

**Harpswell Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
Thursday February 12, 2026
Harpswell Town Office
APPROVED 3-5-26**

This meeting was held in the Select Board Meeting room at the Town Office and was available remotely by Zoom. Instructions were included on the published agenda and on the Town's website. Links to a video recording of the meeting are also available on the Town's website.

Selectmen Present: Chairman Kevin E. Johnson; Selectman David I. Chipman; Selectman Matthew Gilley.

Staff Present: Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator; Terri Gaudet, Treasurer & Deputy Town Administrator.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

1. **Adoption of Agenda:** Approved with no changes.

2. **Public Comment:** None

3. **Select Board Announcements:** None.

4. **Town Administrator's Report:** Administrator Eiane reported the public hearings required for the secret ballot referendum questions in March had occurred. Voters were reminded that they can vote by absentee ballot until March 7- questions about absentee voting can be directed to the Town Clerk. Information on the ballot items is available on the Town's website by clicking a menu option on the home page dedicated to the March 14 Town Meeting.

5. **March 14 Town Meeting:**

Updated Budget: A review of the Town Meeting Warrant continued with some updates and recommendations from the Town Administrator and Treasurer.

Terri Gaudet informed the Select Board of a couple of changes to the 2026 budget. Based on direction from the annual audit, the Town will have to budget in 2026 for the time actually worked in 2026. The Town will also be reducing its interest expense budget by \$114k since funding for the new Emergency Services Building will not be required until the fall (was expected in spring), eliminating an estimated interest payment. The new net total for the annual budget is now projected to be \$8,168,859 – about 4.35% above 2025. The Treasurer also noted the Town will likely need to increase the annual budget for propane before finalizing the warrant. Propane use at the Town Office during this cold winter has already exceeded last year's full year total. More information is expected from the Town's HVAC vendor.

Use of Fund Balance: Deputy Town Administrator Gaudet reported the unassigned fund balance, as of 12/31/25, stood at \$3.9 million. By policy, it is recommended the Town maintain 2 months of expenditures from one year to the next, allowing use of \$812,493 from the unassigned fund balance. It was the recommendation of the Town Administrator and Treasurer – following input from the Select Board at budget workshops - that the following funds be assigned: a) \$600,000 to

offset the Town's tax commitment; b) \$50,000 for removal of hazardous materials at the sentry building at Mitchell Field; c) \$77,870 for rebuilding/repairing the Town's salt shed. It was also noted there is an outstanding approval for use of unassigned fund balance for \$40,000 for replacement of equipment at Harpswell Community TV. The cumulative fund assignment would be \$767,870 – well within guidelines.

Draft Warrant: Kristi Eiane reviewed several minor changes that would need to be made to the text of the Warrant before it got published. The Town's attorney asked that it be made clear to voters that the Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Task Force recommended the minor alterations and amendments recently approved by the Select Board. She also reminded the Select Board that the adjustments outlined by the Town Treasurer for the budget would impact the numbers appearing in many of the budget articles in the Warrant.

The Town Administrator continued by asking the Select Board if they wished to maintain the 6% interest rate standard for tax delinquency. By Maine law, the Town can charge up to a 7% maximum – or anything below that. The Select Board members all expressed an interest in reducing this rate to 4%. The Town Administrator asked if the Select Board wanted to use the same standard for tax abatements owed by the Town to taxpayers. The numbers do not necessarily have to match. The Select Board asked the Town Administrator to do some additional research on the subject and report back.

6. Authorization of the Payroll & Payable Warrants: The Select Board unanimously approved Payroll Warrant PR6 totaling \$28,102.24 and Payable Warrant 7 totaling \$1,647,499.02.

7. Public Comment: None

8. Other Business: Administrator Eiane asked the Select Board to provide signed permission for CMP to place three new poles on Thompson Road (Town road); supporting new homes being built at the site. The Select Board members all signed a permission form to allow the poles.

9. Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Hubbard
Recording Secretary

Attachments: None.

[Attachments are available at the Town Clerk's Office or by email at harpswell@town.harpswell.me.us]