

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES – Final

Hybrid Meeting
Donaldson Room – Town Offices
Monday, January 12, 2026
6:30 PM

PARTICIPANTS: Jennifer Glass, Select Board Chair
Kimberly Bodnar, Select Board Member
Jim Hutchinson, Select Board Member
Tim Higgins, Town Administrator

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS: Peggy Elder, Administrative Assistant

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Jennifer Glass opened the public session of the Select Board meeting and noted that, pursuant to the extension of the remote meeting authorization of the Open Meeting Law through June 30, 2027 (Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025), this meeting was conducted as a hybrid meeting, allowing the public to participate in person in the Donaldson Room or remotely via Zoom. Board and staff participants introduced themselves, and the Chair reviewed the evening's agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- There were no announcements.

APPOINTMENTS

- Dark Skies Subcommittee of the Planning Board – Outreach and Municipal Lighting Practices

Representatives of the Dark Skies Subcommittee met with the Select Board to provide an update on the group's outreach and ongoing work related to exterior lighting, energy efficiency, and reduction of light pollution. The Subcommittee discussed its efforts to engage Town boards, institutions, and community organizations; opportunities to improve existing fixtures (including shielding, timers, and motion activation where appropriate); and ways to balance safety, cost, and environmental impacts. Dark Skies is contemplating bringing a bylaw to town meeting in March. The Board thanked the Subcommittee for its work and noted an upcoming public event for continued community education.

- Lincoln Public Library HVAC Replacement Planning

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC), Select Board, Finance Committee, and Green Energy Committee opened their meetings. The library's 35-year-old boiler needs immediate replacement and the air conditioning system which will need replacement soon. The Town's energy consultant (funded by a three year grant) analyzed several replacement options: ground-source heat pumps, air-sourced heat pumps, and a conventional gas boiler + air conditioning. Of the green options, the Library Board voted to pursue development of the geothermal option, for which there could be a \$1 million grant and significant federal

incentives. At the same time, the town is waiting for more detailed cost estimates for a conventional system.

The discussion centered on several key issues: whether sufficient information exists to make a decision, how to finance the project, and how the options align with the town's decarbonization goals. According to current information, the net cost of either option is about \$2 million. The geothermal option would cost about \$5 million up front but is eligible for multiple incentives including a \$1 million Climate Leader grant, federal investment tax credits, and MassSave rebates. The ground source heat pump option could cost the town roughly the same as the conventional replacement while providing long-term energy efficiency and emissions reductions. Questions were raised about the upfront costs, the reliability of federal incentives given political uncertainty, competing demands on Community Preservation Act funds, and acknowledgement that there are other aging town buildings like Public Safety and Bemis Hall.

After extensive discussion with members of the other boards, the Select Board voted to move forward with preparing the ground source heat pump option for town meeting and to ask the energy manager consultant to help prepare the application for Climate Leader grant. The project would be contingent on receiving the grant. The financing approach remains to be determined, with options including CPC funding (either lump sum or bonded debt service), general fund borrowing, or a tax-exempt lease program. Staff will work with CPC and Finance Committee to develop financing scenarios, and there was recognition that significant community education will be needed before town meeting given the project's complexity.

DISCUSSION

- Annual Town Meeting Warrant Planning and Article Sequencing

There was discussion regarding the timeline and process for the 2026 Annual Town Meeting, including warrant drafting, scheduling, and the anticipated sequence of warrant articles. Staff reported that drafting work is underway; the Board discussed the possibility of two consent calendars, one for the customary items that require a majority vote, and one for several potential amendments to zoning bylaws that are required by law, which need a 2/3 vote. The Board also discussed that the Library HVAC project might affect the order of the warrant.

- FY2027 Budget Development

Mr. Higgins noted that the approach and narrative for major capital and facilities items (including the Library HVAC project) will be an important part of future discussions with the Finance Committee and the community. The board confirmed that it intends to go to the Finance Committee's second budget workshop the budget as it was presented at the first workshop. The presentation includes a base budget, \$66,000 in line item restorations, and \$148,000 for a new community center maintenance account.

Mr. Hutchinson wondered if the Community Center maintenance budget could include some potential offsets, noting that the town budget has been the only department requesting extra funding for a couple of years. Possible offsets discussed include \$80,000 in expense elimination (which would actually appear as savings in the school budget since they previously carried those costs), \$34,000 in LEAP rent revenue (which will go to free cash rather than a

revolving fund per new Department of Revenue guidance), and potential future savings from Bemis Hall utilities. Mr. Higgins advised against building these offsets into the budget due to uncertainty and accounting complexities, though he agreed that the offsets can be mentioned as talking points when presenting to town meeting. The second budget workshop is scheduled for January 28th at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Glass asked that to post a Select Board meeting for that evening so that all members of the Board are free to attend.

- Annual Reports

The Board discussed preparation of the Town's annual report, which is due on February 2, 2026. Ms. Glass will circulate the outline with assignments.

- Liaison Reports

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS) – Ms. Bodnar reported that the Regional Agreement is being updated after months of work with the school's attorney and in coordination with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on necessary changes. The agreement is outdated and needs to reflect current practices and language standards. The subcommittee is waiting for a timeline from LSRHS's counsel to ensure the updates can be completed before Lincoln's March 28th town meeting. Ms. Glass asked for a brief update that could be included in the Select Boards mailed newsletter.

Chairs Meeting - Ms. Glass noted that she and Mr. Higgins hosted a Chairs meeting that was well attended. The meeting focused on communication strategies—both with residents and between committees. Discussions included how to engage residents by making information relevant to them, importance of conveying practical "how-to" information and current events, and ways to improve cross-committee coordination. There is interest in having a meeting in April that is focused on onboarding, and the Board is considering organizing such an event.

Town Meeting Study Committee – Mr. Hutchinson reported that the Committee is finishing its work and preparing the final report. They plan to present to the Board in February and expect a relatively straightforward report-out at town meeting since no bylaw changes are being proposed. The TMSC is considering holding a public forum in late February or early March to share their findings with residents.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Higgins reported that the landfill solar project reached mechanical completion and is waiting for final work from Eversource. Operations are expected to begin in late January or early February.

He noted that staff accepted a grant opportunity from the Green Energy Committee to conduct a feasibility study on battery storage at town buildings. No town funds are required to apply, and minimal staff commitment is needed. The study would explore whether batteries make sense at locations like the water filtration plant, Community Center, and/or public safety. The purpose of the batteries would be to focus on identifying energy consumption patterns and peak load reduction.

Mr. Higgins reported that there's a vacancy on the Lincoln School Committee effective immediately. Given the upcoming town elections in March, the School Committee is deciding whether to appoint someone to fill the seat for two months, or to simply wait until the election. If they choose to appoint a new member, then the Select Board and School Committee will initiate a joint session to do so.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public spoke.

ACTION ITEMS

Library HVAC Replacement – Next Steps / Town Meeting Article Preparation

Ms. Glass made a motion to continue advancing the Library HVAC replacement planning effort, including proceeding with information-gathering and analysis needed to support a potential ground-source HVAC option for a Town Meeting vote; pursuing relevant grant opportunities (including the Climate Leader grant); and coordinating with the Finance Committee and Community Preservation Committee on potential funding approaches (including interim financing options, as needed). Mr. Hutchinson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote: Bodnar, aye; Glass, aye; Hutchinson, aye.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant – Open Warrant

Ms. Glass made a motion to open the warrant for the March 28, 2026 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Hutchinson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote: Bodnar, aye; Glass, aye; Hutchinson, aye.

Consent Agenda – Appointments, Minutes, and Warrants

Ms. Glass made a motion to approve the consent agenda, including:

- Appointment of Colleen Crawford as Public Safety Dispatcher
- Special police officer appointments (including Randy Biddle, John Kennedy, and Adam Rotberg)
- Agricultural Committee/Commission change to full voting member status for all members of the Commission
- Approval of prior meeting minutes (including December 8, 2025)
- Approval of warrants as presented

Ms. Bodnar seconded. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote: Bodnar, aye; Glass, aye; Hutchinson, aye.

Meeting Schedule

The Board reviewed upcoming meeting dates and noted a correction to an error in the published schedule (June date corrected, as discussed).

CORRESPONDENCE

The Board briefly reviewed correspondence and noted a Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) advocacy update regarding state aid and municipal finance, with discussion of ongoing legislative engagement.

Mr. Hutchinson made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bodnar seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:55 PM.

Submitted by:

Peggy Elder, Administrative Assistant

Approved 01/26/26