

1 Approved: February 10, 2026

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3 **Select Board Meeting:** January 13, 2026

4 **Present:** Marjorie Freiman, Thomas Ulfelder, Colette Aufranc, Beth Sullivan Woods, Kenneth
5 Largess

6 **Also Present:** Executive Director Meghan Jop (remotely via Zoom), Assistant Executive Director
7 Corey Testa

8
9 **Meeting Documents:**

- 10 1. Agenda
- 11 2. Select Board Calendar
- 12 3. Meeting Overview
- 13 4. Memo from Traffic Committee to Select Board dated January 8, 2026, RE: Recommended
14 Traffic Regulation Amendment – Stop on Ivy Road at Popular Road and Parking
15 Prohibition on Halsey Avenue and Turner Road
- 16 5. Public Hearing Notice – January 13, 2026
- 17 6. Memo from Traffic Committee to Select Board dated January 13, 2026, Re: Traffic
18 Committee 2025 Summary
- 19 7. Draft 2026 Town Meeting Article List
- 20 8. Draft 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- 21 9. Memo to Select Board from Meghan Jop dated January 9, 2026, Re: Status of the FY27
22 Budget
- 23 10. Town Departments – Guideline Table
- 24 11. Exhibit B – Sources and Uses dated 1/9/26
- 25 12. Exhibit C – Five Year Capital Plan dated 1/9/26
- 26 13. Reserves Projection After ATM 2026
- 27 14. Draft General Bylaw Review Committee Charge (clean)
- 28 15. Draft General Bylaw Review Committee redlined version to previous version
- 29 16. Draft Minutes
- 30 a. December 16, 2025
- 31 17. Other Correspondence
- 32 a. Letter to Edward Augustus, HLC, dated January 9, 2026, Re: Foundational
33 Questions about DCAMM, HLC, and MassBay's Process
- 34 18. Additional Documents
- 35 a. Revised Draft Warrant
- 36 b. Mid-January Liaison update – Aufranc

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39 **1. Call to Order**

40 Ms. Freiman called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30 PM in the Juliani Room, Town Hall.

41 Ms. Freiman announced that the meeting was being broadcast live on Comcast Channel 8 and
42 Verizon Channel 40 and would be available for later viewing on wellesleymedia.org.

44 **2. Citizen Speak**

45 **Nick Rhind**, Garden Road, addressed the Select Board regarding the MassBay development. He
46 expressed disappointment with the Town's communication about the project, noting that despite
47 Chair Freiman's clear outline in September and the Board's October letter, the process for
48 collecting Town input had been canceled with limited explanation. Mr. Rhind encouraged the
49 Board to pursue a collaborative approach rather than threatening litigation against the
50 Commonwealth.

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52 **3. Chair's Report (this item was taken out of order)**

53 Ms. Freiman indicated she would move up on the agenda a portion of the Chair's Report. Ms.
54 Freiman provided an update on the proposed MassBay development, explaining it would be the
55 only MassBay discussion for the evening. She reported on a December meeting at the State House
56 with state officials, including Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC)
57 Secretary Ed Augustus, Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM)
58 Commissioner Adam Baacke, as well as state legislators State Senator Cindy Creem and State
59 Representative Alice Peisch. Also present were MassBay President David Podell, MassBay Board
60 of Trustees Chair Alissa Povich, Ms. Jop and Mr. Testa, and several staff members from the state
61 and local levels.

62
63 Ms. Freiman noted that Secretary Augustus stated that the proposed development on Oakland
64 Street would not exceed 180 units. The Commonwealth is considering preserving approximately
65 39-40 acres of the forested site, intending to find a developer committed to leaving that portion
66 undisturbed, protecting it legally from future development. The development would focus on the
67 roughly 5-acre parking lot area, with various housing types under consideration. State legislators
68 told the Secretary, Commissioner and Dr. Podell that they stood behind and support the Town. Ms.
69 Freiman shared that legislation was not the Town's preferred method of resolution but that the
70 Board would consider all options to protect the Town and residents and ensure that both the Town
71 and the Commonwealth comply with statutory requirements. Ms. Freiman noted the Board had
72 many questions regarding the Commonwealth's interpretation of several aspects of the Affordable
73 Homes Act, as well as on the implementation of the statute.

74
75 The Town and state legislators highlighted concerns about the density of the proposed project,
76 serious traffic issues on Oakland Street and Route 9, and other logistical details like parking for
77 housing residents and MassBay students. Additional concerns involved engaging the
78 Massachusetts Department of Transportation early to address the traffic issues, given that Route 9
79 is a state road, and questions about the timing of promulgation of regulations and terms of the
80 request for proposals for developers. State legislators and the Town emphasized the need for HLC
81 and DCAMM to consider flexibility in the number of units planned. The Commissioner indicated
82 there would be no downward movement on that number.
83

Ms. Freiman noted the community visioning session scheduled in December had been cancelled because of lack of clarity and conflicting information from different offices in the Commonwealth. The Board has submitted written questions to the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and is awaiting responses to determine the next steps. The letter is a public document and was circulated as part of the Board's newsletter, The W, was posted with the meeting materials and is available on the Town's website. Responses to questions are necessary before the Board can reschedule the session and engage with residents.

Ms. Freiman mentioned that the Board has engaged outside attorneys to work with Town Counsel and assist with clarifying the Town's rights and next steps regarding the development. To protect strategic discussions and maintain attorney-client privilege, meetings have been held in executive session. Finally, the Chair emphasized the importance of public opinion and encouraged residents to continue providing their views to the Board, promising updates as new information became available.

4. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Meghan Jop provided several updates:

- The "Skip the Stuff" initiative at local restaurants is now in effect as of January 1, 2026, requiring patrons to request single-use items.
- The Wellesley Cultural Council has announced awards totaling over \$16,000 for 18 projects spanning various arts and cultural initiatives.
- While candidates for boards and committees are set for the Town election, residents can still pull papers to run for Town Meeting until January 23rd at 4 PM, with completed papers due by January 27th at 5 PM.

5. Public Safety Quarterly Updates

Fire Chief Stephen Mortarelli and Police Chief Scott Whittemore joined the meeting.

Fire Chief

Chief Mortarelli provided department updates including:

- Firefighter Ben Gilkey's graduation from the Mass Fire Academy on December 1st, where he served as class president
- Completion of the entrance exam with approximately 60 applicants, with background checks underway for potential new hires
- Successful Senior Thanksgiving lunch event coordinated by Deputy Chief Corda
- Scheduled live burn training at Brookline Fire
- Union Contract Negotiations are beginning
- Updates on technology projects including a new alerting system that has gone live
- The department was first in Metro Fire to switch to the National Reporting System
- Ongoing implementation of the First Due software system for department operations
- Reactivation of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
- Boston Marathon planning underway with Boston Athletic Association

- Progress on the fire station master plan working group, with plans to present recommendations to the Board soon
- Delivery of new equipment including Engine 1, a new command vehicle (CAR 3), and a new Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) along with staff training on the UTV at Morses Pond

The Board commended the Fire Department's accomplishments and modernization efforts.

Police Chief

Chief Whittemore presented department updates including:

- The success of the e-bike safety task force, which has reduced complaints significantly
- Reclassification of two positions: IT Specialist to IT Public Safety Manager, and Office Manager
- All five new officers are fully trained and on duty
- Plans for a police officer exam in April/May following recruitment efforts
- Preparation for the Boston Marathon in coordination with the Fire Department
- Security operations for Secretary Clinton's visit to Wellesley College in November
- Planning for World Cup events, including potential local presence and support at Gillette Stadium
- Receipt of a \$50,000 anonymous donation and a \$16,000 competitive state grant
- Acquisition of a third fully electric cruiser
- Operations during the Thanksgiving Turkey Trot and football game
- Rapid restoration of DPW radio communications after wind damage to an antenna pole
- Extensive training initiatives including night firearms qualification, defensive tactics recertification, and active shooter training with neighboring departments and local colleges
- More efficient scheduling of department-wide training throughout the year

The Board noted the sophistication of both departments and their strong community partnerships.

6. Traffic Committee Update

Transportation and Mobility Manager Sheila Page and Lieutenant Michael Lemenager joined the meeting.

Ms. Page provided an overview of the Traffic Committee's operations, explaining that the committee reviews resident requests regarding roadway safety by gathering data, conducting site visits, and following relevant regulations and guidance. Solutions may be regulatory (requiring Select Board approval), non-regulatory, or involve physical improvements. Ms. Page highlighted a few initiatives including:

- Collaboration on the e-bike safety initiative
- Utilization of a service providing traffic speed data based on cell phone and car data helping to address neighborhood speeding concerns
- Completion of the Complete Streets Prioritization plan which positions the Town for competitive grant applications

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170 Ms. Freiman opened the public hearings for the proposed traffic regulation modifications.

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172 Parking Prohibition on Halsey Avenue and Turner Road

173 Ms. Page presented a proposal to prohibit parking at the intersection of Halsey Avenue and Turner
174 Road near Morse's Pond Access Road, explaining that this popular destination experiences parking
175 issues that create safety concerns. The prohibition would make permanent what has been
176 temporarily marked with cones.

177

178 Several residents provided input:

- 179 • **Pete Jones**, a resident since 1947, shared photos showing extensive parking problems
180 affecting safety, particularly during events
- 181 • **Jamison Barr** of 2 Halsey Avenue noted issues with delivery trucks and emergency
182 vehicles navigating the area
- 183 • **Terri Bonce** of 45 Turner Road suggested better signage about parking lot availability

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185 Board members discussed concerns about displacing parking to other nearby streets and the need
186 for better signage for parking availability and hours of opening and enforcement. The Traffic
187 Committee indicated this would be an iterative approach, with the ability to revisit the regulations
188 if needed.

189

190 **Upon a motion by Ms. Aufranc and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board voted (5-0) to close**
191 **the Public Hearing on this topic.**

192

193 **Aufranc – Aye**

194 **Freiman – Aye**

195 **Largess – Aye**

196 **Sullivan Woods – Aye**

197 **Ulfelder – Aye**

198

199 **Upon a motion by Ms. Aufranc and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board voted (5-0) to amend**
200 **the traffic regulations under No Parking Schedule 1 by adding locations:**

- 201 • **Halsey Avenue on the south side from Turner Road to approximately 140 feet**
202 **westerly on Halsey Avenue and**
- 203 • **Halsey Avenue on the north side from Turner Road, approximately 110 feet westerly**
204 **on Halsey Avenue and**
- 205 • **Turner Road West on the west side from Halsey Avenue to Hodges Avenue.**

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207 **Aufranc – Aye**
208 **Freiman – Aye**
209 **Largess – Aye**
210 **Sullivan Woods – Aye**
211 **Ulfelder – Aye**
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213 **Stop Sign at Ivy Road at Poplar Road**

214 Ms. Page detailed the proposal to add a stop sign at the intersection of Ivy Road and Poplar Road,
215 noting that neither road currently has stop control, making it unclear who has the right of way. Per
216 guidance, the stop sign should go on the road with better visibility, which is Ivy Road.

217
218 The Board agreed with the recommendation from the Traffic Committee.

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220 **Upon a motion by Ms. Aufranc and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder the Board voted (5-0) to close**
221 **the Public Hearing on this topic.**

222
223 **Aufranc – Aye**
224 **Freiman – Aye**
225 **Largess – Aye**
226 **Sullivan Woods – Aye**
227 **Ulfelder – Aye**
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229 **Upon a motion by Ms. Aufranc and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder, the Board voted (5-0) to**
230 **amend the traffic regulations under Schedule IV Stop Signs by adding Ivy Road at Poplar**
231 **Road so as to face southbound drivers on Ivy Road, and Ivy Road at Poplar Road so as to**
232 **face northbound drivers on Ivy Road.**

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234 **Aufranc – Aye**
235 **Freiman – Aye**
236 **Largess – Aye**
237 **Sullivan Woods – Aye**
238 **Ulfelder – Aye**
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240 7. **Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Preparation**

241 **Discuss and Vote the ATM Warrant**

242 Ms. Jop presented the ATM Draft Warrant, reviewing several changes since the previous version
243 including:

- 244 • Confirmation of the February 9th zoning hearing date
- 245 • Addition of "commissions" to Article 1 to be more inclusive
- 246 • Maintaining the baler compactor fund rather than terminating it
- 247 • Verification of revolving fund names
- 248 • Separation of personnel policies from HR bylaw changes in different articles
- 249 • Corrections to language for MWRA articles

250
251 The Board noted this is one of the shortest warrants in 10 years. They agreed to postpone voting
252 on the warrant until after the budget discussion.

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254 8. **FY27 Budget Update**

255 *Chief Financial Officer Rachel DeRoche joined the meeting via Zoom.*

256
257 Ms. Jop and Chief Finance Officer Rachel DeRoche presented an update on the FY27 budget,
258 highlighting a current deficit of approximately \$2 million. To address this shortfall, they proposed
259 a strategy comprising two key actions:

- 260 • Reducing cash capital by \$1 million: This involves requesting departments to delay some
261 projects, particularly given that about \$4 million in previously approved cash capital funds
262 have not yet been spent. Ms. Jop mentioned that the initial proposal already saw cuts from
263 departments such as the Facilities Management Department (FMD) and the Department of
264 Public Works (DPW), which collectively removed nearly \$1 million in capital projects to align
265 with the budget guidelines. Although Ms. Jop and Ms. DeRoche acknowledged the importance
266 of capital investments, they believed this reduction would provide an opportunity to catch up
267 on previously funded but incomplete projects, thus managing the budget more effectively
268 without immediate service impacts.
- 269 • Using Free Cash to offset employee benefits increases: The proposal includes applying
270 approximately \$1.3 million in Free Cash to mitigate the substantial rise in health insurance
271 costs, which are projected to increase by 12.5%. Ms. Jop explained that the prior year had an
272 anomaly with a lower-than-expected increase due to the West Suburban Health Group's
273 favorable rate, but this year presented significant costs driven by national trends such as
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prescription drug prices and provider negotiations. With this approach, the total Free Cash applied to operations would amount to \$3.5 million.

This solution raised concerns among Board members about the increasing reliance on Reserves for covering operational expenses.

To address these concerns, the Board engaged in a discussion about exploring specific capital projects that could be deferred, including an irrigation replacement proposal, playground reconstruction, DPW campus master plan, or a significant request for consultant services for the Comprehensive Plan noting the Planning Department does not currently have a director. Board members noted that cutting capital expenditure in this period results in deferral to a later period and stressed the importance of obtaining detailed information on unspent funds from prior allocations. They highlighted the necessity of strategic planning to assess potential impacts on service delivery and prepare for future financial challenges. Board members also pointed out the importance of leveraging alternative funding sources, such as grants or borrowing, to better sustain long-term fiscal health. There was broad consensus on the need for proactive measures, particularly if health insurance cost trends persist, to safeguard operational balance without undue dependence on reserve funds.

The Board agreed to have staff gather more comprehensive data on the capital projects yet to be completed and potential alternative funding mechanisms. The Board continued the budget discussion and Annual Town Meeting Warrant to the next meeting, aiming for a financial strategy that aligns with both immediate and future Town needs. This re-assessment includes evaluating the feasibility of proceeding with certain projects and seeking input from the Department of Public Works and Planning Board regarding Free Cash articles proposed.

9. Discuss and Vote Modification to Town Bylaw Committee Charge

Ms. Freiman presented a revised proposal for the Town Bylaw Committee charge. The changes included moving the Moderator and staff to *ex-officio* status and proposing that the committee (consisting of two Select Board members and *ex-officio* members) would together designate three Town Meeting members to round out a committee of five voting members.

Board members engaged in a discussion on whether the appointment of Town Meeting members to the committee should align with the standard appointment process typically used for committee appointments. One member expressed the need to consider incorporating a formal

procedure for selecting these members to ensure consistency and transparency. Ms. Freiman elaborated on the rationale for the current proposal, emphasizing the significant value of the ex-officio members' input. She noted that these ex-officio members bring a wealth of experience with Town Meeting and an in-depth understanding of Town Meeting members, which is crucial in selecting individuals who would effectively serve the committee's purpose. This input is vital as it helps ensure that the appointed Town Meeting members are well-informed and suited to contribute meaningfully to the committee's work.

Upon a motion by Ms. Aufranc and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder, the Board voted (4-1) to approve the General Bylaw Review Committee charge, as amended.

Aufranc – Aye
Freiman – Aye
Largess – Aye
Sullivan Woods – No
Ulfelder – Aye

10. Administrative Matters

Discuss and Vote Minutes

The Board reviewed minutes from December 16, 2025.

Upon a motion by Ms. Aufranc and seconded by Mr. Ulfelder, the Board voted (5-0) to approve the minutes of December 16, 2025, as amended.

Aufranc – Aye
Freiman – Aye
Largess – Aye
Sullivan Woods – Aye
Ulfelder – Aye

11. Chair's Report

Ms. Freiman stated she had already provided her MassBay update at the beginning of the meeting and offered to accept any public comments that may have been intended for that agenda item.

Ms. Freiman reported on a meeting with School Committee leadership, noting:

- The school budget public hearing is set for January 20th with a final vote on February 3rd.
- The Superintendent's budget is slightly below 3%, with a version at exactly 3% containing \$26,000 in strategic initiatives.

- School Committee leadership asked questions regarding the presentation of Town and School budget motions and staff are working to address those questions.
- Hardy and Hunnewell Solar cost estimates are in, with pending grant applications.
- The School Committee voted to proceed with window units only for the Air Conditioning project at Bates, Fiske, Schofield and Middle School, at a cost of \$17-20 million. With that estimate, none of the schools will require Americans with Disability Act (ADA) modifications because the total construction costs (excluding soft costs) are below 30% of the assessed values of the buildings.
- A new state policy requires middle school students to be informed about high school options beyond Wellesley High School.

12. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm

The next regular meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2026, at 6:30 pm in Juliani Room, Town Hall.