

Select Board

March 3, 2026

Present:

- Select Board: Mr. Bill Ramsey (remote), Ms. Liz Klein, acting Chair, and Ms. Julie Strehle
- Mr. Tom Mayo, Town Administrator
- Art Robert, Assistant Town Administrator for Operations
- Katie Dugan, Assistant Town Administrator for Finance

Call to order:

6:06 PM: Chair Ramsey called the meeting to order and read the following statement:

“This meeting is being held in person and/or remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 and all other applicable laws temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.”

No one indicated that they were recording the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

Joint Session with the Capital Outlay Committee, Advisory Committee, and School Committee to discuss the FY27 Capital Outlay Committee recommendations

Carol Tully, Chair of Advisory Committee, Jen Benham, Chair of School Committee, Mike Donovan, Chair of Capital Outlay, called their committees to order adopting the language previously read in the meeting by the chair.

Mr. Donovan reviewed the role of the Capital Outlay Committee. He explained that department heads submit five-year capital requests. The Committee meets with each department to review the requests and then evaluates and ranks them based on need and established criteria. He reported that all Priority One (highest ranked) requests were funded.

Mr. Donovan outlined some of the major appropriations, including roof replacements at the High School, South School, and Plymouth River School; HVAC upgrades at the High School; the proposed HCAL building; a multi-year chiller replacement at the Library; and electricity for the Dock House Museum at Bare Cove Park. Police appropriations include taser and body armor replacement, cruiser radios, a vehicle replacement, and fingerprint scanning. The total capital request is \$3.7 million.

There was discussion amongst the committees regarding the requests.

Diane DeNapoli, 16 Gardner St, asked about annual costs for the total borrowing requests.

John Barry, 109 North St, asked a question regarding school roofs.

There was additional discussion amongst the committees regarding the roof projects and the process.

The Select Board requested to review the presentation before meeting again with the Capital Outlay Committee to make final decisions.

Capital Outlay Committee adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Discussion and possible vote on the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article S: School Department Extraordinary Capital Needs

Katie Roberts, Superintendent of Schools, provided an update on the extraordinary repair account, thanking staff and students for their flexibility during last week's disruption at Plymouth River School. She noted ongoing boiler and roof repairs at Hingham High School, with in-house support.

Matt Meehan, Director of Facilities, provided an update on Hingham High School's boiler and distribution systems. He explained that the 27-year-old boilers are experiencing significant wear, including cracked fire tubes, failing pumps, and pressure issues, leading to reactive repairs and flooding. Ongoing work includes adding expansion tanks, water circulation pumps, and RTU maintenance. Emergency repairs were also conducted at Plymouth River School and South School due to snow and ice dam issues.

Mr. Meehan outlined recommendations from Crowley Engineering, including boiler repairs, potential replacement with high-efficiency condensing boilers, and consideration of air-source heat pumps. The proposed warrant article requests \$770,000 to fund the boiler overhaul, roof and HVAC preventive work, and to have an emergency boiler system ready if needed.

There was discussion amongst the committees regarding cost effectiveness and MSBA process for future projects.

The Select Board will vote on the article at the next meeting.

A five-minute recess was taken before the meeting resumed.

Joint Session with the School Committee and Advisory Committee: FY27 School Department Budget Presentation

Ms. Roberts presented the FY27 school budget, emphasizing student-centered planning and six priorities: strengthening student services and special education, implementing high-quality curriculum, shifting focus from literacy to math, integrating "Portrait of a Learner" competencies, investing in staff professional development, and addressing facilities and operations. She noted stabilized enrollment with modest projected growth, explaining staffing and class section adjustments at elementary and secondary levels.

Ms. Roberts and Aisha Oppong highlighted budget efficiencies, including staff reallocation, managing retirements and leaves, leveraging in-house expertise, and using tuition, fees, grants, and green initiatives. Personnel comprises 80% of the budget, limiting discretionary flexibility. Key FY27 increases include the new math program, special education expenses, professional development, and shifts from private to residential tuitions.

A \$430,000 deficit was addressed through staffing adjustments, professional development reductions, and minor technology supply cuts, resulting in a balanced budget.

Ms. Oppong noted that Kids in Action added a behavioral specialist due to increased student behaviors. Each building runs its own program, covering 60–70% of costs, with fees reviewed annually to stay competitive and self-sufficient.

There was brief discussion regarding projected enrollment in future years.

Ms. Roberts went on to explain Special Education explaining that most special education students are served in full or partial inclusion settings within the district. Substantially separate classrooms and specialized programs (CLC, RISE, Lab, Pathways) serve students with higher needs. Out-of-district placements are used only when in-district supports, determined by IEP teams using data, cannot meet a student's needs. Specialized services, including ABA and behavior supports, are provided in tiers, with

the district prioritizing in-district solutions whenever possible. Approximately 600–700 students receive special education services, with 61 placed in out-of-district programs.

Ms. Oppong explained some of the grants received for Special Education.

Ms. Strehle asked why out-of-district costs are projected to increase by about \$600,000 in FY27 despite 10 fewer students. Ms. Roberts explained the increase is due to higher tuition from program reconstructions, potential shifts to more expensive or residential placements, transportation costs, and some services now billed separately rather than included in tuition.

Diane DiNapoli, 16 Gardner St, stressed keeping student's in-district and asked when parents are notified of potential out-of-district placements and whether interventions succeed in retaining students.

Appointments and/or reappointments (for a list of Talent Bank Applicants and Board and Committee vacancies, please visit Hingham-ma.gov/SB)

There were no appointments to be made.

Public Comment

No members of the public came forward.

Select Board/Town Administrator Reports

There were no reports made.

Ms. Strehle made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ramsey seconded. All were in favor.

The Select Board meeting adjourned at 10:23 pm.

Documents:

1. FY27 COC
2. Article S
3. FY27 School Budget Presentation