

Minutes
Select Board
Monday, May 18, 2026
Cotter Room
6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Paul Bunker, Chairman, Nicole Emery, Ken Coyle, Daniel Eddy, William Cormier, Michael Maresco, Town Manager

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence: Terrance “Terry” Minnehan, was a former part-time plumber for the Abington School Department. Betty Henderson was a longtime Library Trustee and also a next door neighbor of Paul Bunker while he was growing up.

Announcements:

- Mr. Cormier: Griffin Farm is still looking for somebody to mow the fields.
- Mr. Coyle: Memorial Day Services at 9 a.m. at the Veterans cemetery plots.
Tuesday night there is a stormwater meeting at the Senior Center on 5/28 to track stormwater all over town. They received a grant they are sharing with Rockland to do a watershed assessment. The data they get out of this will be invaluable. They hope the information can go back to DEP to offset some of their water rules. It's a two year grant to come up with an overall plan to stop flooding. The Council on Aging van will be available to pick up people.
- Ms. Emery: Keep on eye on the School Committee Agendas for their volunteer service award, the outstanding junior certified support staff award and excellence and special education awards will be announced soon at their next meeting.
Congratulations to Sgt. Marquardt who received a Certificate of Appreciation from FBI Director Kash Patel in recognition of his exceptional contributions to Abington, which was a huge honor.
- Mr. Bunker: There are two open seats on the Water Commission. You can go on the Town's website to file the application.
- Mr. Coyle: Our Town Manager (even though he is not old enough) is going to be giving advice in the Old Coots Giving Free Advice Booth during the Founder's Day activities, June 5, 6 & 7. There will be fireworks and a couple of new events this year. There will be a kids parade with carriages to be decorated in red, white and blue. Alex Hagerty will be the Master of Ceremonies.
- Mr. Bunker: Last Saturday was the Town Election. Everything passed, but the Town Hall budget question failed. He thanked all the poll workers for their time on Saturday. Now that we know how

FY27 is going to look, he wanted to thank the Town Manager, the Department Heads, the Finance Committee, and this Board for all the time and effort it took to get to this point. He wanted to emphasize that going forward for the next five or so years we will more than likely find ourselves in a similar predicament. One of our agenda items tonight is Goals and Objectives for 2026-2027. He would like to put together a three to five year budget plan and use this as a road map for each fiscal year going forward. We have asked the town's residents this past week for a lot, and we need to find a way to make the budgets work without asking for another override.

Items:

1. **Rotary Club Update with Adam Gunn.** May 23rd, the Abington Scouts will be leading the flag placing at Mount Vernon Cemetery, and on Monday, May 25th at 9 a.m. our Veterans organizations come together for a beautiful ceremony led by Ken and Kristy Coburn where we honor our killed in action at the Veterans Lot at the Mount Vernon Cemetery. Yaz's Table and Café is there and provides free pastry and coffee. Thank you to Cullivan Landscape Construction for the fourth year in a row of maintaining the veterans lots at no cost to the town.

He is here to announce that they have met their goal of \$80,000 in fundraising for our free veteran transportation program. He's watched residents, and businesses really come together and support this effort. This will provide transportation to veterans, and spouses of deceased veterans to medical appointments not only locally but to all of the VA centers in Brockton and Jamaica Plain. He meets with the Veterans Advisory Council on a monthly basis. They started this in 2023. He recognized the Council members who were in attendance and thanked them for their support. The van should hopefully be here next week, then will be turning it over to Blue Collar Customs who has volunteered to fully wrap our vehicle at no cost to the town. Mobility Works gave a significant discount on the price of the van once they heard about the project.

They are currently providing transportation to medical appointments with a 2014 MV-1. It has 20,000 miles on it. Mike Naujalis, one of our volunteers, is one of our drivers. We received this vehicle about two and a half years ago from the Town of Rockland. We turned the vehicle over to Abington Sunoco who diagnosed the wiring problem at no cost to the town. Abington Sunoco has vowed to service this current vehicle we have as well as the new vehicle at no cost to the Town.

Because they have not only met their \$80,000 goal, but exceeded it, Mr. Gunn is going to request the Select Board establish a Veterans Transportation Gift Fund pursuant to MGL Chapter 44 §53A at the next Select Board meeting. There are so many residents, non-profits and businesses in Abington and beyond that have helped them reach this goal, he can't name them all, but this project was brought to the Abington Rotary Club almost a year ago and within ten months of presenting it to the Select Board, they raised over \$80,000. Rotary members were invited up to the podium. Rick Shepard thanked Adam Gunn for his dedication and hard work for the veterans. The Club had not undertaken anything of this scope before, but they persevered. The support and donations they received were broader than just Abington. There were charitable foundations and some people came forward with

sizable donations. They will be able to start the Gift Account with \$3,562.62 after expenses, and there may be more donations coming in.

The Abington Rotary Club was presented with Abington's Best (copy attached). Mr. Coyle, as a member of the Abington Lions Club, congratulated the Rotary Club on the great job they did, especially in these difficult times.

2. **Discussion on Saturday's Election Results.** Mr. Coyle didn't like the seven separate questions. He didn't think the Town Hall employees would have suffered if it had been one question. Mr. Maresco – it is highly unusual for an override to pass. It is usually 80-20. He thought one of the things that helped was getting the information out there, moving around town, going to the Senior Center, talking to the residents, putting the videos together with the various department heads not just about what the department does, but what that money actually translates into. Abington CAM and Kevin Tocci provided a valuable resource, and he couldn't have done it without them. Kevin came out with 3 minute sound bites that really worked well. The Town Manager thanked the Select Board and the residents who were willing to dig into their pockets and tax themselves so that we can provide topnotch service. He sent out an email to Town Hall employees to explain it wasn't personal, but this is where you pay your taxes, building permits, excise tax bill, Conservation fees, etc. No one took him up on a free tour of Town Hall.
3. **Meeting with Kevin Tocci to discuss the services provided by Abington CAM.** Kevin Tocci, Executive Director of Abington Cable Access & Media Inc., which is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation - The organization is not a town department; it is courtesy of the folks who have Comcast and Verizon subscriptions. Without cable subscribers, there would be no funding for a state of the art studio that they have currently, the broadcast equipment they have, camera gear to capture community events, sports, or meetings like this. The money comes from the local franchise fees at about 5%. There are four channels each on Comcast and Verizon, Channel 6,8 and 9, and a high def channel 1032, and Verizon is 28, 26, 24 and high def of 2128.

They are able to produce what they do thanks not only to their board but also their staff. Their Board of Directors is headed by President Lisa Bezanson, with Bob Alloy, Peter Walters, Jessica Johnson. It starts with them, then goes himself, and Matt Lyons, who are the only full time staff, there are four part time staff members who all have different skill sets. They also have interns. They have about eleven students, and this has been a great asset. They learn how to use the different equipment and how to produce their own content, podcasts. They also have volunteers. He named the various volunteers who are involved in sports broadcasting, veterans programming, hosting movies, and Town Manager's Corner. They offer training in equipment, basics of editing, hosting and producing a show, and podcast basics. They cover as much as they can with a small staff -Town Meeting, High School Graduation, Summer Concerts, Community Band Choir, the Middle and High School performances, holiday and special events, municipal coverage.

They can do all this because they were able to buy good equipment in 2021, updated broadcast equipment in the Cotter Room and Buckley with smart boards and wireless microphones in 2022. Last year they updated their playback system. This past year they bought some film cameras. They are active on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube and have a quarterly newsletter that they put out. They have a sense of pride in what they do in capturing special moments. They have won multiple awards. If anyone is interested in volunteering or would like more information, just send an email info@abingtoncam.tv.

Ken Coyle – wanted to comment that his stepdaughter was an intern before he was on board and when he was onboard. She took what she learned here to film school. Last weekend she received her Master's at Emerson. She got a great job at the local scene which is a really big local cable company, four or five towns down from Plymouth, and wanted to thank Kevin for what they do.

Bill Cormier – wanted to recognize Lisa Bezanson and Kevin. Since he's come on, huge kudos for the advancements that he's made, and he appreciates that he took his son under his wing. Mr. Tocci – it's a team effort. He doesn't do it alone, doesn't do it without the support of his board or staff, or without the support of the town.

4. **Adoption of marijuana licensing with Liz Shea.** The Plan to Comply with Cannabis Control Commission Equity Mandates and Host Community Agreement Policy was supposed to have been adopted a year ago. She doesn't know why this didn't happen. Basically, it is just a policy to evaluate candidates. We have one license available. Everything listed in the policy is allowed to be licensed unless we pass a bylaw against it and then a vote at town meeting. Cannabis cafes are a different animal. This policy gives the Town Manager direction on how to evaluate. It is only allowed in the specified zoning overlay district. It also doubles as the medical marijuana overlay district as well, for site plan, parking, lighting, signage, security.

Town Manager – Nicole, KP Law, is making sure we are covering all facets of the law, and it prevents challenges and lawsuits if you follow the process. Everything is uniform, so all the cities and towns are doing it the same way. Mrs. Shea – after this, they still have to go to Planning for a Special Permit. Mr. Coyle asked about a communication on delivery from the Police Chief. Mr. Maresco – he will set up a meeting with Nicole, KP Law, and the Chief before moving in that direction. No consumption is allowed on site – they could lose their license, according to Mrs. Shea. There is no more mitigation. If there are more than normal public safety response calls, we can bill them back for that, but that has to be documented. Mr. Maresco reviewed the delivery process; it is very regulated.

Motion by Mr. Eddy to adopt the marijuana licensing as presented, seconded by Mr. Cormier, unanimous.

5. **Update on Lincoln Boulevard and Green Street Community Gardens, Liz Shea.** This was a grant they got two years ago about climate resiliency and municipal vulnerability preparedness, and they had to do an MVP plan, then they came up with an MVP2.0 project which in their minds was going to help smaller communities do a project. The first year they had training, how climate resiliency

affects people, especially non-English speaking people, lower income people, seniors. They came up with three projects, and at the end picked the raised bed gardens. They are going in at Green Street Park and Lincoln Boulevard. They had a fence installed, South Shore Voc. Tech. made the beds, DPW picked up the beds and stored them at the North School and then moved them to the two locations. Seoane's donated the rain barrels. We're going to water the one's at Green Street with the water barrels because there's no water up there.

She has worked with two of the best groups of volunteers. There was a student who recorded a video for MVP; they had a translator; they had pastors from the Brazilian church. They had a very diverse group that helped them make the decisions. The second round were all these enthusiastic gardeners who reached out to all their connections to make a lot of this happen. She gave a shout out to Kelly Johnson, Heidi Hernandez, Charlotte Hernandez, Charlene Sawyer, Talena Shaka, Raquel and Celia DaSilva, Christine Henningson, Robin Costa, Mike Lavery, Chad Coursey, Ryan Chadwick and Jesse Loreo.

They are opening the gardens on May 30th, and they are getting free clean soil from the DPW. All the beds are spoken for. They might have a few lower beds up at Green Street still left, but the interest and turnout have been amazing. She also thanked Kevin Cogan, Deputy Town Planner.

Mr. Cormier – asked how this was publicized; no one in the neighborhood knew about it. It was on the Green Street Facebook page, as well as the town's website, the town page, and they have had multiple Green Street neighbors that are on the committee. How was the placement picked? Mrs. Shea – the further down you go, the wetter it is. And there is a baseball field down there. Mr. Cormier – it is now a landing pad for the helicopter, that was another concern. Was the fire chief consulted prior to the placement? No. He was concerned about the helicopter stirring up things from the garden. Mrs. Shea – there is a shed all the tools would be stored in.

6. **Discuss Select Board's Goals and Objectives for 2026-2027.** Town Manager – main concern going forward is going to be the budget. He would like to do a three year look ahead, factor in the fixed costs, the variables. He doesn't see local aid increasing. Pension costs keep going up. He doesn't see an end to health care costs without some sort of intervention by federal or state. The County plans to have the pension fully budgeted and funded by 2031. That will free up some cash. There is a post employment benefit OPEB other than pension fund that we have to fund. It is in our financial plan. We have to look at revenue streams. They are looking to cap the landfill and put photovoltaics out there. We are part of an aggregate electric, so our costs are regulated by a government entity. We can hire a consultant to come in and take a look. The easiest way is to cap a landfill and roofs. He is beginning the budget process right away because it's going to be tough. We are going to have to manage with what we have.

Ms. Emery – she would like to try to keep the small town feel but build on the commercial tax base and improve our business retention. Establish some sort of outreach meeting with local business owners for their input on what to do to keep them here.

Mr. Coyle – develop a chamber of commerce or a business association to help keep the businesses we have here and encourage more to invest in Abington, maybe streamlining the process. Mr. Maresco – has been in touch with Tim Cahill, South Shore Chamber of Commerce, about starting a Chamber here. They are going to try to get six local businesses together and SSCC will come down and help grow that. Water is probably our biggest challenge right now. One of the great things about new business, is it takes the burden off the residential taxpayer, and you have businesses.

Mr. Cormier would like to see a capital improvement plan committee.

Mr. Eddy – starting the budget process right away is great. He would like to see more transparency. He would also like to see the budget process going out 3-5 years. Would like public comment period added to the meeting.

Mr. Coyle – brought up trash. Would like to see a trash advisory board, organize a community trash pickup. Town website – in need of updating and should be more user friendly.

The Board members expressed their appreciation for how well the Town Manager keeps them informed.

Ms. Emery - would like to see a citizen outreach program on how town government works, how budget works, what town meeting is versus election, capital planning.

Mr. Bunker – is trying to set up a regional Select Board/School Committee group to advocate for more local state aid on Beacon Hill . He would like to see what they can do to get more people to volunteer for boards. They have a lot of open seats on different boards and committees.

Chris Jones, 639 Randolph Street – asked about the two unoccupied schools and the soon to be unoccupied fire stations. There have been RFP'S issued on the two schools and the Town Manager has had four calls from developers who are interested. We would sell the fire station on Route 18. Mr. Jones asked when the windows from the old high school would be paid for. He will email his questions to Mr. Maresco who will look up the information.

7. **Vote for the Town Manager and Chairman of the Board of Health to sign the PHE Participating Municipality Statement of Commitment PN-5 Grant Program Collaborative.** This is funding from the state to enhance the basic services we already have. PN-5 is a local group out of Brockton. We were non-compliant. They have put the Town Manager in touch with an expert who has refined the job posting for us. We are to work cooperatively with the lead municipal agency to ensure

compliance with the scope of services of the grant. They augment, not replace, any services that are not being done. The Board has to authorize the Town Manager to sign the document, then have the BOH Chairperson, Katie VanNest, sign, then we are in compliance as far as being an active participant in the organization. We have to have our own health agent right now. Once we participate in the PN-5, then we can possibly share an agent. He is working cooperatively with the Board of Health, Katie and Carol, and they are on all his emails. He will send a copy of this document to the Board.

Motion by Mr. Coyle to have the Town Manager and Chairman of the Board of Health sign the PHE Participating Municipality Statement of Commitment PN-5 Grant Program Collaborative. Mr. Eddy – generally does not like to authorize the signing of something he hasn't seen but will support the process. Seconded by Ms. Emery, unanimous

8. Town Manager's Update:

- Finalizing the Health Agent's job description with the DPH and Tom Carbone, a retired Health Director.
- The Schools' RFP has been filed with COMBUYS, the Central Register, the Town's website and will be published in the Brockton Enterprise. The RFP will be live on May 20, 2026.
- Will be meeting with Jessenia Urrea, the interim Shared Services Coordinator for PN-5. The town needs to authorize the Town Manager to sign the contract. I was able to negotiate with DPH and PN-5 not to kick the Town out.
- DPH will also help me begin the process to share the services of the BOH with another community which potentially could be a cost saver. In the short term, I am working with the BOH to get a new Health Agent.
- Working with Claire Galkowski, South Shore Recycling Collaborative, on a grant application for \$4K.
- Continued to answer questions from citizens leading up to the Special Election on Saturday. The videos and the assistance of Kevin Tocci made the difference. Residents appreciated the in-depth knowledge of each of the departments and what would have been lost.
- Special thanks to the great work done by our Town Clerk Leanne Adams and her assistant, Barbara Comoletti, and the many volunteers.
- Working with Andrew to get the FY25 Audit started and completed with CBIZ. We finished FY24. They are behind. The month closes on the 30th, and by the 15th, we should have the previous month reconciled. The problem is there are not a lot of companies out there. We had Powers & Sullivan. They were bought out by Markham, who was bought out by CBIZ. CBIZ bought all these companies then laid off 200 people. Part of the problem is us not getting all the information to them; the other part is they are strained to capacity. He can't get a commitment on the FY25 audit. They won't even schedule it until he gets the signed contract to them. When we hire a new Treasurer, it will be in the job description that if the reconciliation isn't done on a monthly basis, that is grounds for termination.

- Working with the Treasurer's Office and Sharon to get the tax bills ready. Sharon is doing a great job as the Assistant. He is helping her with some of that.
- Finalizing the Treasurer Collector's ad for the journals.
- Continue to work with the Compost Site volunteers.
- Working with Town Counsel to get the new Trash and Recycling contract ready for All State Waste to sign. They take over on July 1, 2026. Trash barrels will stay the same. John Stone and his guys have been great about replacing barrels, taking apart the damaged ones.
- Assisting the Golf Course with a personnel issue.
- Working on an Executive Session for Town Counsel and Labor Counsel to update the Select Board.
- Working with Kristel Cameron to fill the two vacancies on the Abington Water Board with the assistance of their legal counsel, John Clifford .
- Working with Andrew, Town Accountant, regarding the borrowing that will be executed by the Select Board on June 22nd.

Motion by Ms. Emery to adjourn at 7:46 p.m., seconded by Mr. Eddy, unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hurst