



Office of the Board of Selectmen
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Tom Klebart, Chairman
Mark Rogers, Vice-Chairman
Elaine Davies, Secretary
Scott Dziedzic
Earl Gabor

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY JANUARY 12, 2026 6:00 P.M.**

Selectmen's Meeting Room
Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570

MEETING OPENING At 6:00 p.m., Chairman Klebart called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Webster Town Hall, 350 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570. The following individuals were present: Chairman Tom Klebart, Vice-Chairman Mark Rogers, Selectman Earl Gabor, Selectman Scott Dziedzic, Selectman Elaine Davies, Town Administrator Richard LaFond, Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director Courtney Friedland, Executive Assistant Kelly Lyman, Chief Michael Shaw, Lieutenant Christopher Trainor, Sergeant Sean Ebbeling, Assistant Town Clerk Lisa LeBlanc, Michael Maciag, National Grid.

Webster Housing Authority Members and Candidates Present: Chairman and State Appointee David Dupont, Vice Chairman Peter Luchina, Treasurer Susan Sminchiski, Rhea Parker, Barbara Avery, Frank Stefanik.

Chairman Klebart referred to An Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency which, includes an extension until June, 2027, of the remote meeting provisions of the Governor's March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Chairman Klebart announced that the meeting was being recorded for YouTube and Vonage.

The Board stood and took the Pledge of Allegiance.

SWEARING IN OF SERGEANT SEAN EBBELING AND LIEUTENANT CHRISTOPHER TRAINOR

Sergeant Sean Ebbeling began part-time in January 2017 and moved to full-time shortly after. As a full-time officer he attended Randolph Academy. He has served as a Field Training Officer and was an integral part of training new officers. After briefly leaving to join the Massachusetts State Police, he chose to return to Webster in August 2024. He is a 13½-year Marine Corps veteran with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Sergeant Ebbeling thanked his family and friends, and the police department, and said he looks forward to the leadership role.

Lieutenant Trainor filled a command staff position in the Webster PD that was open since 2023. He began as a part-time dispatcher in 2011, became a part-time patrolman and entered the State Police

Municipal Academy in 2012. He served in Worcester, was promoted, and joined the detective team. He earned the FBI Trilogy Award in 2020 and holds a bachelor's degree in psychology. He is currently enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Major in the Civil Affairs Unit, and attended the Naval War College. Lieutenant Trainor thanked the Board, the Town Administrator, and his family, stating he is honored for the opportunity.

The Board congratulated both officers on their promotions and thanked them for all they do for our community.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE WEBSTER HOUSING AUTHORITY

Chairman Dupont called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

Webster Housing Authority Members and Candidates Present: Chairman and State Appointee David Dupont, Vice Chairman Peter Luchina, Treasurer Susan Sminchinski, Rhea Parker, Barbara Avery, Frank Stefanik.

There is a vacancy on the Webster Housing Authority left by the passing of Kathryn Ward. The WHA is seeking to fill that seat until the next election on May 4, 2026.

Barbara Avery is a lifelong resident of Webster, and her husband was a former member of the WHA. She has significant volunteer experience, including as former president of the Harrington Auxiliary, founded in 1932. She noted the importance of working hard to sustain long-standing institutions. She retired in 2012 and continued part-time in several departments, including marketing. She currently volunteers at the library.

Frank Stefanik has been a resident of Golden Heights for seven years and has attended WHA board meetings. He previously served as president of the housing association. Mr. Stefanik has successfully advocated for funding at the State House. Now retired, he expressed a desire to give back to the community. When asked why he wanted to join, he said he attends every meeting and wants to contribute. He also serves as treasurer of the Harley Owners Group and has a financial background.

Rhea Parker has been a tenant at Golden Heights for 13 years and is president of the tenant organization. She regularly attends meetings. Ms. Parker explained her extensive experience helping tenants resolve problems. Her husband is a Vietnam War veteran, and she has organizational experience as vice president of Parents Without Partners, where she handled renewals and new-member orientations. She worked 23 years at Travelers Insurance.

Selectman Davies asked all 3 candidates what skill they think is really important for serving on the Board and for an example of how they used that skill in the past. Ms. Parker described helping tenants and participating in decisions, and purchasing equipment. Frank emphasized the importance of people skills, listening, and guiding residents in a diverse housing population. Barbara noted that she would bring impartiality and a new perspective.

A discussion followed regarding the composition of the board. Ms. Smichinski is a resident on the state side. A tenant vacancy on the federal side will be open soon, due to William Herra's passing. Selectman Gabor asked if there were non-voting members. Mr. Dupont explained that tenant organizations and residents may provide public comment during meetings, and WHA holds town-hall-style sessions for tenant feedback. Ms. Smichinski noted that it is state mandated to have a federal resident and a state resident on the board, and that training is required. According to the Town Charter, one member is appointed by the state, and 4 members are elected, for a total of 5 members. The Board of Selectmen can appoint members to fill vacancies only until the next election. There were no further questions or comments from either board or from the public.

Motion to recommend appointing Barbara Avery to the Webster Housing Authority until Election Day on May 4, 2026, leaving the other vacancy for a tenant representative, made by Mr. Dupont, seconded by Mr. Luchina for the Webster Housing Authority, and seconded by Selectman Dziedzic for the Board of Selectmen. There were no additional nominations, and no further questions or comments from the Board or from the public. Motion passed unanimously by the Webster Housing Authority 3-0. Motion passed unanimously by the Board of Selectmen 5-0.

MEETING MINUTES - DECEMBER 8, 2026 AND DECEMBER 22, 2026

Motion to approve the draft meeting minutes from December 8, 2026 made by Selectman Davies, seconded by Selectman Dziedzic. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Selectman Rogers and Selectman Gabor recused themselves from voting on the December 22nd draft meeting minutes. **Motion to approve the draft meeting minutes from December 22, 2026 made by Selectman Dziedzic, seconded by Selectman Davies. Motion passed 3-yes, 2-recused.**

PUBLIC HEARING - National Grid to install 1JO Pole on Bates Point Rd. Installing new JO Pole #14-50 in line with existing poles 14 and 15 for service to new house located at 70 Bates Point Road.

Motion to open the public hearing made by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Davies. Roll call vote: Selectman Davies - yes, Selectman Gabor - yes, Selectman Dziedzic - yes, Selectman Rogers - yes, Chairman Klebart - yes. Motion passed 5-0.

National Grid Representative Michael Maciag joined the meeting via Vonage and explained that this is a service request from a resident who requested upgrades involving National Grid and Verizon. Selectman Gabor asked if there will be three poles in the proximity of 4 parcels of land. Mr. Maciag replied that there are many poles on Bates Point Road. There were no further questions from the Board or from the public.

Motion to close the public hearing for 70 Bates Point Road made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Gabor. Roll call vote: Selectman Davies - yes, Selectman Gabor - yes, Selectman Dziedzic - yes, Selectman Rogers - yes, Chairman Klebart - yes. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion to approve the petition to allow National Grid to install 1JO Pole on Bates Point Rd. made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Davies. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING - Petition for Verizon to Place Conduit -Verizon to place one (1) three (3) inch conduit along the south side of East Main Street, near 132 (formerly 130) East Main Street, and running in a westerly direction along the south side of East Main Street a distance of approximately (30) feet to a point on the south side of East Main Street.

Motion to open the public hearing made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Davies. Roll call vote: Selectman Davies - yes, Selectman Gabor - yes, Selectman Dziedzic - yes, Selectman Rogers - yes, Chairman Klebart - yes. Motion passed 5-0.

Tom Harmon from Verizon described the work: a 30-foot trench in front of the Gulf gas station, near the exit. The conduit would run south along the sidewalk edge and connect to an existing line. Only the East Main Street exit might be affected. Selectman Davies asked how long the work would take and Mr. Harmon could not provide a timeframe. There were no further questions or comments from the Board or from the public.

Motion to close the public hearing for 132 (formerly 130) East Main Street made by Selectman Davies, seconded by Selectman Dziedzic. Roll call vote: Selectman Davies - yes, Selectman Gabor - yes, Selectman Dziedzic - yes, Selectman Rogers - yes, Chairman Klebart - yes. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion to approve the petition to allow Verizon to place one (1) three (3) inch conduit along the south side of East Main Street, near 132 (formerly 130) East Main Street, and running in a westerly direction along the south side of East Main Street a distance of approximately (30) feet to a point on the south side of East Main Street made by Selectman Dziedzic, seconded by Selectman Davies. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING - APPLICATION FOR A WINE AND MALT BEVERAGES LICENSE SUBMITTED BY SAUCED & TOSSED CHICKEN CO LLC -

Motion to open the public hearing made by Selectman Gabor, seconded by Selectman Davies. Roll call vote: Selectman Davies - yes, Selectman Gabor - yes, Selectman Dziedzic - yes, Selectman Rogers - yes, Chairman Klebart - yes. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Grant Fabbri, owner and applicant, was present. Mr. Fabbri is currently working with the planning department for the business on signage permits, and with the building department because the awning requires a building permit for the ground anchor. A final inspection will follow. The restaurant hopes to open for the Super Bowl. Mr. Fabbri explained they currently operate a food truck serving fried chicken, boneless wings, salads, and other homemade items. They received positive feedback, including recognition as “best food” at the Spencer Fair. The food truck will still be used for events. The second floor of the premises will be used for office space only. There no planned construction, and no food service or alcohol on the second floor. There were no further questions from the board or from the public.

Motion to close the public hearing for Sourced & Tossed Chicken Co. LLC, located at 32 Main Street, Webster MA 01570, made by Selectman Davies, seconded by Selectmen Dziedzic. Roll call vote: Selectman Davies - yes, Selectman Gabor - yes, Selectman Dziedzic - yes, Selectman Rogers - yes, Chairman Klebart - yes. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion to approve the application for a Wine and Malt Beverages License submitted by Sourced & Tossed Chicken Co LLC, located at 32 Main Street, Webster, MA 01570 made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Gabor. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ONE-DAY SPECIAL LIQUOR LICENSE - The application was submitted by St. Louis Church for a Comedy Night - There were no questions or comments from the Board.

Motion to approve the One-Day Special Liquor License application submitted by St. Louis Church for a Comedy Night to be held on Saturday, January 17, 2026 at 14 Lake Street, Webster, MA, 01570 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Gabor. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

DISCUSSION ON THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT EXPLORATORY AND MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEES - Recruitment for the committees should begin, and postings should be shared on board agendas to let the public know we need at-large members. Selectman Davies recommended that Mr. LaFond, Mr. Klebart, and she should meet with the Town Planner, Joey Wigglesworth to discuss the Master Plan prior to a committee meeting. CPA meetings would require only a few months of meetings. Mr. LaFond will reach out to local organizations for volunteers.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

1. FY 2027 Budget Process -This past Friday was the time line for receiving budget requests for FY 2027. Our request was for a level services proposal, and also level services minus 5%. We will be reviewing these requests over the next week or two. Due to the extent of our forecasted deficit, the school administration and I will be waiting until the Governor's initial budget proposal to determine any changes in local aid categories beyond our projections.

2. 4 Bartlett Street - The Building Commissioner continues to monitor the property to ensure compliance with our zoning bylaws. Two weeks ago, he found it necessary to give notice for an occupant to vacate by January 1 because they were residing illegally in a trailer on the property. Compliance was achieved. Illegal occupancy was a previous violation that was addressed by the Building Commissioner and Health Director, with the assistance of Superior Court. As previously reported, demonstrating an ongoing pattern of violations will be a reason to seek the contempt order. Unfortunately, there's no reason to believe that the pattern will cease, requiring further legal action.

The owner of 4 Bartlett, Nathan LeBaron, has filed his third suit against the town for infringing upon his ability to conduct activities of the Church of The First Born at that address. The suits are

identical. He continues to assert that his property is a religious institution and he is exempt from zoning. His prior suits have not progressed and neither will this one. His multiple suits are being handled by our insurer rather than town counsel.

3. Snow and Ice Management - Winter to-date has been challenging to our Highway Department. The Town's nine plows (seven of which are able to dispense salt product), in addition to seventeen private contractors, have been required to respond to many extremely long weather events. Long weather events (snow/melt/freeze/rain/freeze) extending for over 10 to nearly 20 hours are very expensive and taxing on highway department staff - even if there is little snow. Only six complaints have been received between our office and the Highway Department. Half of those were from residents on private roads. In addition to the superior road conditions (under the circumstances) and the obvious satisfaction of citizens, this is an outstanding achievement. I wish to recognize our Highway Superintendent and the nine men in our Highway Department for this remarkable performance. When most were celebrating New Year's Eve day and New Year's day, your highway department was preparing for, and maintaining the safety of your town throughout the night and well into New Year's Day. These men did not have the opportunity to celebrate with their family and friends like most of us. The Public Works is the backbone of a town and the citizens should be proud.

4. Website Award - I'm pleased to inform the public that Webster is the winner of this year's Massachusetts Municipal Association's Municipal Website Award for populations between 12,000 and 25,000. According to the MMA, the websites scored among the highest in categories that evaluated navigation and organization of material, convenience of information, functionality, and overall experience. We were applauded for our efforts in making this website an effective tool for our community.

5. Brian Road- Most recently I have been informed that another status conference with the Judge for our Second Appeal will be held on the 20th. Our First Appeal, based upon procedural errors, was combined with this Second Appeal because the basis for each appeal is the same. We haven't heard anything regarding any intent of the proponent to appeal or submit a new application. The concrete barriers remain in place. I intend to discuss this matter with the Thompson's First Selectmen within the next week or two. It's my understanding that one factor in the slow pace of this process is based upon the Town of Thompson's limited ability to pay legal fees to defend the actions of its Planning and Zoning Commission. The Select Board controls the "purse strings" and is bearing the burden of funding the opposition to our appeal rather than strategizing to have the proponent bear the financial burden for doing so.

6. Health Insurance - Both Dudley-Charlton and Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School Districts have now joined Webster in executing the regional Joint Purchase Agreement for health insurance. Both towns are currently members of the Hampshire County Health Group. This group is essentially crumbling for various reasons and our local JPA may be a very nice fit. The most important factor is, unlike Massachusetts Strategic Health Group, the state Group Insurance Commission health insurance program (GIC) and Massachusetts Municipal Associations insurance program, we are in a

position to be selective of potential members with only favorable claims history. We are on a course to stability in perhaps the most unstable time in history.

7. Town Clerk - TA/BOS Office - After the required procurement process, minor construction work will begin to modify our current office space for use by the Town Clerk. The work is expected to take about one month during which time the TA/BOS office will be located in the auditorium.

Ms. Lyman passed the test for the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM-CP). The test was four hours long and required much independent study.

Motion to accept the Town Administrator's report made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Dziedzic. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Vacancies – Board of Selectmen Appointments

Finance Committee	Full Member - 2
Historical Commission	Full Members - 3
Zoning Board of Appeals	Full Member - 1, Alternate Member 1
Planning Board	Associate Members - 2
Webster Housing Authority	Full Member - 1 (Selectman Appointed)

Proposed Future Meeting Date:

Monday February 9, 2026, 6:00 p.m., Selectmen's Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, 350 Main St., Webster, MA 01570

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. made by Selectman Rogers, seconded by Selectman Dziedzic. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kelly Lyman, Executive Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

EXHIBITS:

1. Draft Meeting Minutes from December 8, 2025, 5 pages.
2. Draft Meeting Minutes from December 22, 2025, 2 pages.
3. Document: Board and Committees Volunteer Application and Letter of Interest, Barbara Avery, 12/16/2025, 3 pages.
4. Document: Board and Committees Volunteer Application, Rhea Parker, 12/8/2025, 3 pages.
5. Document: Board and Committees Volunteer Application, Frank Stefanik, 11/26/2025, 5 pages.
6. Document: One-Day Liquor License Application, St. Louis Church, 2 pages.
7. Document: National Grid Petition, 67 Bates Point Road, 11/13/2025, 7 pages.
8. Document: Verizon Petition, 132 East Main Street, 12/1/2025, 5 pages.
9. Document: Application and associated documents, Sauced & Tossed, 12/17/2025, 21 pages.

10. Document: Town Administrator General Update, 1/9/2026, 2 pages.