

TOWN OF BOWDOINHAM

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES



Date: January 27, 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 Vice Chair, Mark Favreau, at 6:30 pm. Select Board members participating were Mark Favreau, Jason Hodde, Allen Acker, Shelley Hooper and Nicole Briand, Town Manager.

II. Amendments to the Agenda - None

III. Comments from the Public

Hope Libby expressed her appreciation to the Select Board and Town staff for maintaining a flat budget over the past three years. She then shared her concern regarding comments made at the previous Select Board meeting suggesting that it may no longer be reasonable to expect the budget to remain flat, along with other related remarks. (Her letter is attached)

Hooper apologized if her wording at that meeting came across as flippant, noting that this was not her intention. She clarified that her point was that the basic cost of doing business has increased and will continue to rise, and that these increases—combined with school-related expenses will inevitably impact taxes.

IV. Approval of Consent Calendar

A. Meeting Minutes

1. January 13, 2026

B. Warrants & Financial Reports

1. Treasurer's Warrant #14

Acker moved the Board approve the Minutes, as presented; seconded by Hodde. Vote was 3-0. Favreau abstained because he was not at the last meeting.

Acker moved the Board approve the remainder of the Consent Calendar, as presented; seconded by Hodde. Vote was 4-0.

V. Discussion Items

A. Annual Administrative Review of the Land Use Ordinance

Nathan Drummond, Chair of the Planning Board, informed the Select Board that the Board is working on administrative updates to the Land Use Ordinance to improve clarity and make it easier for both applicants and Board members to navigate. He added that additional revisions are underway to incorporate new state legislation.

Acker then shifted the discussion to increasing opportunities for accessible housing and development within the residential-agricultural district, noting that the village districts have limited room for expansion.

B. Review of Discontinued Roads

The Board reviewed a 2020 report prepared by Paul Dennison outlining discontinued or potentially discontinued roads in Bowdoinham. The Board then discussed next steps for several roads listed in the report:

- Pioneer Road: Research whether this road was formally discontinued and, if so, determine whether road maintenance should cease.
- Vine Street and Batchelder Road: Research possibility of discontinuing.
- Hatch Road: This road is currently in the process of being discontinued. The Town Manager is researching the associated processing costs and will report back to the Board.
- Hathaway Cross Road: Confirm the exact location of this road.
- Curtis Farm Road Tunnel: Investigate the tunnel located under the highway, which is experiencing multiple drainage issues.

VI. Town Manager’s Report

- Dog Licenses are due January 31st after that there is a \$25 per dog late fee.
- The Ice & Smelt Festival is scheduled for the weekend of February 27th – March 1st.
- Foreclosure notices were mailed for unpaid FY2024 taxes. These taxes were originally due November 1, 2023 and May 1, 2024. Leins were recorded on August 22, 2024 and automatically foreclosure is scheduled for February 22, 2026. The Board will review foreclosure waivers at the February 10th meeting.
- The flooring for the upstairs bathroom and the back offices is scheduled for February 2nd.

VII. Announce Future Select Board Meetings

- A. February 10, 2026, at 6:30 pm – Regular Meeting
- B. February 24, 2026, at 6:30 pm – Regular Meeting

VIII. Comments from the Select Board Members

Hodde asked the Town Manager for an update on the Gallant legal matter raised two weeks ago. Briand reported that she had contacted the town’s insurance provider regarding public liability, as the suit alleges that employees infringed on constitutional rights. She noted that Maine Municipal has retained an attorney and will be filing a motion to dismiss.

IX. Comments from the Public

Hope Libby commented that Bowdoinham does an amazing job notifying people when dog licenses are due.

X. Adjourn

Adjournment was at 7:50 pm.

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

Dear Members of the Selectboard,

I am here to express my appreciation for the time, effort, and commitment shown by the Selectboard and the many committee members who serve the Town of Bowdoinham. I would also like to thank those who have demonstrated a commitment to maintaining a flat town budget, a priority that is important to many residents.

It is worth noting that Bowdoinham has successfully maintained a flat town budget for the past two years. This history shows that fiscal restraint is not unrealistic or "fantasy thinking," but rather something the town has already achieved through deliberate and thoughtful decision-making.

For that reason, I am concerned when I hear statements suggesting that a flat budget is unrealistic, that tax increases are inevitable, or that restraint is impractical. Such language gives me pause, as it suggests a shift away from prioritizing the financial limits faced by the average Bowdoinham taxpayer.

Bowdoinham is fortunate to have strong services and valued community assets, and I appreciate what those services bring. However, town projects—such as the waterfront park and the potential River House—also carry ongoing maintenance and operational costs that increase long-term revenue needs, costs that ultimately fall on taxpayers.

I am also concerned about suggestions that increased business revenue could meaningfully reduce the residential tax burden. Given Bowdoinham's development constraints, relying on business growth as a solution to offset rising taxes does not appear realistic. While supporting local businesses is important, it should not be viewed as a dependable strategy for reducing residential tax pressure.

When discussions move toward simply accepting service expansion and higher taxes as inevitable, it is troubling. Fiscal restraint should remain an active goal, even when challenging. Many residents are already under financial strain, and even modest increases can have significant impacts.

I do appreciate the thoughtful discussion around the use of undesignated fund balance as a potential tool to offset taxes or provide relief. Continuing to explore options like this sends an important message that all residents are being considered.

Not all residents use or benefit equally from town services, and many would likely feel more heard if the Board consistently sought ways to balance service expansion with tangible efforts to limit the tax burden or provide relief where possible.

Thank you for your service to the town and for considering this perspective as you continue your budget discussions. I hope Bowdoinham can remain committed to fiscal responsibility while continuing to support a strong community.

Respectfully,
Hope Libby
Bowdoinham