

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
FEB. 3, 2026 – 7 P.M.
HYBRID ON ZOOM AND SOUTH HADLEY SENIOR CENTER

Present in person were Chair Jeff Cyr, Vice Chair Nicole Casolari, Clerk Carol Constant, members Andrea Miles and Renee Sweeney, Town Administrator Lisa Wong and Assistant Town Administrator Chuck Romboletti.

CALL TO ORDER

Cyr called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / OPEN FORUM

Sweeney reminded the public of a food drive for neighbors Helping Neighbors sponsored by the South Hadley Democratic Town Committee happening Feb. 7 at SHHS. Anne Stockton, of 325 Hadley St., noted folks can also drop food off on Wednesdays before noon or Saturdays before 10 a.m. at the pantry.

Constant noted that nomination papers can be taken out for town meeting member or elected office via the town clerk's office.

Jack Culp, of 65 Woodbridge Ter., spoke in favor of keeping Gaylord Library open.

Miles said the Budget Task Force voted last night in favor of an \$11 million override ask for the Selectboard. She said their report will be released next week.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Constant motioned to approve the Draft Minutes of Jan. 20, 2026. Miles seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

CONSENT AGENDA

Constant moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. Miles seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

The Consent Agenda consisted of two One-Day Beer & Wine License Requests from Kathleen Van Winkle for Feb. 13 and March 13 at Gaylord Library.

TRI-ANNUAL INTERVIEWS

The board interviewed George Francis for the Veterans Council, Stephen A. Romeo for the Veterans Council, Adam Jajko for the Conservation Commission, Veterans Council, Olivia Aguilar for the Sustainability Energy Commission, and Robert Szklarz for the Historical Commission.

IGM CONTRACT RENEWAL

Sweeney motioned to authorize the town administrator to execute an agreement for Option Year 3 to extend the IGM contract to Jan. 15, 2027 and as the contract provisions require, the fee for

this additional year of services was mutually negotiated by the parties to entail \$868,392 in Operations Expenses, \$733,692 for IGM Maintenance Fees and \$39,900 for the Operations Management Fee to be paid by the Town to IGM. Constant seconded.

Four in favor, one against (Miles). The motion carried.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PROPOSAL

Michelle T, chair of the Redevelopment Authority, explained the Redevelopment Authority is requesting \$150,000 in seed funding to help unlock redevelopment opportunities in the Falls by identifying property needs, connecting owners with grants and financing, and attracting potential developers. The Authority has been actively supporting the area through property owner forums, a quarterly newsletter, private fundraising via the Frank DeToma Fund, and small grants for facade and business improvements to stimulate economic growth.

Selectboard members acknowledged the challenging budget year and concerns about limited free cash, calling it a strategic, one-time seed investment rather than an ongoing expense. They said it will leverage additional public and private funding, stimulate redevelopment in the Falls, and expand the tax base.

Miles motioned to support the proposal. Casolari seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Selectboard discussed reviving the inactive Cable Advisory Committee, a five-member board established under state law to advise on cable licensing, public education, compliance and negotiations. With the town's current cable license agreement with Comcast expiring in 2029, members expressed support for reestablishing the committee to provide public input and expertise during upcoming negotiations.

Miles motioned to revive the Cable Advisory Committee. Constant seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

35 CAREW AND 10 PROSPECT SALE

Constant motioned to authorize the sale of the Tax Title property located at 35 Carew Street to The Seajay Group LLC, or their nominee, for the sum of Three Hundred and Six Thousand Dollars and zero cents (\$306,000.00), pursuant to the Town's authority under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 60, Section 64A. Further move to authorize the Tax Title Custodian and Town Administrator to execute any and all other documents necessary to effectuate the sale, and to take any actions required to complete the conveyance pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 60, Section 64A. Miles seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

Sweeney motioned to elect, contingent upon the issuance of a court judgment in favor of the Town, to sell the Town-owned real estate known as 10 Prospect Street and identified by the Assessor's Office as 018C-0007-000 and to authorize the Tax Title Custodian Town Administrator to make all necessary and required decisions to move forward with the sale of the property or otherwise comply with M.G.L. c. 60, § 64A. Constant seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

BUDGET

Wong reported that the Governor's proposed budget reflects a net decrease of approximately \$6,000 in state aid, with higher-than-expected revenues offset by increased assessments, including an 11% rise in school choice and charter tuition. The town faces a projected \$3.5 million deficit, with draft scenarios outlining significant staffing and service reductions across schools and municipal departments absent an override; a \$6–9 million override would mitigate but not eliminate cuts, while an \$11 million override was recommended by the Budget Task Force to stabilize services for several years. Board members discussed the need for additional financial detail, ongoing uncertainties in revenue and health insurance costs, and the timing of more finalized budget information.

HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE

Romboletti said the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust is projecting a preliminary 16% health insurance rate increase for next year, potentially rising to approximately 20% without plan design changes. Final rates are expected to be voted on Feb. 25. The estimate includes impacts from six communities leaving the trust and efforts to rebuild reserves. Officials are continuing to evaluate alternative options and monitor comparable increases from other providers.

RESIGNATIONS

Constant motioned to accept the resignation of Mitch Resnick from the Board of Library Trustees and vote to place the position on the April town election ballot. Miles seconded. All in favor. Unanimous. Constant highlighted Resnick's dedication and work on the Canal Park Committee and the Library Trustees.

ADJOURN

Miles motioned to adjourn. Constant seconded. All in favor. Unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Maher
Executive Assistant to Administration**