

**Town of Deerfield
Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of March 16, 2026
Joint Meeting With Select Board**

Finance Committee Members Present: Mark Brennan, James Cambias (*secretary*), Julie Chalfant (*chair*), Margaret Nartowicz, John Paresky.

Select Board Members Present: Trevor McDaniel (*chair*), Blake Gilmore, Tim Hilchey.

Also Present: Jenni Allard, Lisa Armstrong, John Cunningham, Holly Drake (*Accountant*), Christopher Dunne (*Administrator*), Sarah Kimball (*Treasurer/Collector*), Cassie Sanderell (*Clerk*).

Documents Presented:

- Town Clerk Salaries proposed 2027 budget (account 161-5110)
- Town Clerk Expense proposed 2027 budget (account 161-5410)
- Treasurer/Collector Salaries proposed 2027 budget (account 145-5110)
- Treasurer/Collector Expense proposed 2027 budget (account 145-5410)
- Veterans Benefits proposed 2027 budget (account 543-5410)
- Maturing Debt proposed 2027 budget (account 710-5900)
- Interest on Maturing Debt proposed 2027 budget (account 751-5900)
- Interest on Temporary Loans proposed 2027 budget (account 752-5900)
- Franklin County Regional Retirement proposed 2027 contribution (account 911-5400)
- Workers Compensation proposed 2027 budget (account 912-5400)
- Unemployment Insurance proposed 2027 budget (account 913-5400)
- Group Insurance — Town proposed 2027 budget (account 914-5400)
- Group Insurance — School proposed 2027 budget (account 914-5410)
- Medicare Insurance proposed 2027 budget (account 916-5400)
- Unfunded Sick Leave and Vacation proposed 2027 budget (account 910-5800)
- Senior Center building costs presentation draft by Julie Chalfant

Ms. Chalfant called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. on March 16, in the Town Office building on Conway Street in South Deerfield. Mr. McDaniel called the Select Board meeting to order at 5:32.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$110,513 for Town Clerk Salaries (account 161-5110) in the 2027 budget. Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is an increase of 0.26 percent from last year. Ms. Drake explained they have reduced the Assistant Town Clerk from 12.5 to 10 hours per week in order to keep close to level funding. Ms. Nartowicz and Mr. McDaniel were concerned about the reduction in hours given the number of elections planned for this year, and the move to the new building.

Mr. Brennan moved to amend the recommendation to \$114,814 and restore the Assistant Town Clerk to 12.5 hours per week. Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. This represents an increase of 4.17 percent over last year. The amendment passed, 4-1-0.

The amended motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey moved that the Select Board recommend the same amount. Mr. McDaniel seconded the motion. The motion passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$29,950 for Town Clerk Expense (account 161-5410). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is a 33.41 percent increase from last year. Ms. Sanderell explained most of the increase comes from a rise in Elections expense because of the number of elections scheduled for this fall. Motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. McDaniel made the same motion for the Select Board, seconded by Mr. Gilmore. That motion passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$154,193 for Treasurer/Collector salaries (account 145-5110). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is a 3.67 percent reduction from last year. It includes normal step increases, but the Assistant Treasurer/Collector weekly hours are reduced at the request of the employee. Other elements are level funding. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. McDaniel made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. Gilmore. That motion passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$38,645 for Treasurer/Collector Expense (account 145-5410). Ms. Nartowicz seconded the motion. This is a 4.18 percent increase over last year. Ms. Kimball says she anticipates higher costs for postage and some equipment. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. McDaniel. That motion passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$16,000 for Veterans Benefits (account 543-5410). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is level funding from last year. Ms. Kimball said there is no increase in the number of people getting benefits. The motion passed unanimously.

The same motion was moved, seconded, and passed by the Select Board, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$563,367 for Maturing Debt (account 710-5900). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is an 0.2 percent increase over last year. Ms. Chalfant asked if we have a figure for Library debt

payments, but Ms. Drake did not know, and was unsure what the term of that bond will be. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

The same motion was moved, seconded, and passed by the Select Board, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$413,723 for Interest on Maturing Debt (account 751-5900). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. McDaniel made the same motion to the Select Board. Mr. Hilchey seconded it, and the motion passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$5000 for Interest on Temporary Loans (account 752-5900). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. Ms. Drake explained that this is a contingency in case of short term borrowing, and is level funding from last year. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

The same motion was moved, seconded, and passed by the Select Board, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$766,440 for Franklin County Regional Retirement (account 911-5400). Mr. Cambias and Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is an increase of 8.89 percent over last year. The town's basic contribution is \$1,088,884, with contributions from the South County EMS, South County Senior Center, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant then deducted as those are paid from their respective budgets. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

The same motion was moved, seconded, and passed by the Select Board, 3-0-0.

Mr. Paresky moved to recommend the sum of \$55,896 for Workers Compensation (account 912-5400). Mr. Brennan seconded the motion. This is an increase of 2.43 percent over last year. It includes offset deductions for SCEMS and WWTP but not SCSC. Ms. Kimball explained this is an estimate based on current payroll. Mr. Hilchey asked how the Senior Center driver is covered. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. McDaniel, and it passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$15,000 for Unemployment Insurance (account 913-5400). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is level funding from last year. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. McDaniel, and it passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$613,255 for Group Insurance — Town (account 914-5400). Mr. Cambias seconded the motion. This is an increase of 13.13 percent over last year. According to Mr. Dunne and Ms. Drake the insurance trust has added a deductible to keep the increase down, and this includes a one-time charge for mitigation refund. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. McDaniel, and it passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$1,102,846 for Group Insurance — School (account 914-5410). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is an increase of 8.23 percent over last year. As with the Town insurance, this also includes a mitigation charge. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. McDaniel, and it passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$133,454 for Medicare Insurance (account 916-5400). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is a 4.74 percent increase, reflecting rate increases and change in staff. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. Hilchey made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. Gilmore, and it passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Brennan moved to recommend the sum of \$10,000 for Unfunded Sick Leave and Vacation (account 910-5800). Mr. Paresky seconded the motion. This is a 50 percent reduction from last year. Ms. Drake explained she anticipates only one retirement in the coming year. The motion passed, 5-0-0.

Mr. McDaniel made the same motion to the Select Board, seconded by Mr. Hilchey, and it passed, 3-0-0.

Mr. Cambias moved to accept the corrected minutes of the March 9 meeting. Mr. Brennan seconded the motion. The motion passed, 4-0-1.

Ms. Jenni Allard of Whately spoke during the Public Comment period in support of the proposed Senior Center location on Amherst Road in Sunderland, calling it a unique opportunity that won't recur.

Mr. John Cunningham of Deerfield commended that the projected cost of the location is a lot of money to spend outside Deerfield.

Ms. Lisa Armstrong of Deerfield spoke in favor of the building, noting that gathering all Senior Center activities in one place would be more efficient

Ms. Chalfant presented a slide show of building options for the South County Senior Center and what the costs would be. Considerable discussion of which building would be best and how much the towns can afford. There will be a joint meeting on the subject on March 23 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Cambias moved to adjourn. Mr. Brennan seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m. The Select Board adjourned simultaneously.