TOWN OF HINGHAM

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2026 AT 7:00 PM
Hybrid Meeting

Members in Attendance: Nancy MacDonald, Ruth Bennett, Elizabeth Dings, Vicki Donlan, David Ellison, Eryn Kelley, Kirsten Moore, Phillip Edmundson

Members attending remotely: Crystal Kelly

Absent: None

Also Present: Emily Wentworth, Community Planning Director, Paula Sjostedt, Administrative Assistant, Ben Burnham and Mary Power, Advisory Committee liaisons

CALL TO ORDER:

At 7:00 PM, Chair Nancy MacDonald called the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting to order and stated the following:

"This meeting is being held remotely and in person 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."

Chair Shriver took roll call attendance of other members present including***:*** Eryn Kelley, Ruth Bennett, Crystal Kelly, Kirsten Moore, Vicki Donlan, David Ellison, Elizabeth Dings, Phillip Edmundson, and Nancy MacDonald

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON PROJECTS TO RECOMMEND TO ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2026

Chair MacDonald advised the meeting was to vote on which projects and funding amounts are to be recommended for inclusion in the Annual Town Meeting warrant article. No public comment would be taken.

Chair MacDonald advised committee members that they will be voting based on a working budget of $1,863,538. She shared that in the last meeting figures were discussed which included reserve funds. She shared that she will be work with Town Hall staff in the off season to better understand the status and amount of these reserves.

Chair MacDonald went onto explain the voting process and that following all project votes, the committee will vote on the official warrant language, which becomes the motion for Town Meeting. A brief discussion occurred regarding past voting practices and how to record votes when members support different funding levels. The Chair stated that CPC practice has been to adopt the majority position when a single funding amount receives majority support. After completing all project votes and approving the warrant article language, the CPC's recommendations will be forwarded for the required public hearings and subsequent Select Board and Advisory Committee votes.

The pre-vote tallies were shown and updated for members who were not able to provide their figures before the start of the meeting. Chair MacDonald explained that the committee will go through each potential grant reviewing the pre-vote and discuss what to move forward to the Warrant Article. Member E. Kelley asked what would happen in the case of a split vote. Chair MacDonald again responded that in the past a majority vote would be taken.

Chair MacDonald moved on to identify the applications where the majority of members were in agreement in the initial pre-vote.

Lehner Land Debt: $209,179. The CPC confirmed unanimous support.
This grant was bonded and the terms of the bond do not allow the CPC/Town to under or overpay.

GAR Elevator Replacement: $160,000. The CPC unanimously approved the full amount.

Iron Horse Restoration: $30,300. The CPC unanimously approved the full amount.

Chair MacDonald moved onto articles and funds that did not initially receive a unanimous vote.

Administrative Fund: $40,000.

Chair MacDonald noted for the group that the admin fees cover coalition membership, attorney/legal fees, and salary for administrative support. She also noted that any unused funds are rolled back into the general fund at the end of the fiscal year.

The member who voted against the fund explained their reason was that in past years support was done by volunteers and that she felt the funds could be better used toward funding applications. Some members questioned whether $40,000 is the appropriate amount. Members asked what the 5-year average administrative spending has been. Ms. Wentworth stated that last year's spending was approximately $22,000, but historical data is difficult to compile due to changes in accounting systems and personnel. She advised that Ms. Sjostedt has begun building a more robust tracking spreadsheet, but full historical reconstruction will take time. Members agreed that the committee cannot function with a $0 administrative budget, and that administrative support has been valuable and necessary. Members asked if in the future the 5 year average spending from the administrative fund could be shared with the group.

Following this discussion the CPC unanimously approved the full amount.

Chair MacDonald moved on to discuss the applications that apply to Historic categories.

Hingham Community Center Improvements: $185,500.

Chair MacDonald reminded the committee that the Hingham Community Center application was comprised of four components. They are the Central Street exterior repairs, rear vinyl siding replacement, front and side portico repairs, and fireplace and chimney repointing. She also pointed out a 20% contingency had been applied to the portico repairs and the fireplace/chimney work.

Members who did not initially support full funding stated their reasons was an attempt to allocate funds to other worthy applications who had limited funding resources. One member reasoning that the Community Center had received a Greenbush Historic Preservation Grant.

Members expressed strong support for the Community Center citing that it is a heavily used town institution that raises its own funds and has historically been responsible stewards of the building. They also found the applicant to be efficient and that they "worked magic" in refining their request to focus on historically eligible components. Chair MacDonald shared that the applicant previously applied in 2016 for a smaller project ($15,650). Members felt the applicant has demonstrated thoughtful planning and responsiveness to CPC guidance.

Members who initially did not support full funding stated they were willing to change their vote to support the full request but preferred to wait until the committee reviewed all projects and understood the full budget impact.

Chair MacDonald reminded the committee that votes are not final until the end, and members may adjust allocations as needed.

Chair MacDonald moved onto requests made in the Recreation/Open Space category.

Plymouth River Basketball Court: $333,500. The CPC unanimously approved the full amount.

Chair MacDonald moved on to request in the Housing Category.

30 Thaxter Street Roof Replacement: $299,572. The CPC unanimously approved the full amount

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Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) Opportunity Fund: $800,000.

Chair MacDonald reminded members that the request was broken into two parts. A request of $300,000 toward the “Opportunity Fund” for use creating new housing and a $500,000 request to offset building envelope preservation costs at the Lincoln School Apartment (LSA). She also reminded members that HAHT identified the LSA project as their top priority.

Member C. Kelly requested a change in her initial allocation due to a mathematical error. Chair MacDonald took this moment to reminded members that they are not required to allocate the full balance and could maintain a reserve if preferred.

Chair MacDonald advised that initial polling put the average funding target at $222,942 toward the Opportunity Fund and $288,175 toward the LSA preservation project. A lengthy discussion followed. The discussions included a request for a deeper review of the distributed spreadsheet, limited access during the site visit, lack of demonstrated need, lack of detailed estimates, and potential sale of the property. Other members express their feeling that the applicant failed to follow CPC application protocol and submission of materials too late in the process. Others citied concerns over lack of transparency regarding how and when the funds would be spent. Members did express concerns about the resident experience. Following a lengthy discussion of both funding options and the potential future sale of the LSA property.

Chair MacDonald advised members that a meeting to discuss the warrant to approve future sale of the LSA was scheduled for the following week. Chair MacDonald suggested that the members revisit allocations before a votes is taken. She advised the committee that the total for all other grant requests was $605,487. The total available funds for all requests was $1,863,538. Members discussed their thoughts on distribution of the remaining funds.

Several members felt they could not support any funding to the LSA envelope preservation project at this time with the information currently available. All members voted to contribute to the Opportunity Fund in varying amounts. After another extended conversation reiterating previously stated concerns, the CPC unanimously approved $605,487 to be applied to the Opportunity Fund for creation of new housing.

The allocation spreadsheet was updated and a vote was taken.

Vicki Donlan made a motion, seconded by Kirsten Moore to approve the agreed upon budget amounts totaling $1,863,583

The motion passed by roll call vote.

In Favor:	Eryn Kelley, Ruth Bennett, Elizabeth Dings, Vicki Donlan, Phil Edmundson, Dave Ellison, Crystal Kelly, Kirsten Moore, Nancy MacDonald
Opposed:	None

Chair MacDonald read the proposed warrant article language:

Will the Town appropriate, borrow and/or set aside for future appropriation a sum of money from the available Community Preservation Funds remaining after payment of debt service for bonds and/or notes issued under M.G.L. c. 44B for the following items recommended by the Community Preservation Committee for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026:

1. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $40,000 from the Community Preservation General Fund to be used by the Community Preservation Committee for its administrative and operating expenses.

2. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $209,179 from the Community Preservation General Fund to be available for expenditure by the Select Board for the payment of bonds or notes borrowed for Community Preservation projects under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 44B, § 11.

3. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $605,487 from the Community Preservation General Fund for community housing purposes to the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust Opportunity Fund to be used by the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust for community housing purposes and that these funds, including, without limitation, any net proceeds received by the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust from the sale of any property acquired in whole or in part with said funds or any previous funds appropriated to the Opportunity Fund, shall remain in said Opportunity Fund for future use for said purposes.

4. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $299,572 from the Community Preservation General Fund and/or the Community Housing Reserve Fund for community housing purposes by the Hingham Housing Authority to be used for the Roof Replacement project at 30 Thaxter Street.

5. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $30,300 from the Community Preservation General Fund for historic preservation purposes to be used by the Hingham Historical Commission for the Victory Statue (Iron Horse) Restoration Project.

6. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $160,000 from the Community Preservation General Fund for historic preservation purposes to be used by the Hingham Veteran's Services for the elevator replacement project at the Grand Army Hall.

7. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $185,500 from the Community Preservation General Fund and/or Historic Resources Reserve Fund for historic preservation purposes to be used by the Hingham Community Center for preservation and restoration of the exterior of the John Thaxter House (Hingham Community Center) and to authorize the Town of Hingham Historical Commission, with the approval of the Select Board, to acquire a preservation restriction for said project under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 40, § 8D and M.G.L. c. 184, §§ 31-33 and all other applicable laws.

8. Appropriate a sum of money in the amount of $333,500 from the Community Preservation General Fund for open space/recreational use purposes to be used by Town of Hingham Recreation Commission for the PRS Basketball Court Project.

Vicki Donlan made a motion, seconded by Kirsten Moore, to accept the warrant article language as read by Chair MacDonald.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

In Favor: Eryn Kelley, Ruth Bennett, Elizabeth Dings, Vicki Donlan, Phil Edmundson, Dave Ellison, Crystal Kelly, Kirsten Moore, Nancy MacDonald
Opposed: None

Chair MacDonald moved on to review Committee Membership which runs through the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026. She noted that three seats were set to expire this year and encouraged members to consider re-upping for another term.

Chair MacDonald then moved on to discuss upcoming meetings. She advised that the next meeting would likely be in May or June and agenda items would include updates and extensions for currently open CPC projects, a debrief of the April 27, 2026 Town Meeting, and voting on grant agreements for projects approved at the 2026 Town Meeting.

A brief discussion about attendance at the AdCom and Select Board meetings followed.

Vicki Donlan made a motion, seconded by Dave Ellison, to adjourn the CPC meeting at 9:05PM.

The motion passed by roll call vote.

In Favor: Eryn Kelley, Ruth Bennett, Elizabeth Dings, Vicki Donlan, Phil Edmundson, Dave Ellison, Crystal Kelly, Kirsten Moore, Nancy MacDonald
Opposed: None