

**Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2025**

Present: James Bailey – Chairman, Selectwoman Iris Campbell, Richard Pelletier – Selectman, and Laura Buono, Town Administrator

Others present: Mark Murdough, Darrell Murdough, Larry Baken, Andrew Freishger, Riche' Colcombe, Kim Lillis, Chris Parsons, Shawn Kelley, Kemp Murphy, Ruth Murphy

Pledge of Allegiance was recited

Meeting opened at 6:00 pm

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

Riche' Colcombe said she had a few comments:

1. Ms. Colcombe said she mentioned a while back that Bill Shee will be resigning as the accountant for the Trustees of the Trust Funds at the end of 2025. Ms. Colcombe told the Board that she is not willing to do the bookkeeping and accounting for free. She said the town will need to hire someone for this position.
2. Ms. Colcombe talked about the Manahan Trust; it takes the 3 Trustees of the Trust Funds and the Selectmen to approve expenditures from the Trust and some sort of a budget needs to be generated so the Trustees will know how much money will need to be available.
3. Ms. Colcombe said she is unable to search on the town's website for any information prior to the new website going live.
4. Ms. Colcombe talked about the coverage contract for Windsor as a reminder of the upcoming budget process.
5. Ms. Colcombe asked about the contract with Deering and what that contract covers and does the money go directly to the general fund or the police revolving fund.

Ian Thayer said with his assessment doubled how will that effect his taxes. Chairman Bailey explained because the assessments are now up to date the tax rate will be reduced. Ms. Buono explained during a revaluation some property taxes go up, some stay the same and some go down and if you feel the property is over assessed there is an abatement form that can be filed. The State requires a revaluation every 5 years, but if the town's valuation goes below 50% before the 5 years the State will demand a revaluation.

Riche' Colcombe said her assessment increased by 80% and others in her neighborhood had a lower increase than her, she feels it doesn't make sense that properties that surround her increased by different percentages.

Selectman Pelletier shared some of the research he has completed on property values and feels it's a good idea to meet with the assessors and talk about it. Ms. Buono cautioned about being too fixed on percentages because you don't know what's behind it, some of those homes could have been sold.

2. MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Bailey made a motion to approve the meeting minutes dated November 25, 2025. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Bailey made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for December 9, 2025. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed.

- 2025 Property Tax Abatement Map 7 Lot 113-00CTOS \$1,366.00 (billed to previous owner); the following cards for revaluation purposes Map 11F Lot 50-50CTOS \$1,095.00; Map 5 Lot 69-00CTOS \$1,787.00; Map 12 Lot 321-00CTOS \$2,412.00; Map 12 Lot 113-00CTOS \$3,755.00.

4. MANIFEST

Chairman Bailey made motion to authorize the Selectmen to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign Payroll Check numbers 20690 – 20734 a/k/a Vouchers 49, 49A & 50 in the amount of \$285,970.69 (includes 257 direct deposit stubs) and Accounts Payable Check numbers 034954 – 035024 a/k/a Voucher 39 in the amount of \$2,100,334.57. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed.

** A/P Checks include payment to Hillsborough County in the amount of \$1,055,902.00 and Hillsboro-Deering School District in the amount of \$502,420.92.

5. PUBLIC HEARING – FEE'S

TOWN OFFICE – GENERAL

- Photocopies 8" x 11" \$0.60/page (currently .50/page)
- Photocopies 11"x14" \$0.80/page (currently .75/page)
- Insufficient Funds Fee - \$35.00 (currently \$25.00)

BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE:

- Certificate of Business Occupancy: \$75.00 (currently \$50.00)
- New Residences, Barns, Garages, Modular Home, Mobile Homes, Alterations, Additions, Breezeways, Porches, (Sheds over 200 sq. ft.), Decks, Ramps: \$75.00 plus \$0.30/sq. ft. (currently \$50.00 & .20/sq. ft.)
- Roofing: \$75.00 (currently \$50.00)
- Commercial Buildings or Construction of a New Business: \$125.00 plus \$0.35 per sq. ft. (currently \$100.00 & .25/ sq. ft.)
- Residential: Electrical, Plumbing or Gas/mechanical Permits: \$75.00 (currently \$50.00)

Commercial: Electrical, Plumbing or Gas/mechanical Permits: \$125.00 (currently \$100.00)

- Foundations Only: \$75.00 (currently \$50.00)
- Swimming Pools, Chimney/Fireplace/Pellet/Gas Stoves: \$75.00 (currently \$50.00)
- Demolition: \$50.00 (currently \$25.00)
- Fences over 6' (feet): \$75.00 (currently \$50.00)
- Permit renewal: 50% of original cost - \$75.00 minimum (currently \$50.00 minimum)
- Sign Permit: \$50.00 (currently \$25.00)

- Solar: \$75.00 Permit Fee + \$75.00 Electric + .30 per square feet for each Array Panel (currently \$50.00 & .25/sq. ft.)
- A penalty equal to double the permit fee will be charged for work done without obtaining a building permit.

TRANSFER STATION

- Auto, Motorcycle & ATV Tires - \$10.00 (currently \$5.00)
- Mattress and Boxsprings - \$40.00 (currently \$10.00) These can no longer be placed in with the trash as was previously allowed.
- Freon Products (Refrigerators, Air Conditions, etc.) - \$15.00 (currently \$10.00)
- Demolition - .09/lb. \$180.00/ton (currently .08/lb. \$160.00/ton)
- Miscellaneous electric equipment w/batteries (hoverboards, electric scooters, ellipticals etc.) - \$5.00 (new fee)

Chairman Bailey opened the hearing at 6:30 pm

Copies of the fees and the changes were distributed to the public.

Chairman Bailey said the town is trying to stay current, the fees have not been adjusted in quite some time.

Selectman Pelletier said the Board received the new fee structure at their last meeting and felt the Board should have had a discussion before they were presented to the public. He feels the timing is poor to do this currently because of the recent increase in property taxes.

Public Comments:

Larry Baker asked what the analysis is that brought the town to the new rates and how that decision was made. Selectwoman Campbell explained as far as the Transfer Station is concerned, the outside rates for disposal have increased, it now costs \$40 to dispose of a mattress instead of \$10. Mr. Baker wants to understand the analysis that was done to get to these prices. Chairman Bailey said the increases at the Transfer Station are being absorbed by the town and are working towards updating those increased costs for disposal.

Chris Murphy asked the same question, what is the analysis behind the rate increases, are these new rates comparable to other towns? She also feels the timing is not favorable, she doesn't feel any one of her neighbors are ok with all these changes that are impacting them because a lot of people are on a fixed income. Where is the money going and why does it need to be increased. Chairman Bailey said the fees brings in revenue which is then used to offset the taxes to help keep the tax rate steady. He said the fees at the Transfer Station are not controlled by the Transfer Station, and trucking fees are not controlled either. Ms. Buono said the Transfer Station is the one department where you will see consistent changes.

Ms. Buono explained the revenues offset the town's expenses, the more the town can offset those expenses the less it will cost the taxpayers. Building permit fees offset that department a bit, \$45,000 has been taken in at this point and those are user fees. Ms. Buono said the town would not be doing our job if we did not try to keep the tax rate as level as possible, that's where the analysis comes in. Ms. Murphy asked if that is documented somewhere, how the analysis was done. She asked when she applies for a building permit, what is she paying for. Chairman Bailey said the fee will cover the number of inspections.

Ian Thayer asked if the expenses can be reviewed. Ms. Buono said yes, all that information is available for review.

Andrew Freishger asked if he would need a permit to replace a shed roof that is under 200 square feet. Chairman Bailey said those answers would need to come from the building inspector.

Riche' Colcombe said Hillsborough has the fourth highest tax rate in the state and those taxes are paying the building inspector, she doesn't feel it is valid to say the fees are increasing to be like other towns. She also said that under RSA 41-9A authority is given to the Selectboard to increase fees and asked if the Board had that meeting to discuss the fees or was there an illegal meeting. She said the Selectboard has not discussed any of these fees and yet these fees are published at a public meeting. Chairman Bailey said the purpose of this meeting is to receive public input, then the Board will discuss the proposed fees as well as considering the feedback from the public. He said the department heads come up with the fees and he may have misspoke about saying we are trying to keep up with other towns. The fact is we are trying to keep up with current figures to help offset the taxes. The proposed fees are not etched in stone and if the Board feels the fees are too high, they will be adjusted.

Ms. Colcombe made another point, she said there was advisement from the Solid Waste Advisory Board, she said she attends many of the Selectboard meetings and has never seen the Selectboard look at any financial information. She is curious how the Selectboard would know the costs have increased if it's not being discussed, reviewed and available for the public to see at the Selectboard meetings. She asked where this is being discussed and again asked if they are having other meetings that no one is aware of. Chairman Bailey said the department heads keep track of the information, as individuals, we talk to the department heads, there are no illegal meetings. Selectman Pelletier recalled discussing the increased cost for mattress disposal at a public meeting.

Someone asked why the department heads are not in attendance for this discussion. Ms. Buono explained that 2 are in attendance and 2 were not available for personal reasons.

Joseph Demmons asked if the metal was being sold. The answer was yes. He then asked about scrap batteries if they are being sold, he said lead acid batteries have a lot of value to them. Chairman Bailey didn't know the answer.

Someone asked how much was the cost to pave the Transfer Station. He also has a problem with the tax rate. He said his property gets flooded by storm drains leaving most of his property unusable. He feels the value of his land is incorrect. He said people are outraged by the increase in fees after being hit with increased taxes on top.

Riche' Colcombe made a comment about employees that do not live in this town making decisions to increase fees. Ms. Colcombe was corrected, the Board of Selectmen makes that decision.

Mark Murdough feels the department heads should be at this type of meeting to answer the public's questions.

Chairman Bailey said all these comments will be taken under consideration.

Shawn Kelley said if the fees go up too much, people will start dumping illegally.

Some comments were mixed, adding comments about the new property values.

Chairman Bailey closed the public hearing at 7:10 pm

6. DEERING SERVICE CONTRACT

Police Chief Chris Parsons provided a backstory (a lot of background noise) Chief Parsons said there has been some sort of police agreement with Deering since (not audible). At that point the police chief in Deering retired as well as the full-time officer. Since 2019, Hillsborough has been on-call with Deering. With the recent resignation of the Deering police chief and other officers at the police department resigned as well, Hillsborough needed to figure out what to do. Now at this point there is no mutual aid and when the Hillsborough police department responds to a state police request there is no monetary benefit to the town. Currently there are 3 state troopers covering from here to the Massachusetts line.

Chief Parsons presented a contract for 3 months, before the Deering police retired Deering was billed about \$4,000 a month for Hillsborough support. This new contract will be for \$23,000 per month for the Hillsborough police to respond to all of Deering's calls and maintain a patrol presence. Chief Parsons said there is a 3-year agreement to look at as well, but Deering needs to have a vote at Town Meeting, to disband the police department in Deering.

Selectwoman Campbell asked if this involves hiring another officer. Chief Parsons does not know yet, he will be tracking the activity.

Chief Parsons explained the patrolling in Deering is set up as a grant schedule. Chief Parsons receives highway safety grant money from the state and asked for the \$23,000 to be set up as a Highway Safety Grant, and at the end of the month what is available will go back into the general fund. Selectman Pelletier asked who has the authority to approve this proposal. The Chief said the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Pelletier is concerned the town may need to use Hillsborough tax dollars to service Deering. Chief Parsons said without the agreement the department would be providing services for free. Chairman Bailey asked if \$23,000 will be enough. Chief Parsons said, for right now, yes.

Chief Parson said if Deering votes to disband the police department and Hillsborough takes Deering on, there will be some equipment involved in the long-term contract. There are now 2 Deering cruisers at the Hillsborough police department. Chief Parson would also like to put about \$2,000 into his revolving account from the \$23,000 for equipment expenses, the mileage on the cruisers will be increasing.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to enter into contract from December 1, 2025, to April 1, 2026, for \$23,000 per month with the town of Deering. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion, the motion passed.

Selectwoman Campbell asked if this can be done with Windsor. The chief said the fee Windsor is charged covers expenses.

7. 171 WEST MAIN STREET

Ms. Buono said the demolition is on schedule and should be completed by the end of December.

8. WOODS WOOLEN MILL

Ms. Buono reported the bids went out yesterday for reclamation of the Woods Woolen Mill site. She said there is a mandatory walk through on Monday, December 15th @ 10:00 a.m.

9. SIDEWALK PROJECT

Ms. Buono reported the project is going out to bid this week.

10. NONPUBLIC SESSION

Chairman Bailey made a motion to go into nonpublic session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) reputation at 8:00 p.m. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Bailey – yes, Campbell – yes, Pelletier – yes. The motion passed.

In attendance: Chairman Bailey, Selectwoman Campbell, Selectman Pelletier, Town Administrator Laura Buono

The Board discussed a department head's concern about a recent situation that came up regarding an employee.

Chairman Bailey made a motion to come out of nonpublic session at 8:57 p.m. Selectman Pelletier seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Bailey – yes, Campbell – yes, Pelletier – yes. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm

A true record
Mary Whalen
Recording Secretary

Date: _____

Approved by:
Hillsborough Selectboard

James C. Bailey, III, Chairman

Iris Campbell, Selectwoman

Richard Pelletier, Selectman