The Board voted to authorize the Highway Department to incur snow and ice expenditures in excess of the amount appropriated for that purpose and to take any related action necessary to address winter storm response obligations.</p> <p>Board to review proposed amendments, consolidation, and restatement of conservation restrictions between Dorothy S. Pierce and the New England Forestry Foundation, and to take any action deemed appropriate thereon. The Board voted to reconfirm its December 6, 2023 approval and signatures on the amendment, consolidation, and restatement of the conservation restrictions identified by the cited book and page references, finding that doing so advances the public interest pursuant to M.G.L. c. 184, §§31-33.</p> <p>Board to review and vote on Police Details for all upcoming elections; review of matter, votes may be taken. The Board voted to approve police details for the upcoming 2026 local and state elections at Berkley Middle School, including two detail officers at each election and the additional police coverage requested for early voting.</p>	<p><b>Motion to approve:</b> TM motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> MH motioned: JM second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> TM motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> JV motioned: MH second. Motion approved</p>

	<p>Board to review letter from the Office of the Town Clerk regarding the Annual Town Elections Calendar. The Board voted to accept and approve the 2026 Annual Town Election calendar as presented by the Town Clerk, including all related nomination, certification, withdrawal, registration, vote-by-mail, warrant posting, election, and campaign finance reporting deadlines.</p> <p>Board to review the audit engagement letter with CBIZ CPAs, dated April 7, 2025, and to consider authorizing the Town Administrator to take any and all actions necessary, including termination, in connection with said agreement. The Board voted to authorize the Town Administrator to take any and all actions necessary, including termination, in connection with the audit engagement agreement with CBIZ CPAs dated April 7, 2025, in light of the continued delay in completion of the FY24 audit and its impact on the Town's financial operations and borrowing.</p> <p>Board to discuss the scope and manner of public communication regarding pending litigation, consistent with legal counsel and applicable law. During the discussion on public communication regarding pending litigation, Jennifer Vincent proposed creating a transparent, accessible way for residents to see what litigation involves the Town, noting that the information is already public but often difficult for residents to find without specialized knowledge or formal records requests. She suggested a simple page on the Town's website listing active matters and linking directly to court or case records, without added narrative or commentary from the Town. Mark Horsfall strongly supported the idea as a way to improve accountability and reduce rumors, referencing long-standing concerns about opaque handling of lawsuits and payouts in many municipalities, while Tabitha McCrohan emphasized that clearer information could help residents understand that many issues stem from structural and legal complexities rather than bad faith. Town Counsel's written suggestions were referenced, and the Board agreed that any framework must be carefully structured to avoid prejudicing ongoing matters or violating legal constraints. By consensus, the Board directed that a draft framework and example web layout be developed with Town Counsel's input and returned to the Board at a future meeting for formal review and possible adoption.</p> <p>Board to review and potentially authorize execution of a letter to Mayor Shauna O'Connell (City of Taunton) regarding recent social media postings. The Board discussed and agreed to send a formal letter to Taunton Mayor Shauna O'Connell responding to her January 24 social media post that referenced a newspaper article on Berkley's financial challenges and contrasted them with Taunton's fiscal position. Jennifer Vincent explained that, because the Board is a public body and the post involved a neighboring municipality, it was important to respond formally and on the record rather than individually. The Board reviewed and edited a draft letter stating that the Mayor's post improperly used Berkley's situation as a political comparison point, risked damaging inter-municipal relations, and mischaracterized the context of the article; the final version requests a public acknowledgment of the harm caused and a formal apology to the Berkley community. The Board then voted to approve the edited letter and to transmit it to Mayor O'Connell.</p> <p>The Board discussed holding offsite "Meet and Greet" / Ask-a-Selectman sessions to improve direct engagement with residents. Noting that prior in-town "Talk of the Town" sessions at Town Hall had mixed turnout, Mark Horsfall suggested going to where residents already are, such as local businesses. He reported that both Boondocks and Mark of Healing were open to hosting informal sessions and planned to approach a few other high-traffic locations. The Board was supportive of the concept and agreed in principle to proceed, with Horsfall taking the lead on coordinating dates, locations, and formats, and</p>	<p><b>Motion to approve:</b> JM motioned; MH second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> JV motioned; MH second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Discussion only, no votes taken.</b></p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> JV motioned; MH second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Discussion only, no votes taken.</b></p>
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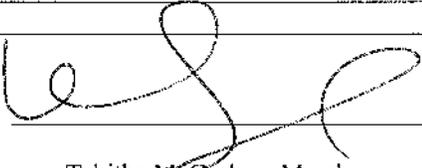
	<p>working with others so the events can be promoted and scheduled in a way that complements other town outreach.</p> <p>Board to review and potentially authorize the Town Administrator to execute the MassDOT LEAP Program technical assistance scope of work related to the Berkley Middle School sidewalk project. The Board voted to authorize the Town Administrator to execute the MassDOT LEAP Program Technical Assistance Scope of Work related to the Berkley Middle School sidewalk project, allowing the Town to receive planning and design support at no cost.</p>	<p><b>Motion to authorize:</b> JV motioned: MH second. Motion approved</p>
<p><b>Old Business</b></p>	<p>Board to review an e-permitting proposal and potentially authorize the Town Administrator to prepare and submit a Community Compact IT Grant application for the purpose of exploring implementation in FY2027. The Board voted to authorize the Town Administrator to prepare and submit a Community Compact IT grant application for the purpose of exploring implementation of an e-permitting system in FY27, including associated subscription and implementation costs.</p>	<p><b>Motion to approve:</b> MH motioned: JV second. Motion approved</p>
	<p>Board to continue discussion of building permit fee increases, including gas and plumbing permit fees, and to take any additional action deemed appropriate, including rescission or modification of the Board's vote of January 7, 2026; review of matter; votes may be taken</p>	<p><b>Discussion only, no votes taken.</b></p>
<p><b>Meeting Mail:</b></p>	<p>FY 2025 Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School annual audit report. The Board briefly reviewed the FY25 annual audit report for Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School, noting that the audit was completed on time and conducted by a firm other than the Town's current auditor (CBIZ). With no questions or concerns raised about the report's contents, the Board voted to file the audit report as received, without further discussion.</p>	<p><b>Motion to file:</b> JV motioned: TM second. Motion approved</p>
	<p>Board to review correspondence from the Berkley Conservation Commission dated January 16, 2026, titled <i>"Response to January 9, 2026 Email to the Conservation Commission,"</i> authored by Mark Horsfall, and to take any action deemed appropriate. During the discussion regarding a Selectman's email and whether it reflected Board views, Jennifer Vincent read into the record a request from the Conservation Commission that the Board clarify if Selectman Mark Horsfall's prior email (sent from his personal account) represented his personal opinions or an official position of the Board. Vincent stated that the email does not represent her personal view and that she is not sufficiently familiar with the underlying Conservation matter to take a substantive position. Tabitha McCrohan similarly noted that she had not read the state response and knew very little about the case, emphasizing that individual communications to the Town Administrator or other boards do not automatically reflect a Board of Selectmen position. A Conservation Commission representative (David Patrick) reiterated concern that the email had been directed to the Commission while Horsfall was a sitting Selectman and sought assurance that board volunteers would not be disparaged by their appointing authority, prompting the Board to draw a clear distinction between Horsfall's personal communication and any official action or statement of the Board as a whole.</p>	<p><b>Discussion only, no votes taken.</b></p>

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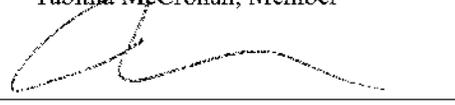
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<p><b>Meeting Minutes:</b></p>	<p>Board to approve Meeting Minutes of January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to approve Executive Session Minutes of January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to approve Meeting Minutes of January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026; review of matter; votes may be taken</p> <p>Board to approve Meeting Minutes of January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026; review of matter; votes may be taken</p>	<p><b>Motion to approve:</b> JV motioned: TM second. Motion approved</p> <p><b>Tabled</b></p> <p><b>Tabled</b></p> <p><b>Motion to approve:</b> JV motioned: TM second. Motion approved</p>
<p><b>Town Administrator Report</b></p>	<p>Congressional Earmark Opportunities - Overview of potential congressional earmark targets and preliminary supplemental budget ideas under consideration. The Town Administrator informed the Board that he will present at least two, and potentially three, candidate projects for congressional earmark requests at the next scheduled meeting for the Board's review and possible referral to the Town's legislative delegation.</p>	
<p><b>Executive Session</b></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><b>Roll Call Vote:</b> Vincent-Aye McCrohan-Aye Horsfall-Aye</p>
<p><b>Adjournment:</b></p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 7:29 PM</p> <p align="center">*Next Scheduled Meeting is Wednesday, February 11th, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.*</p>	

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Jennifer Vincent, Chairwoman

  
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Tabitha McCrohan, Member

  
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Mark Horsfall, Member

  
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Matthew Chabot, Town Administrator