



SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 15, 2025
6:00 PM

ACTON TOWN HALL, ROOM 204
472 MAIN STREET

Present: Dean Charter, Alissa Nicol, David Martin, Jim Snyder-Grant, Fran Arsenault
Additional Attendees: Town Manager John Mangiaratti, Assistant Town Manager Thom Begin,
Executive Assistant Lisa Tomy

I. Regular Business

1. Resident Concerns

Glen Cote – updated the Board on the School Committee on tiers of instruction and staff cross collaboration, AB Forward redistricting options narrowed down to 5 options, and finally brought down two options and moving from recommendation to final decision with the School Committee, continuing deliberations this Thursday with final on January 13th.

2. Chair Update/Town Manager Update/Members Minute

Mr. Charter acknowledges Carol Lake, first Senior Center Director passed and was instrumental in the growth and success of the current operation. Mr. Mangiaratti highlighted grants recently awarded and state delegation in securing earmarks most recently for turnout gear replacement of \$25,000 and portable radio replacement for \$25,000. Introduced Town Engineer Evan White. Ms. Nicol announced a menorah lighting ceremony on Wednesday at 6 pm at the Red House. Mr. Snyder-Grant noted at 7 pm tomorrow the Planning Board is holding a public hearing on subdivision rules and regulations and a cell tower placement, the Health and Human Services and DEI Directors are leading Acton for Proaction seminars with one session focusing on people with disabilities on January 6th at 10 am or 6 pm, and continuing with outreach to several different groups. Ms. Arsenault mentioned Powers Gallery is up for sale and if the town would be interested in purchasing the property with its historical significance and location of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

II. New/Special Business

3. Presentation by Water Resources Advisory Committee on Stormwater Management Study

Ms. Nicol noted the members of the committee have extensive expertise and background in water resources. Joe Robb presented to the Board and recommendations for future stormwater maintenance and repairs. Ms. Nicol questioned the response from the public seminars and online survey and WRAC

had not made a specific recommendation on a stormwater utility, because a consensus of the committee wasn't reached.

Ron Parenti – WRAC – noted members did recommend a stormwater utility but preferred the Select Board decide a sustainable funding mechanism. Ms. Nicol questioned the potential annual fees the public may draw what each cost may be. Mr. Martin noted that regular funds are important for planning purposes. General fund budgeted revenue will never be regular year to year due to financial conditions constantly changing. So, a fee based on impervious surfaces is preferred.

Mr. Snyder-Grant questioned about condo development and if they are responsible for stormwater maintenance, and if developers are required to maintain their own infrastructure. Evan White Town Engineer noted the town inspects construction sites, and the town under Stormwater Chapter X the town can inspect after construction is completed, agrees that the funding would be through an enterprise fund.

Ms. Arsenault agrees with a utility fee structure. Mr. Charter agrees on a predictable revenue source such as stormwater utility under impervious surfaces. Michael Watkins, 607 Old Stonebrook – Massachusetts river and stream crossing standards were not discussed in the report and should be considered as most culverts were built before modern standards.

Kim Kastens, 94 Pope Rd – concerned on wetlands and the Conservation Commission not been part of the planning phase of the report, stormwater quantity was the focus and to consider water quality in the planning process.

John Petersen, 6 Jackson Drive – noted the general fund isn't a reliable source for stormwater management, questioned about the value of investment in the construction of stormwater utility and how to manage decisions to change fee rates over time.

Scott Sullivan, Finance Committee – discussed at FinCom meetings and mentioned several members not supporting an independent fee and also not coming out of the general fund.

Mr. Snyder-Grant noted two parts for maintaining systems such as legal and maintain high level of water quality and working only on emergency repairs is costly

Ms. Nicol suggests further review of the document and to bring back to a future meeting for further discussion and a vote on recommended funding. Mr. Charter recommends a discussion and vote at the second meeting in January.

4. Approve Wayfinding Signage and Locations on Main Street and Quarry Road

Mr. Mangiaratti noted the Economic Development Director worked on adding wayfinding signage to support economic development with the museum on Quarry Road, and presented the proposed locations to be installed, and to work with residents/abutters where signs would be installed. **Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve wayfinding signage as outlined in packet and approved 4-0-1 (Snyder-Grant)**

5. Approve Grant of Pole Relocations on Powder Mill Road

The request is related to ongoing work with the apartment development on Powder Mill Road requiring no public hearing. **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve the relocation of 13 poles along Powder Mill Road, as identified in the petition from Eversource Energy and Verizon and approved 5-0.**

6. Discuss Potential Change to July 4th Fireworks Celebrations

Mr. Charter commented on the cost of the fireworks program, the impact on the environment and sensitive communities, and cost of town staff support, and not supporting fireworks in July of 2027, and questioned if the Board would support the fireworks show for July 2026. Mr. Snyder-Grant supports eliminating the fireworks in 2027, but supports for 2026 with the 250 events. Mr. Martin noted the significance of the 250th signing of the Declaration of Independence and agreeing with Mr. Snyder-Grant. Mr. Charter noted that this Board cannot commit a future Board. Ms. Nicol noted that town staff that work the event every year, so and are not able to spend the holiday with their families. She would support one more fireworks event. Ms. Arsenault was in favor of eliminating the fireworks for 2026 and replacing them with a festival or community gathering. Ms. Nicol noted that there would be less draw to the event without fireworks. Mr. Mangiaratti noted the annual draw is for the fireworks and with just a band the draw would be significantly less. Members expressed support to continue for 2026 possibly holding it on an alternative day, but eliminate moving forward, with the funding that was approved at 2025 Town Meeting. Mr. Charter suggested Acton 250 members read portions of the Declaration of Independence and noted concerns creating large regional event with a small representation of Acton residents attending

Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to not use appropriated funding to pay for fireworks and instead hold a concert and community festival on July 4 2026, and amended by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant to include holding event on a Friday or Sunday and approved 5-0.

7. Public Hearings at (or after) the Time Advertised:

- a. **6:30 PM Site Plan Special Permit (SPSP) for Hawthorn Realty Company to combine the properties at 471, 465-469 Great Road to Construct Two Buildings to be used as Building Trade Shops (applicant requests continuation to January 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM)**

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to continue the public hearing to January 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM in this room and approved 5-0

- b. **7:10 PM Proposed Amendment to Existing Traffic Rules and Order to Add Stop Sign at River Street and Chadwick Street**

Evan White, Town Engineer presented to the Board the request for a traffic rules and order to install a stop sign at River and Chadwick Street. Resident reached out about concerns about the safety of the intersection

after recent change in traffic patterns. Ms. Nicol noting waiting until the 75% design is completed and not seeing a significant increase in traffic volume. Ms. Arseneault supports adding the stop sign now, feeling that traffic has increased, and a deterrent for speeders is needed. Mr. Snyder-Grant supports the new sign and noted if the 100% design does not support it could be removed. Mr. Martin sympathetic with resident at corner, suggests adding additional signage warning of oncoming traffic does not stop. Mr. Charter would support adding the additional stop sign. Kendra Wilson, River Street – advocates for 3 way stop sign on both east and west River Street.

Manish Kumar, River Street – intersection causes confusion for drivers, concerned about school bus safety at the intersection.

Terra, Mass Ave – supports adding stop signs/

Stephanie Krantz – supports a three-way stop sign intersection/

Elise Ruggerio, Chadwick Street – supports adding stop sign, noted increased traffic and traffic backup.

Julie Williams, 14 Chadwick – noted increase in traffic, speeding, lack of sidewalks and supports a three-way stop sign

Evan White noted the 25% design does not include a 3 way stop sign, and will go back to the consultants about adding it and may be included in the 75% design stop sign plan.

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to close the public hearing and approved 5-0

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve amendment to existing traffic rules and order to add stop sign at River Street and Chadwick Street and approved 5-0

8. Authorize Town Manager to Sign Habitat for Humanity Local Initiative Petition (LIP) Application for 416 Great Road

The Town Manager noted past LIPs have been brought to the Board for approval.

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to authorize Town Manager to sign Habitat for Humanity Local Initiative Petition application for 416 Great Road and approved 5-0

9. Approve Updated Changes to Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Policy
Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve updated changes to other postemployment benefits policy as outlined in packet and approved 5-0.

10. Review Town Requests for FY27 Community Preservation Grants

Mr. Charter outlined the amount of money available for CPC funding that cannot fund all requested town projects let alone the additional private projects requesting funding. Total funding requests are \$2.8 million and only \$1.8 available in funding. Mr. Begin noted the bell tower is under contract with Structures North and have submitted a 25% design with 100% expected late February or March with construction docs prior to Town Meeting. Mr. Charter noted in past the amount of open space that has been preserved in previous years,

Mr. Martin noted in previous years bonding for parcels that have been deducted through CPC, Ms. Nicol prioritizes preserving open space funding, clock tower restoration and playground replacements, West Acton Citizen Library improvements, and moving funding for RHSO to the operating budget and open up funding for historical projects Mr. Snyder-Grant noting supporting the community housing funding, questioned about moving funding away from traditional clock tower with an alternative display, supports playground replacements. Ms. Arsenault supports funding the clock tower structural support replacement, community housing program funding, historic district marker signs. MS. Nicol suggested to increase the funding allotment for community housing. Mr. Charter will bring the priorities from the Board to the CPC.

11. Authorize Town Manager to Sign Utility Easement at 433 Massachusetts Ave for Proposed Telecommunications Facility at 9 Charter Road

Mr. Mangiaratti noted the school needs an easement on a property that is still owned by the town for the location of a cell tower installation and the request has been reviewed by town counsel. Mr. Snyder-Grant noted it is needed for access for a cell tower but allows for underground utilities. Mr. Snyder-Grant noted the Planning Board is holding a hearing for the cell tower tomorrow, and the applicant will need a HazMat permit from the Health Division and consider approving but not signing until the permits are granted. Mr. Mangiaratti noted that this is just an access easement – not the cell tower.

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to authorize Town Manager to sign utility easement at 433 Massachusetts Ave for proposed telecommunications facility at 9 Charter Road whenever the project schedule dictates and approved 4-0-1 (Nicol)

12. Approve 2026 License Renewals as Listed in the Packet

Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Mr. Martin to approve all licenses as listed in the packet and approved 5-0-0

13. Approve Letter of Support for Municipal Empowerment Act

Mr. Snyder-Grant supports sending the letter or what the Board would request to do. **Ms. Nicol moved, seconded by Ms. Arsenault to approve letter of support for Municipal Empowerment Act and authorize Mr. Charter to sign letter and approved 5-0-0**

14. Discuss DPW Project

Mr. Charter discussed with the Board the several suggested options and the pro and cons with each after the joint meeting with the Finance Committee. Mr. Charter noted several additional alternatives brought up by the Finance Committee:

- Lay off mechanics and outsource – would create issues with transporting equipment out of town, repair time extended, inability to work on equipment at night and during weather events
- Labor cost could reach up to \$900K per year
- Extended wait time on parts replacement and return to service

- Locate office staff to remote locations – most of staff office space in current location are 1st or 2nd line Supervisors to crew and provide training and mentoring on daily basis
- Separating office staff and crew is comparative to moving school principals and vice-principals offsite resulting in breakdown of communication
- Highway fleet has too many redundant vehicles – DPW needs to respond at all times to provide public safety and access
- Need to have backups when equipment fails or out of service waiting for replacement parts

Mr. Martin and Ms. Nicol noted the recent joint meeting was a more productive conversation regarding the DPW Building.

15. Discuss Acton Leadership Group

Mr. Mangiaratti noted a well-attended meeting and went in with a deficit, the Minuteman School district enrollment has declined so decreasing by 1%, ABRSD was 3.25-3.25%, and changed to 4.25% and SB gave direction for town budget to come in at 3.25% which reduced the deficit by 1 million.

Consent Items

Mr. Snyder-Grant held consent item 18. Mr. Martin held consent item 19. **Mr. Martin moved, seconded to approve consent items 16, 17, 20-22 and approved 5-0.** Mr. Snyder Grant questioned the role of the Select Board liaison and staff role for MAPC. Mr. Martin noted he is liaison to sub-committee (MAGIC) and staff roll is key for communication purposes, suggested updates from the Town Planner, Ms. Nicol noted Ms. Sauer would notify of any future planning initiatives. **Mr. Snyder-Grant moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to approve consent item 18 and approved 5-0.** Mr. Martin and Ms. Nicol noted abstaining from consent item 19. **Ms. Arsenault moved, seconded by Mr. Snyder-Grant to approve consent item 19 and approved 3-0-2.**

Mr. Martin moved, seconded by Ms. Nicol to adjourn and approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Documents Used:

- December 15, 2025 Agenda
- Water Resources Advisory Committee Report and Presentation
- Wayfinding Signage
- Grant of Pole Relocation from Eversource
- Public Hearing Notice 471, 465-469 Great Road for Hawthorn Realty Company
- Public Hearing Notice for Amendment to Existing Traffic Rules and Orders
- Habitat for Humanity Local Initiative Petition for 416 Great Road
- Memo from Town Manager on Updated Other Post Employment Benefits Policy
- Utility Easement for 433 Massachusetts Ave
- Municipal Empowerment Draft Letter of Support

- Meeting Minutes from December 1, 2025
- Conservation Restriction for 4 Piper Lane, 6 Piper Lane, 4 Piper Lane Rear, and Right of Way over 90 School Street
- MAPC Letter
- Memo from Laura Ducharme Dated
- Letter from Digital Credit Union Dated
- Memo from Conservation Division