

TOWN OF BOWDOINHAM

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES



Date: March 24, 2026

Time: 6:30 pm

I. Call Meeting to Order and Establish a Quorum

The meeting was called to order, and a quorum was established by Select Board Chair, Joanne Joy, at 6:30 pm. Select Board members participating were Joanne Joy, Mark Favreau, Jason Hodde, Allen Acker, Shelley Hooper and Nicole Briand, Town Manager.

II. Amendments to the Agenda

6.E. Personal Property Tax Abatements

III. Comments from the Public

Chris Vonderweidt (White Road) addressed the Board regarding the policy for citizen emails sent to the Select Board. He expressed concern for not receiving notification that his email would be part of the meeting. Joy explained that Select Board members cannot discuss or respond to such communications outside of a posted meeting, as emails involving two or more members constitutes a meeting. Mr. Vonderweidt stated that this policy should be made clear on the Town website. Joy indicated the Town would investigate adding guidance on contacting Select Board members. Communications are included in the Consent Calendar and are not always discussed unless specifically brought forward.

IV. Approval of Consent Calendar

A. Meeting Minutes

1. March 10, 2026

B. Warrants & Financial Reports

1. Treasurer's Warrant #18

C. Reports and Communications

1. Lisbon Emergency Medical Services

2. Citizen Communication

Acker asked if March 10, 2026, Minutes could be revised stating he was in error at the last meeting discussion of Blanchard Road, he should have abstained not voted. "I should not have voted at all. I was not against the Blanchard Road which my vote indicated. I was against our vote having any authority to approve that authority. I should have correctly abstained from the vote instead of voting against the motion." Joy said that the March 10th Minutes could not be changed but that his statement could be added to this meetings minutes. Acker asked for it to be so.

Chris Vonderweidt addressed the Board regarding his email concerning the paving of the Maily Park parking area. Joy thanked him for raising his concerns and stated that some confusion appeared to stem from the wording of the prior week's memo. She clarified that the Board was not proposing changes to the parking layout but only paving the existing parking area.

Vonderweidt stated that paving the lot was not supported by the community and contended that the project was misrepresented in the grant application. He referenced the March 31, 2025, public hearing noting that concerns were expressed to paving the lot and concerns about paving near the bay. He further stated that he felt public feedback and a consultant study were being disregarded.

Acker asked Briand "Was that grant was written by us or was it written by MDOT? Because I know the question was if we vote to support the grant that MDOT was submitting on our behalf. So .. did we construct the verbiage included in that as a town saying opposite of what was previously noted in public hearing in comment or was that written by MDOT? "

Briand responded that the Town wrote the support letter for the project, MDOT wrote the grant. She went on to say that they had discussed at the meeting that they were not proposing any changes to lower Main Street, or the layout of the parking lot. Due to maintenance issues, they were just asking for it to be paved not for other changes in layout.

Favreau added that the Board had previously voted to support aligning entrances for crosswalks and paving the lot. He stated that the Board had discussed paving for at least six years due to ongoing maintenance costs and that no changes to traffic flow or parking were proposed.

Hodde stated that his understanding from the public meeting was that residents opposed changing the layout and adding raised crosswalks, not paving alone, and felt the Board had listened to public input. Joy noted that the discussion relied on recollection, as no materials were available at the time. Hooper stated that she was new to the Board and apologized that Vonderweidt felt his concerns were not being heard.

Vonderweidt responded that while Public Works' recommendation to pave for maintenance purposes was understandable, it was separate from the concerns raised at the public meeting. He stated that the recollections shared by Favreau and Hodde were not consistent with the meeting summary, which expressed concerns about reduced parking and limiting paving near the bay.

Joy stated that there were differing interpretations of the prior discussion and thanked Vonderweidt for bringing the issue forward. She stated that no changes would be made at this time. Nicole noted that MDOT did not include paving the parking lot in the grant request.

Favreau moved the Board approve the Consent Calendar, as presented; seconded by Hodde. Vote was 5-0.

V. Presentations

A. Lisbon Emergency Medical Services

Chief Amy Cailler presented the Board with the annual report for Lisbon Emergency Medical Services, providing an overview of the organization, its services, goals for the coming year, and grants received during the past year.

Deputy Chief John Cordts reviewed the proposed annual budget, noting that modest increases reflected inflation and would result in an increased cost to Bowdoinham of \$14,454. He discussed the statewide shortage of EMS personnel and reported that LEMS has maintained its full-time staffing levels. Cordts also explained that, to minimize the budget increase, a \$26,000 retirement line item was removed. Acker expressed concern about that

reduction, stating that staff deserve the benefit, and other Board members voiced agreement.

Joy stated that she had heard that Lisbon Emergency Medical Services could benefit from a longer-term contract among the three participating towns—Lisbon, Bowdoin, and Bowdoinham—and indicated that the Town would be interested in exploring that option. Cordts replied that the matter would need to be discussed among the towns and invited the Board to attend the LEMS meeting scheduled for April 9. Several Board members expressed interest in attending and requested that Cordts provide the meeting information to Briand for distribution.

B. FY2026-2027 Municipal Budget

Marc Babcock of the Finance Advisory Committee joined the Board to review the proposed budget. Mr. Babcock informed the Board that the proposed budget reflects an overall decrease of \$202,814. While the expense budget increased by \$155,278, this increase is offset by a projected \$358,092 increase in estimated revenue.

Joy expressed concern regarding the proposed funding for the Cemetery, stating that significant work is needed. Favreau added that the Town is losing ground at one of the cemeteries and that \$5,000 would not be sufficient to address the issue. Briand informed the Board that reserves are available to cover additional expenses if necessary and could be used for smaller maintenance needs.

Acker voiced his opposition to the proposed \$75,000 allocation for Legal Services, noting that based on the unused portion of the current year's budget, he felt the increase was unnecessary. Briand explained that the Town currently has four ongoing legal cases, and once those cases proceed to trial, the funds will be needed. Acker stated that he believed the cases were simply awaiting judgment and did not agree with Briand's explanation.

Hodde thanked Briand for providing historical expense data, which he felt demonstrated consistent spending over the last five years. He stated he was comfortable with the proposed figures and complimented staff on their work. Briand responded that departments are careful budget managers and often aim to end the year with modest surpluses that can be placed into reserves for unexpected future expenditures.

Briand explained that over the past three years, the Town has been working to retain employees by adjusting wages to be closer to median levels for their respective positions and responsibilities. The proposed budget includes a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and a 2% merit increase.

The Board discussed proposed funding for Merrymeeting Hall, noting that the Town does not own the facility and that Town Hall space is now available.

During further review of the proposed budget, Acker noted a reduction in funding for Public Works ditching. He stated that since the Town now has the equipment and a significant amount of work remains, the funding reduction should be restored. Acker also expressed opposition to moving toward a year-round transfer station, stating that he believed a twice-yearly collection was more efficient. Other Board members disagreed.

Acker opposed the title Community Services Director, stating that he felt Recreation and Parks Director would be more appropriate. Other Board members disagreed, noting that the position also oversees Age-Friendly initiatives and other community services.

The Board next reviewed Organizational Requests. There were mixed opinions regarding financial support for Kennebec Behavioral Health and Spectrum Generations. Favreau noted that Sweetser provides mental health services in Bowdoinham and expressed concern that Kennebec Behavioral Health is not part of the service district and may be less likely to serve Town residents. He also noted that the request increased from \$100 to \$1,000.

Hodde stated that through Community Connections, they have had negative interactions with Spectrum and that Community Connections has been providing services to Bowdoinham residents that Spectrum would typically provide.

Joy summarized the discussion by stating that Board members held strong but mixed opinions on the requests.

Briand stated that based on the Board's discussion, she understood that the Finance Advisory Committee should re-examine the following areas: Legal Services, Historical Society funding, Public Works ditching and Organizational Requests

VI. **Action Items**

A. Act on Supplemental Assessment #2

Favreau moved the Board approve FY26 Supplemental #2, as presented; seconded by Hooper. Vote was 5-0.

B. Act on Supplemental Assessment # 3

Favreau moved the Board approve FY26 Supplemental #3, as presented; seconded by Hooper. Vote was 5-0.

C. Act on Bucklin Appraisal Proposal

The Town received a proposal from Bucklin Appraisal LLC to appraise the market value of four parcels located on the remaining portion of Hatch Road in Bowdoinham. As part of the discontinuance process the Town must have these properties appraised to bring the road discontinuance to Town Meeting 2027.

Favreau moved the Board approve the Bucklin Appraisal Proposal for the Hatch Road parcels, as presented, and authorize the Town Manager to execute the agreement; seconded by Hodde. Vote was 5-0.

D. Act on Navigational and No-Wake Aids

Favreau moved the Board approve the placement of the navigational and no wake aids for 2026; seconded by Hodde. Vote was 5-0.

E. Act on Personal Property Tax Abatements

Acker moved the Board approve Personal Property Tax Abatement # 1 through 23, as presented; seconded by Hooper. Vote was 5-0.

VII. **Town Manager's Report**

Town Office – Closures

Friday, April 17th – Attic Clean-Out

Monday, April 20th – Patriots Day

Browns Point Road Bridge will be closed the week of April 20th - To perform a geotechnical evaluation, DOT has scheduled soil boring with a drilling company. These soil borings require that the bridge be closed to traffic during the duration of the drilling.

The Town submitted CDS applications to both Pingree and King's Office. The Town was encouraged to repackage our BUILD application for the design and engineering of the Merrymeeting Trail, from Gardiner's Waterfront Park to just south of Bowdoinham Riverfront Park for the Congressionally Direct Spending applications; no match is required for these applications.

MDOT has submitted their CDS application to Collin's Office. They removed the paving of Maily Park from the package as paving parks is normally outside of MDOT's scope of work. However, they included the sidewalk to Wallentine Road, the realignment of the Maily Park Entrance, the sidewalk extension to Riverfront Park, the crosswalk between parks and the three gateway treatments; our project and match limit (\$2,500,000 and \$25,000) did not change. We originally included the sidewalk extension to Riverfront Park and crosswalk in our ATPI application package. Unfortunately, MDOT determined that portion of the project would require a 40% match, not the 20% previously discussed, so we removed it from that application and asked MDOT to include it in the CDS application (which if funded would require a 10% match). The ATPI application package is now limited to the crosswalk from Main Street to Lower Main Street, which qualifies for the 10% match.

VIII. **Announce Future Select Board Meetings**

A. April 14, 2026, at 6:30 pm. – Regular Meeting

B. April 28, 2026, at 6:30 pm. - Regular Meeting

IX. **Comments from the Select Board Members**

Acker requested an update from Briand regarding the Pratt Road property owners. Briand reported that all paperwork had been submitted. She also stated that letters had been sent to Blanchard Road residents, and that she has received one response so far.

Hodde informed the Board that he would be on vacation from April 30 through May 22 and asked if the Warrant could be completed before he left.

X. **Comments from the Public - None**

XI. **Executive Session**

A. Convene in Executive Session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(C) to discuss the acquisition of a property of interest.

Convened 9:00 pm. Adjourned 9:53 pm.

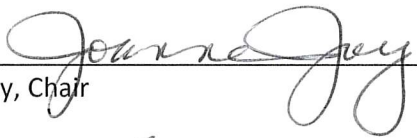
Acker moved the Board enter Executive Session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405 (6) (C) to discuss the acquisition of property interest; seconded by Favreau. Vote was 5-0.

Acker moved the Board leave executive session; seconded by Hooper. Vote was 5-0. No action was taken.

XII. **Adjourn**

Adjournment was at 9:53 p.m.

Select Board
Town of Bowdoinham, Maine



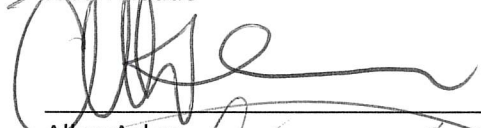
Joanne Joy, Chair



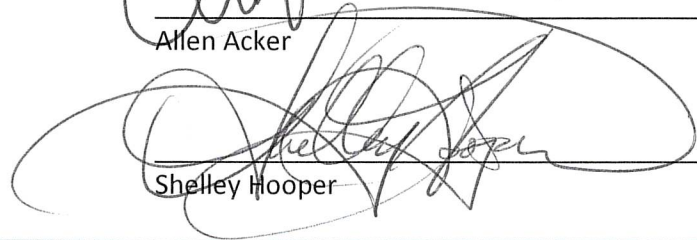
Mark Favreau, Vice Chair



Jason Hodde



Allen Acker



Shelley Hooper

Respectfully Submitted,



Lisa-Marie Curtis, Administrative Assistant