

**Wednesday, January 21, 2026  
Advisory Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.  
Juliani Room  
Town Hall  
525 Washington Street  
Wellesley, MA**

Madison Riley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was livestreamed on Wellesley Media at [www.wellesleymedia.org](http://www.wellesleymedia.org) and broadcast live on local cable channels Comcast 8/Verizon 40.

Those present from Advisory Committee: Madison Riley, Chair; Mark Benjamin, Vice Chair; Jay Prosnitz, Vice Chair; Doug Wilkins, Secretary; Susan Clapham; Rani Elwy; Paul Barnhill, Doug Smith, Mariana Vinacur.

Advisory Committee members participating remotely: Jay Bock, Aaron Williams.

Absent: Phil Jameson, Lucienne Ronco, Penny Rossano, Dan Weinger.

Also present: KC Kato, Town Clerk .

## Citizen Speak

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

## **Town Clerk FY27 Budget Request**

Town Clerk KC Kato presented the FY27 budget request for the Town Clerk's office and provided an overview of the Town Clerk's office structure, which includes an Assistant Town Clerk, an Elections and Registration Administrator who focuses on election work and census tasks, and a Licensing and Elections Administrator who assists with elections, dog licensing, and vital records work. The office also employs elections and seasonal staff during busy election periods.

The Town Clerk's office serves as a frontline customer service point for Town residents, helping visitors navigate town government. Key responsibilities include:

- Elections and election administration.
- Public records access and management.
- Processing vital records (births, deaths, marriages) dating back to 1881.
- Dog licensing (approximately 3,400 dogs in Wellesley).
- Conflict of interest compliance tracking.
- Town Meeting support.

The Town Clerk's office relies on other departments for help during elections and includes coordination with DPW for ballot deliveries; FMD for setup; and Police for security. There is also extensive community engagement needed to recruit election workers and candidates for Town positions.

Since 2020 there have been significant changes to election administration, particularly with the implementation of vote-by-mail, which has become permanent unless the Select Board opts out. This has created additional costs in terms of labor, equipment, and postage, with Wellesley ranking fourth in the state for percentage of voters who voted by mail in the last presidential election.

50 Regarding the FY27 budget, elections in FY27 will include the state primary in September, the midterm  
51 election in November, and the annual Town election in March, resulting in higher costs compared to single-  
52 election years. The main drivers of the budget increase are temporary/seasonal help and postage expenses  
53 related to mail-in voting.

54  
55 The Town Clerk's office receives grant funding after elections to offset some costs, but these grants aren't  
56 guaranteed and therefore aren't factored into the initial budget request. Elections now cost between \$30,000-  
57 \$40,000 each to administer.

58  
59 **Questions/Discussion**

- 60 • A question was asked about the potential consolidation of polling locations.
  - 61     ○ Although polling locations have been reduced from 8 to 5 locations, further consolidation  
62         would yield limited savings due to statutory staffing requirements at each precinct.
- 63 • A comment was made about the Saturday voter registration requirements and whether efforts have  
64     been made to change this.
  - 65     ○ It was noted that State law requires staying open on Saturdays before State elections for  
66         last-minute registrations, despite minimal usage of this service in Wellesley. Efforts have  
67         been made to change this but it is unlikely to be changed.
- 68 • A question was asked about election integrity.
  - 69     ○ The system of checks and balances that prevents people from voting both by mail and in  
70         person was described.
- 71 • A question was asked about voter turnout.
  - 72     ○ Wellesley's turnout for local elections, typically around 25%, exceeds that of many  
73         neighboring communities, though the most recent Town election saw a drop to 17%.
- 74 • A question was asked about Article 6 regarding the Town Clerk salary.
  - 75     ○ It was noted that the HR director has made a recommendation that the Select Board is still  
76         considering, based on comparable positions in other communities.

77  
78 **Minutes Approval**

79 Mariana Vinacur made and Susan Clapham seconded a motion to approve the January 14, 2026 minutes.

80  
81 **Roll Call Vote**  
82 Paul Barnhill – yes  
83 Mark Benjamin – yes  
84 Jay Bock – yes  
85 Susan Clapham – yes  
86 Rani Elwy – yes  
87 Phil Jameson – absent  
88 Jay Prosnitz – yes  
89 Lucienne Ronco – absent  
90 Penny Rossano – absent  
91 Doug Smith – abstain  
92 Mariana Vinacur – yes  
93 Dan Weinger – absent  
94 Doug Wilkins – yes  
95 Aaron Williams – abstain

96  
97 *Vote:* The motion passed 8 to 0 with 2 abstentions.

98  
99

100 **Liaison Reports**

101 *Select Board/Rani Elwy* - the Select Board finalized and signed the warrant but was still debating the budget,  
102 which would continue into the following week. Discussions on Article 6 (Town Clerk salary) and Article  
103 20 (feasibility study) are ongoing.

104 *Schools/Mariana Vinacur* - the School Committee held a budget hearing the previous night with limited  
105 public feedback. After the hearing the WPS administrative team introduced a revised budget with the same  
106 bottom-line figure but included some small changes, including the reduction of an additional FTE. The  
107 revised document had not yet been posted.

108 *Council on Aging/Susan Clapham* - interviews for a new director have been completed and the COA voted  
109 to offer the position to Holly Lucht, who has extensive municipal experience in Princeton and Shrewsbury.  
110 The kitchen at the senior center will have a final inspection at the end of January and currently staff are  
111 completing training underway. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the kitchen is tentatively scheduled for early  
112 March.

113

114 **Administrative**

115 Guidance was provided on the preparation of write-ups for Town Meeting articles. The importance of using  
116 the correct Google Sheets template and formatting was emphasized. The executive summary section was  
117 reviewed, and it was explained that "Voting yes will" and "Voting no will" statements should be simple and  
118 focused on the immediate impact of the vote rather than reasons or explanations.

119

120 It was also noted that for financial articles, writers should clearly explain tax impacts as far into the  
121 foreseeable future as possible in an effort to provide Town Meeting with more information on long-term  
122 financial impacts beyond just the next fiscal year.

123

124 The approach Article 8 (appropriations) write-ups was discussed and it was suggested this might require a  
125 different approach given the detailed nature of the budget discussions.

126

127 It was asked if potential Consent Agenda items should be noted in the write-up. It was felt this  
128 determination would come too late in the process to be included in the write-ups.

129

130 **Adjourn**

131 Mariana Vinacur made and Jay Bock seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

132

133 **Roll Call Vote**

134 Paul Barnhill – yes

135 Mark Benjamin – yes

136 Jay Bock – yes

137 Susan Clapham – yes

138 Rani Elwy – yes

139 Phil Jameson – absent

140 Jay Prosnitz – yes

141 Lucienne Ronco – absent

142 Penny Rossano – absent

143 Doug Smith – yes

144 Mariana Vinacur – yes

145 Dan Weinger – absent

146 Doug Wilkins – yes

147 Aaron Williams – yes

148

149 The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. 10 to 0.

150

Approved January 28, 2026

151 Meeting video [January 21, 2026](#)

152

**153 Meeting Documents**

154 • FY27 Town Clerk Budget

155 • 161 Town Clerk FY27 Op Request – submitted – Advisory

156 • Draft 011426 AC Minutes