

Falmouth Finance Committee
Hermann Foundation Meeting Room, Falmouth Public Library – January 28, 2026
Meeting – 4:00 pm
MINUTES

Present: *Keith Schwegel – Chair; Kathleen Beriau ; Tim Gordon Vice Chair; Lee Bordick; Ron Dyer; Susan P. Smith – Secretary; Mary Harris; Joseph Lemay; Russell Murphy; Eileen Miskell; Robert B. Dugan; Peter Hargraves*

Absent: *Addie Vaccaro*

Representing the Town: *Mike Renshaw, Town Manager; Peter Johnson-Staub, Deputy Town Manager; Laura Sitrin, Finance Director; Gregg Fraser, Harbor Master; Maura O’Keefe, Town Counsel; Susan Lumping, Human Resources Director; Matt Lanen, Water Superintendent*

1. Call to Order

Chair Keith Schwegel called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

2. Discuss/Vote: Public Safety - Marine/Environmental

MOTION by L. Bordick/R. Dyer to move \$1,606,145 for the Public Safety – Marine/Environmental.

Discussion:

Gregg Fraser – there are minor changes proposed to the budget, which the largest one for the professional services line. This increase is to help with the budget for engineering firms and projects. The time of year restrictions for dredging in embayments are between January 15th-August 30th.

Majority in favor, with Smith abstaining.

3. Discuss/Vote: General Government - Town Counsel

MOTION by K. Beriau/R. Dyer to move \$682,679 for General Government – Town Counsel.

Discussion:

K. Schwegel – would it be helpful to have another attorney on staff with separate expertise, instead of having to go to outside counsel?

Maura O’Keefe - it would be a wish list item to have a third attorney on staff. Bringing labor counsel in house would not likely be efficient. A dedicated litigation or someone with particular municipal expertise in other areas could be helpful.

All in favor.

4. Discuss/Vote: Community Services – Veterans

This item will be taken up at the next meeting.

5. Discuss/Vote: General Government - Human Resources

MOTION by S. Smith/R. Dyer to move \$550,316 for General Government – Human Resources.

Discussion:

S. Smith – the new software purchased a few years ago is not yet up and running.

Susan Lumping – the first recruiting module was implemented and there were some challenges. The financial modules should be up and running by July 1. By January 2027, the full system should be up and running. There are currently a number of positions that need to be filled.

P. Hargraves – are there any barriers to effectiveness for the Department/Town as the DEI position has not been filled for a couple of years?

S. Lumping – staff continues to work to hire people for the Town that embody the DEI valued characteristics. The goal is for everyone, regardless of their ability, age, sexual identity, gender, etc. to receive the same level of service and the same opportunities that others receive.

All in favor.

6. Discuss/Vote: General Government - Disability Commission

MOTION by S. Smith/R. Dyer to move \$250.00 for General Government – Disability Commission.

All in favor.

7. Discuss/Vote: Employee Benefits – Unemployment

MOTION by M. Harris/R. Dyer to move \$175,000 for Employee Benefits - Unemployment.

All in favor.

8. Discuss/Vote: Employee Benefits - Health Insurance

MOTION by M. Harris/R. Dyer to move \$19,017,425 for Employee Benefits – Health Insurance.

Discussion:

M. Harris – the full cost for this item will not be known for a bit. One of the issues that has come up under health insurance are weight loss drugs that are very expensive.

L. Bordick – what percentage of employees share the health insurance costs?

S. Lumping – on the Town side, 426 employees are enrolled in one of the various health insurance plans. This includes the retirees under 65 who are still on active plans. On the school side, 418 are enrolled in one of the various health insurance plans. There are 764 retirees who are enrolled in one of the Medex plans. The Town covers between 60%-75% of the plan for active employees. This depends on the plan.

All in favor.

9. Discuss/Vote: Employee Benefits - Life Insurance

MOTION by M. Harris/R. Dyer to move \$10,000 for Employee Benefits – Life Insurance.

Discussion:

M. Harris – the proposal is to move this from its own line item into the Other Employee Benefits line.

K. Schwegel – how many employees are in this program?

S. Lumping – there are currently 185 Town employees and 230 school employees.

All in favor.

10. Discuss/Vote: Employee Benefits - Other Employee Benefits

MOTION by M. Harris/R. Dyer to move \$229,000 for Employee Benefits – Other Employee Benefits.

All in favor.

11. Discuss/Vote: Reserve Fund Transfer - Water Department (Additional funds needed for repair contract on CPTP \$250,000)

Discussion:

K. Schwegel - we normally do not use the reserve fund for capital expenditures. There is nothing in the guiding legislation which limits it to only operating budget items. It does not say that it cannot be used for capital items. The law does require that, in order to qualify for using reserve funds, it has to be either unforeseen or extraordinary.

Matt Lanen – this proposal is to address urgent repairs at the Crooked Pond Treatment Plant. The nature of the repairs is time sensitive. These repairs were an unforeseen issue.

S. Smith – the backup information is dated prior to December 31st and so this could have been addressed through a Warrant Article. I am concerned regarding the precedent of using the reserve fund for this item. Many projects come in overbudgets and if using the reserve fund for them is going to be considered, it will need to be funded differently moving forward.

M. Renshaw – this was not necessarily a case of underestimating the budget for this project, but instead a sudden discovery of corrosion within the hatch area of the system.

S. Smith - we've never paid for asbestos removal when it has been discovered by accident.

M. Lanen – this is a timing issue. This cannot wait for a vote at spring Town Meeting.

MOTION by K. Schwegel/R. Dyer to move \$250,000 for the Reserve Fund Transfer - Water Department.
Majority in favor, with Smith abstaining.

12. Review & Vote Approval of Meeting Minutes

- January 14, 2026

The meeting minutes were not addressed at this time.

13. Chairman Report

K. Schwegel – we will meet next week and include some of the items that were tabled from this evening.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kristan Patenaude, Recording Secretary