

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, July 22, 2025
Select Board Chambers and
Via ZOOM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>

6:03 p.m. Call to Order

A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Heidi Frail. Those present were Marianne Cooley, Joshua Levy, Kevin Keane, and Town Manager Katie King. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance was also in attendance. Vice Chair Cathy Dowd joined via Zoom.

6:04 p.m. Town Manager Oath of Office

Ms. Frail welcomed all to the meeting. Town Clerk Louise Miller ceremonially administered the Town Manager Oath of Office to Ms. King (note: Assistant Town Clerk Helen Atkinson formally administered the aforementioned oath to Ms. King at the July 3, 2025 Special Meeting of the Select Board). Ms. King thanked the Select Board members for their confidence and for appointing her as Needham's Town Manager. She expressed appreciation for Kate Fitzpatrick and her example as Town Manager and concluded by thanking Town Staff for their support as she begins her tenure.

6:08 p.m. Public Comment Period

No public comment was heard.

6:08 p.m. Purple Heart Day Proclamation

Vice Chair Cathy Dowd read the 2025 Purple Heart Day Proclamation, reaffirming the Town of Needham as a Purple Heart Community.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve and sign the 2025 Purple Heart Day Proclamation.

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:10 p.m. Alcohol License Hearing – Henry Hospitality, Inc. d/b/a The James
Presenters: Stuart Henry, Henry Hospitality, Inc. Owner & License Manager of Record, Mary Kylie, General Manager

The Select Board, as local licensing authority, held a public hearing in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 138 Sections 23 and 64, and Section 10.1 of the Town of Needham Regulations for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages. The purpose of the hearing was to consider and vote on whether to modify, suspend, revoke, or

cancel the On Premises All Alcoholic Beverages Pouring License issued to Henry Hospitality, Inc. d/b/a The James, for the following violations:

1. 204 CMR 2.05(2): Permitting an illegality to occur on the licensed premises, to wit; G.L. c. 138, §34, sale or delivery of an alcohol beverage to a person under twenty-one years of age, and which sale or delivery occurred on March 19, 2025; and
2. Section 3.5.13 of the Town of Needham Regulations for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (Revised April 25, 2023): Failure to request proof of identification from any patron appearing to be under the age of 40 prior to any alcohol sale and confirm the authenticity of the identification card through the use of a digital card scanner, and which failure occurred on March 19, 2025.

Ms. Frail invited Stuart Henry, Owner, and Mary Kylie, General Manager to the table for the hearing. Police Chief John Schlittler provided an overview of the underage compliance checks at all the stores and restaurants that hold liquor licenses in Needham on March 19, 2025. An underage party went into The James at approximately 4:38 p.m. The bartender, identified as David Adams, did not check the underage individual's identification and did serve them an alcoholic beverage. The underage individual texted Officer Broderick that they had been served an alcoholic beverage and left the bar. Officer Broderick entered the bar, identified himself as a Needham Police Officer, and advised Mr. Adams that he was conducting alcohol compliance checks and that he had served an underage party, subsequently providing Ms. Kylie with a notice of violation. Chief Schlittler noted that this is the third violation for this establishment in the past five years.

Ms. Frail invited Board members to ask any questions. Ms. Cooley asked if there was both in-house training and in-person alcohol service training and if scanners have been added. Ms. Kylie confirmed this and added that every day there is a pre-service staff meeting before lunch and dinner and other protocols in place. Support Services Manager Myles Tucker shared the recommended penalties for both violations.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to:

1. **Find sufficient evidence that, on March 19, 2025, Henry Hospitality, Inc. d/b/a The James, located at 1027 Great Plain Avenue, violated 204 CMR 2.05(2) permitting an illegality on the licensed premises, to wit: Chapter 138, Section 34, sale or delivery of an alcoholic beverage to a person under twenty-one years of age and**
2. **Find sufficient evidence that, on March 19, 2025, Henry Hospitality, Inc. d/b/a The James, located at 1027 Great Plain Avenue, violated Section 3.5.13 of the Town of Needham Regulations for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (Revised April 25, 2023) by failing to request proof of identification and confirm the authenticity of said identification card through the use of a digital card scanner.**

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

The Board then discussed the penalty for this infraction. Ivria Fried of Harrington Heep, LLP, Town Counsel, noted that the Select Board may allow the Licensee to decide when they would like to serve the suspension by requiring them to complete the suspension by a date certain.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to:

- 1. Suspend the Section 12 Restaurant All Alcoholic Liquor License issued to Henry Hospitality, Inc. d/b/a The James, located at 1027 Great Plain Avenue, for a period of 1 day for the violation of 204 CMR 2.05(2) permitting an illegality on the licensed premises, to wit: Chapter 138, Section 34, sale or delivery of an alcoholic beverage to a person under twenty-one years of age and**
- 2. Suspend the Section 12 Restaurant All Alcoholic Liquor License issued to Henry Hospitality, Inc. d/b/a The James, located at 1027 Great Plain Avenue, for a period of 6 days for violation of Town of Needham Alcohol Regulations at Section 3.5.13.**
Both suspensions to be served as 3 consecutive days and then 4 consecutive days on dates chosen by the Licensee within 45 days of receipt of a written notice of the hearing decision.
- 3. Authorize the Town Manager to draft and send notice of the Select Board's decision to the Licensee and to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission.**

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:48 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Grant of Location – 1166 Greendale Avenue
Presenter: Joanne Callender, Eversource Energy, Brian Canavan, Director of Operations, St. Sebastian's School, Joe Cataldo, M.J. Cataldo, Inc.

Eversource Energy requested permission to install approximately 13 feet of conduit in Greendale Avenue. The reason for this work is to provide service to new landscaping lights at 1166 Greendale Avenue. The Department of Public Works has approved this petition, based on Eversource Energy's commitment to adhere to the Town's regulation that all conduit installed must be 3" schedule 40 minimum; and, that when buried, that conduit must be placed at 24" below grade to the top of the conduit.

Ms. King noted that this Grant of Location is for the new stone wall signage at the corner of Greendale Ave and Great Plain Ave. A building permit was not required, only an Electrical Wiring Permit. Work has been completed without the Grant of Location as the Building Department's internal procedure was not updated until after this Electrical Wiring Permit was applied for and the work was completed. Mr. Cataldo explained that the work was completed not knowing there was a specific permit from the Town that was required. Ms. Cooley clarified that there is a public process for this type of situation as neighbors can sometimes be impacted by work. Ms. Frail confirmed that the Building Commissioner has now addressed

this type of circumstance with the new procedure as of the Select Board meeting on June 24, 2025.

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Board vote to approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 13 feet of conduit in Greendale Avenue.

Second: Ms. Cooley.

Mr. Keane asked if the asphalt patch is to Town standard, and Ms. King confirmed that Engineering will assess it. Mr. Keane also asked if other lampposts belonging to St. Sebastian's also went through a Grant of Location process, as they appear to be in the Town's right of way.

Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

6:54 p.m.

Approve Sale of Bond Anticipation Note

Presenters: David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance, Ellyse Glushkov, Town Treasurer/Collector, Cecilia Simchak, Assistant Director of Finance

Mr. Davison asked the Board to approve the sale of a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) for \$2.76 million, which will mature in October 2025. This is a refinancing of existing debt that is maturing on July 30. The Town received four bids on the note, with the winning bid from Fidelity Capital Markets with a coupon rate of 4% with a premium of \$6,486, with the actual cost to the Town being a 3.06% net interest cost, five basis points above the note that the Town issued in June 2025.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote as presented in the materials to support the sale of \$2.76 million worth of general obligations at 4%.

Motion A: Move to approve the sale of \$2,760,000 4.00 percent General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes (the "Notes") of the Town dated July 30, 2025, and payable October 30, 2025, to Fidelity Capital Markets, a Division of National Financial Services LLC, at par and accrued interest, if any, plus a premium of \$6,486.00.

Motion B: Move that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Notes, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated July 8, 2025, and a final Official Statement dated July 15, 2025, each in such form as may be approved by the Town Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Motion C: Move that the Town Treasurer and the Select Board be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a significant events disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the Town, which undertaking shall be

incorporated by reference in the Notes for the benefit of the holders of the Notes from time to time.

Motion D: Move that we authorize and direct the Town Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures and continuing disclosure procedures in such forms as the Town Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax exempt status of the Notes and to comply with relevant securities laws.

Motion E: Move that any certificates or documents relating to the Notes (collectively, the “Documents”), may be executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be regarded as an original and all of which shall constitute one and the same document; delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to a Document by electronic mail in a “.pdf” file or by other electronic transmission shall be as effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart signature page to such Document; and electronic signatures on any of the Documents shall be deemed original signatures for the purposes of the Documents and all matters relating thereto, having the same legal effect as original signatures.

Motion F: Move that each member of the Select Board, the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.

Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:05 p.m.

Communications and Community Engagement Update

Presenter: Amy Haelsen, Director of Communication and Community Engagement

Amy Haelsen provided a history of her position, to include funding of the “Public Information Officer” position by Town Meeting Warrant Articles prior to approval of the current position title being funded permanently by the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Haelsen remarked that, following the pandemic, the role shifted to focus on soliciting input and feedback from stakeholders in a targeted way.

Ms. Haelsen then provided an overview of highlights:

- Worked with Needham Branding & Town Seal Committee to develop new Town branding and branding guidelines
- Rolled out Town branding in early 2025
- Coordinated the Town Seal redesign (still in process)
- Increased outreach to stakeholders over the last year:
 - o Social media followers grew by 20%
 - o Newsletter subscribers grew by 11%

- Increased number of social media posts and newsflashes by 25%
- Cultivated relationships with local media. Needham is viewed as a valuable resource for regional stories.
- Led community engagement efforts for MBTA communities and other major projects

Ms. Haelsen also focused on the various communication tools that the Town uses to communicate with residents, including the Town website (currently undergoing a refresh with new Town branding), Newsflash, Notify Me feature on the website, social media, and continued regular outreach to local non-profits. These tools provide timely updates and announcements that distribute information to the public about specific Town projects and programs. She further covered the six surveys conducted in the Town through Polco over the last 14 months, including the 2024 Annual Community Survey, Recycling and Transfer Station Study, Alder Brook Phase I project, and the Large House Review Committee survey, among others.

Discussion ensued regarding future additional staff resources to support communications, how to prioritize what information is disseminated, and strategies for responding to ad hoc questions from residents. Ms. King also emphasized the challenges of distributing the extensive volume of information there is to residents and how this aligns with Select Board goals. The Board and Ms. Haelsen also discussed the challenges of the current website, including the limitations of the Search function, and the deadline of April 2027 for new documents added to the Town website to be accessible.

7:34 p.m. Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda
Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda with the exception of Item 5 on the Appointment Calendar, which will be moved to the August 12, 2025 meeting.
Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Abigail Carr	Community Preservation Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027
2.	Haril Pandya	Design Review Board Term Exp: 6/30/2028
3.	Eileen Baker	Envision Needham Center Working Group Term Exp: 6/30/2027
5.	See Agenda Packet for Full List	Election Officers (Wardens, Clerks, Deputy Clerk, Inspectors, and Tellers) Term Exp: 8/31/2026

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of May 27, 2025, June 10, 2025, and July 3, 2025
2.	Approve Personnel Administration Policy #427: Extra Committee Liaison Policy

3.	Approve a request from Jessica Rice, Co-Race Director of Jog Your Memory 5K, Inc., to hold the road event “Jog Your Memory 5K Run and 1.5 Mile Walk for Alzheimer's” in Needham. The event is scheduled for Sunday, October 5, 2025, starting at 9:00 a.m. The event and route have been approved by the following departments: Fire, Police, and Public Works
4.	Approve a request from Hilary Ryan, VP, Development, Charles River Center to hold the road event “Charles River Center 5k Run/1Mile Walk” in Needham. The event is scheduled for Sunday, September 28, 2025, starting at 10:00 a.m. The event and route have been approved by the following departments: Fire, Police, and Public Works
5.	Approve a request from William Gallagher of Needham Running Club to hold the road event “4th Annual MetroWest Backyard Ultra” in Needham. The event is scheduled for Saturday, September 27, 2025, starting at 8:00 a.m. The event and route have been approved by the following departments: Fire, Police, Park and Recreation, and Public Works
6.	Approve a request from Allan Eyden, Road Coordinator for PanMass Challenge to hold the road event PanMass Challenge in Needham. The event is scheduled for Saturday, August 2 and Sunday, August 3, 2025, starting at 6:30 a.m. The event and route have been approved by the following departments: Fire, Police, and Public Works (added)
7.	Accept the following donation made to Needham Park and Recreation: • \$100 from Leah Liao on behalf of the Needham Exchange Club for Kidz Art camp
8.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: • \$2,000 from Mr. C. Bruce Johnstone
9.	Accept the following donations made to the Needham Free Public Library: • \$9,000 from Friends of the Needham Free Public Library • \$535 from Needham High School class of 1952 • <i>The Women</i> by Kristin Hannah and <i>Abundance</i> by Ezra Klein & Derek Thompson, estimated value \$75, from an anonymous donor • Several children’s books, total estimated value \$149, from the Lappin Foundation • <i>The Courage of Passion</i>, <i>The Passion of Vengeance</i>, and <i>Once and for All</i>, all by Lee Castle, estimated value \$31, from Lee Castle • Two copies of the CD <i>I Want to Move Out</i> and two copies of the CD <i>The Biggest Bankrupt City in the World</i> by Warren Zanes, estimated value \$104, from Michael O’Neal
10.	Approve a new Common Victualler License for WR Noodle Group d/b/a Noodle Doodles
11.	Approve and Sign Water Sewer Abatement 1346

NOTICE OF APPROVED BLOCK PARTIES

Name	Address	Party Location	Date	Time	Rain Date
Evan Olesh	23 Bonwood Road	Bonwood Rd & Avalon Rd	9/6/25	2pm-10pm	N/A

NOTICE OF APPROVED ONE-DAY SPECIAL ALCOHOL LICENSES

Hosting Organization	Event Title	Location	Event Date
Pan Mass Challenge	Pan Mass Challenge	Trim Parking Lot – 0 Map Hill Road	8/01/2025
Pan Mass Challenge	Pan Mass Challenge	Trim Parking Lot – 0 Map Hill Road	8/03/2025

7:34 p.m. Mr. Davison returned to complete the signing of the Bond Anticipation Note documents.

7:35 p.m. Joint Meeting with Stormwater By-Law Working Group
Presenters: Thomas Ryder, Town Engineer, Kim Donovan, Management Analyst – Engineering, Stormwater By-Law Working Group

The Stormwater By-Law Working Group was formed with the purpose of conducting a review of the current Stormwater By-Law and making recommendations to the Select Board for changes/updates as needed. The Committee has prepared a draft By-Law with recommended revisions for review. Mr. Keane took a roll call of Committee members and called to order the meeting of the Stormwater By-Law Working Group. Present at this meeting were: John Salo, Sue Barber, Janine Helwig, Tom Ryder, Deb Anderson, and Joshua Levy.

Town Engineer Tom Ryder introduced Management Analyst Kim Donovan to update the Select Board on the working draft of findings and proposed revisions.

Current By-Law Review Findings

- Limited Scope:
 - o Focuses on National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water quality compliance but lacks provisions for stormwater capacity and flood mitigation
 - o Purpose should be expanded to address water quantity and community resilience
- Vague Enforcement and Accountability
 - o Enforcement measures are vague and not well-defined
 - o No clear process to hold permittees accountable or address violations
- Inadequate Triggers for Review
 - o Activities like regrading, tree clearing, and driveway expansion often escape review
 - o Applicability criteria are unclear, leading to oversight gaps
- Lack of Clarity and Organization
 - o By-Law is difficult to interpret and not user-friendly
 - o Definitions and structure need improvement for better understanding
- Insufficient Design and Submission Guidance
 - o Design standards are unclear and inconsistently applied

- Submittal requirements lack detail, causing confusion for applicants
- Regulatory Inflexibility and Supporting Documentation
 - By-Law should be flexible enough to accommodate future regulatory changes, unless those changes are significant
 - A draft regulations document was created but never finalized
 - Finalized regulations would guide implementation and could be amended by the Select Board between by-law reviews.

Mr. Ryder and Ms. Donovan then outlined proposed changes and detailed recommendations, highlighting the need for increasing the infiltration requirement from 1 inch to 1.5 inches, updating triggers for applicability with additional language of land disturbance, adding clear language addressing both stormwater quantity and quality, promoting sustainability, and aligning with evolving regulations. Additionally, they focused on how the recommendation would address the definitions in the By-Law and the administration and applicability of the By-Law. Finally, Ms. Donovan explained the anticipated benefits of updating the By-Law:

- Better stormwater management
- Reduced flooding and erosion risk
- Protection of water resources
- Improved consistency and transparency in permitting
- Potential for additional credit with reporting agencies

Discussion ensued with questions from the Board about the importance of this topic for all Town residents, how the Committee arrived at 1.5 inches, and how the design standards in the regulations maintain some flexibility. The Committee used sample By-Laws from the towns of Natick and Weston, as well as a model from engineering consulting firm BETA. The Committee anticipates that the regulations will be complete by the end of August and that they are on schedule to report back at the beginning of October.

Ms. Frail requested that tree placements be added to plot plans and asked what the staff impact will be to manage systems and evaluate assessments. Committee members also emphasized the importance of the by-law being clear and consistent for construction stakeholders to adapt.

Ms. Frail requested that the Committee focus on the development of the plot plan requirements, taking into consideration that the Tree Preservation Planning Committee and the Large House Review Committee are also including the plot plan as a significant part of their review processes.

Motion by Mr. Levy to adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Stormwater By-Law Working Group.

Second: Mr. Ryder. Unanimously approved 8-0.

8:37 p.m.

Set Recycling and Transfer Station User Charges and Fees

Presenters: Katie King, Town Manager, David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance

The Board held a Public Hearing regarding RTS charges and fees at its June 24, 2025 meeting. The Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling Advisory Committee voted to recommend the changes that were presented to the Board that evening. The residential box spring or mattress disposal would be \$25, and the commercial haulers fee would be \$50. The fee for disposal of truck tires would be \$21. The changes in the three fees reflect the increased cost to the Town for the acceptance of those items. There are no changes to any of the major solid waste disposal fees (pay-to-throw bags and over the scale).

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Board vote to approve the proposed changes to Recycling and Transfer Station Charges and Fees Schedule itemized below and that they be effective October 1, 2025.

Description	Current	New
Box Spring or Mattress (Residential Drop Off)	\$20.00	\$25.00
Box Spring or Mattress (Commercial Drop Off)	\$40.00	\$50.00
Tires - Vehicle Truck	\$15.00	\$21.00

Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

8:39 p.m. Town Manager

Update Select Board Meeting Calendar

Town Manager Katie King proposed the following changes to the Select Board's 2025-2026 regular meeting calendar:

1. Move the start time of the September 24, 2025 meeting to 7:00 p.m. to accommodate the last day of Rosh Hashanah.
2. Move the October 28, 2025 meeting to October 29, 2025 to support the Town's professional development opportunity.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to make the following amendments to its 2025-2026 regular meeting calendar:

1. Move the start time of the September 24, 2025 meeting to 7:00 p.m.
2. Move the October 28, 2025 meeting to October 29, 2025.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

Needham Information Technology Strategic Plan FY2026-2028

Ms. King presented to the Select Board the Needham Information Technology Strategic Plan for FY 2026-2028 as adopted by the Needham School Committee on July 14, 2025 for their consideration to adopt. Ms. King noted that the single modification made was clarifying language about what items apply to school only, general government only, and Townwide. Mr. Levy asked about budgetary impacts of this change for the upcoming year.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to adopt the Needham Information Technology Strategic Plan for FY 2026-2028.

Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

Conservation Restriction Grantee Assignment

Ms. King presented to the Board for their endorsement and signature assignment instruments that will assign conservation restrictions for the Carol Brewster and Walker Pond Conservation Areas – undeveloped properties protected since their purchase in 2009 and 2012 – to the Wellesley Conservation Land Trust from the Needham Land Trust after they notified the Town that they plan to dissolve.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to sign the Conservation Restriction Grantee Assignment instruments for the Carol Brewster and Walker Pond Conservation Areas.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

Select Board Goals Update & Planning

Ms. King discussed progress toward the Board's FY2025-FY2026 goals and discussed planning for FY2026-FY2027. Items included:

- ***Goal 1: Healthy and Socially Thriving***
 - Community celebration on the Common: rescheduled for 2026
 - Outreach to identity network groups: complete and continue to operationalize
 - Ensure there is at least one all-gender bathroom in all Town buildings – not substantively advanced yet
 - Assess arts policies and proposals: inventory and analysis complete
 - Intentional efforts to diversify candidate pool for appointed Boards and Committees: complete; data from demographic surveys of sitting board committee members and applicants
 - Complete Equity Audit: operationalized
 - Conduct Board and Committee member orientation sessions to include the Town's race equity vision statement and NUARI principles: complete
 - Develop a plan for a community observance of Juneteenth: complete
 - Implement Valor Act and consider aligning the administrative process for both the Valor Act and the Senior Corps programs: will report at next meeting with final recommendations for program eligibility
 - Convene NUARI to discuss progress on strategies for ensuring that all members of the community feel welcome: complete
- ***Goal 2: Economically Vital***
 - Gather community data from Placer.ai to look at movement and time in location to target future businesses and amenities: operationalized
 - Ms. Frail added that she would like to discuss an Economic Development Action Plan and Roadmap.
- ***Goal 3: Livable***

- Work with the Planning Board on next steps related to the MBTA Communities Act: complete
- Evaluate next steps for use of the Stephen Palmer Building: top priority; two consultants engaged after Town Meeting Fall 2024
- Evaluate the role of the Affordable Housing Trust: priority
- Evaluate expansion of off-leash dog areas: Board to discuss pilot proposal
- Encourage and participate in the Planning Board's large house review: priority, underway
- Explore renaming Hemlock Gorge to Nehoiden's Grant: FY2026
- Identify funding for School Master Plan projects and participate in the planning process: underway
- Evaluate RTS Service Delivery Model to guide long-term investment and review operational efficiencies in the short-term: consultants are analyzing survey results and will make recommendations
- Upgrade Town Seal to improve graphic quality and historical accuracy: underway
- Identify opportunities for expanded active and passive recreation facilities including but not limited to an action sports park and pickleball: operationalized
- Improve trailhead access to ensure clear and accessible access: operationalized
- ***Goal 4: Accessible and Connected***
 - Complete Quiet Zone feasibility and design and seek funding for noise reduction/Quiet Zone construction: top priority, underway
 - Evaluate the feasibility of a shared use way between Needham Heights and the City of Newton
 - Evaluate expansion of snow and ice removal efforts, including sidewalk plowing strategies
 - Update parking payment technologies to allow for credit card and/or app-based payments: delayed into fall/winter due to challenges integrating parking app and parking enforcement software
 - Evaluate and make a final determination of the appropriate plan for Downtown Redesign Phase 2
- ***Goal 6: Responsibly Governed***
 - Collaborate with the Finance Committee about the Town's policies regarding the use of free cash and debt: complete
 - Evaluate the possibility of a Community Master Plan. Develop an inventory of Town long-range plans and identify overlaps and conflicts, including other Boards of jurisdictions
 - Capital Facilities: CATH upgrades: Town Meeting appropriate design funds
 - Evaluate ways to increase minority and women-owned business participation in construction, building maintenance projects, and other Town programs: underway

- Evaluate enhanced benefits to assist in the Town's recruitment and retention efforts: operationalized
- Review and update the Sign By-Law: FY2026
- Review and update Select Board policies as appropriate
- Evaluate options for enhanced data collection by Town Departments to assist the Board in reviewing and evaluating progress toward goals: operationalized
- Explore options for evaluating Town Counsel: complete
- DPW phased renovation/construction: moving forward with expansion of Jack Cogswell Building as fleet maintenance facility
- Capital Facilities: Library phased renovations: construction will begin in September
- Implement successor agreements for expiring contracts: operationalized
- **Goal 7: Environmentally Sustainable**
 - Identify and implement strategies to protect the Town's tree canopy: priority, underway
 - Develop Town Zero Emission First policy: complete
 - Explore the option of enabling Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program through MassDevelopment Program and develop supporting programs to drive participation: proposal in the fall
 - Strengthen the Town's Stormwater By-Law and prioritize efforts to improve stormwater quality and capacity: priority, underway
 - Establish a comprehensive Climate Communications Strategy to engage community members and organizations in the implementation of climate actions and continuous evolution of the Climate Action Roadmap: FY2026
 - Establish regulations to prohibit non-electric vehicles parking in EV charging spots: complete
 - Recommend community energy aggregation: complete

Preliminary Discussion of October 20, 2025 Special Town Meeting Articles

Ms. King updated the Board on the preliminary articles under consideration for the October 20, 2025 Special Town Meeting.

Financial Articles

- Line-Item Transfers:
 - FY2026 Water Enterprise Fund Budget
 - FY2026 Sewer Enterprise Fund Budget
 - FY2026 General Fund Operating Budget
- Appropriation for Unpaid Bills of a Prior Year
- Appropriation for Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) Programming
- Appropriation for Quiet Zone Construction
- Appropriation for Infiltration & Inflow
- Matching Funds for SRF Drainage GIS Updates

Zoning Articles

- Amend Zoning By-Law – Accessory Dwelling Units

General Articles

- Amend General By-Law – Stormwater

Reserve Articles

- Capital Facility Fund
- Debt Service Stabilization Fund

Town Manager Report

- The State voted a final FY2026 State budget. Additionally, the Governor filed a supplemental FY2026 budget, within which the governor asked for expanded authority to make mid-year budget cuts. The Mass Municipal Association has expressed concern regarding this action. Ms. King asked if the Board would like to draft a letter expressing the Town’s concern with this action. There was consensus among the Board that Ms. King draft and send such a letter.
- The Town has launched the Small Repair Grant Program again on a rolling basis. These grants provide up to \$7,000 for household repairs for health and safety issues for residents over 60 years old and/or individuals with disabilities.
- The Summer Reading Program at the Needham Public Library is thriving with 1,000 children signed up, which is 300 more than last year.

9:22 p.m. Board Discussion

Open Meeting Law Complaint

Gary Ajamian filed an Open Meeting Law Complaint Form with the Select Board on July 9, 2025. In this complaint, Mr. Ajamian alleged violations of the Open Meeting Law relating to the Select Board’s vote at its May 5, 2025 meeting to delay the Envision Needham Center pilot program. In accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, §23, the Select Board is required to provide the complainant and the Attorney General with its response to the complaint within 14 business days after filing.

Town Counsel has advised the Select Board that they are only required to respond to the letter to inform the complainant that the letter dated July 9, 2025 was received beyond the 30 days allowed by the Open Meeting Law following the meeting in question on May 5, 2025. It is at the Board’s discretion whether to go beyond this requirement to respond to the substance of the complaint. Board members discussed the substance of the complaint. Mr. Levy commented that he does not agree with the statement that it is not a timely filed motion and also noted that the May 5 minutes were meant to be approved at the May 27 meeting, but they were removed and then added to the June 10 meeting. Other Board members agreed with the proposed response that reflects that the complaint was submitted beyond the 30 days and that the Board discussed the substance of this matter during open session on May 5, as reflected in the minutes.

Motion by Ms. Dowd that the Board authorize Town Counsel to prepare and submit a response to the Open Meeting Law complaint.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Approved 4-1 by roll call vote with Mr. Levy against.

Off-Leash Dog Pilot Proposal

The Select Board discussed the proposed pilot of an off-leash dog area at Rosemary Trail, as follow-up to their joint meeting with the Park and Recreation Commission on June 23, 2025.

Ms. Cooley expressed that Rosemary Trail is not an appropriate location for an off-leash dog park. Mr. Keane, Mr. Levy, Ms. Dowd, and Ms. Frail agreed, with Ms. Frail citing the Police Department's recommendation that this is not an advisable choice. Ms. Frail noted that the Town will continue to look for an appropriate location.

Committee Reports

Mr. Keane reported that the Envision Needham Center Working Group has engaged the consultants for three options to compare. These options will focus on maximizing parking and will not include bike lanes.

Ms. Dowd reported that T-CHOC met to work through the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) request for reimbursement on the predevelopment grant. Reg Foster, NHA Chair, informed the Committee that the State is late in making their grant decisions.

Ms. Cooley reported that the Large House Review Committee met. The audience was mainly comprised of builders in Town. Ms. Cooley noted that builders were not as concerned with change resulting in smaller properties as previously perceived. She anticipates specific proposals to bring to a public hearing in the fall. There were not specific proposals given to builders at this meeting; instead, there was discussion about how builders perceived potential changes to setbacks, how Floor Area Ratio is calculated, and other changes. Committee members discussed models and calculations that would be helpful to present at the public hearing.

Ms. Frail reported that the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) met and welcomed new members, discussed Committee goals and the potential for the CEA to develop an economic development study.

Ms. Frail reported that the Tree Preservation Planning Committee met, identifying the most significant issue being related to teardown activity resulting in clearcutting of trees. The goal is to produce a targeted by-law that focuses on this. Ms. Frail emphasized that addressing the administrative work, forming a working group, compiling a tree inventory, and developing community education will be essential to achieving this goal and bringing this item to Town Meeting in October 2026.

Ms. Frail also reported that she attended the Pollard listening sessions.

9:54 p.m.

Adjourn

Motion by Ms. Frail that the Board vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Exception 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Needham Police Union, the Police Superior Officers Association, and the Needham Independent Public Employees Association and pursuant to Exception 6: to discuss the purchase, lease and value of real property, in particular the residential dwelling units located at the Stephen Palmer Building, 83 Pickering Street, Needham, MA, where the Chair declares that an open meeting on both of these items may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body [The Chair so declares.] and to adjourn at the conclusion of the executive session without returning to open session.

Second: Ms. Cooley. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:
<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID>

The next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of the July 22, 2025 Select Board meeting can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHX8pGh0RPE> or at <https://www.needhamchannel.org/2025/07/needham-select-board-7-22-25/>.