

BOF

December 10th, 2025

Regular Meeting Minutes

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Minutes of Board of Finance December 10th, 2025, Regular Meeting - 12/10/25

Date and time: 12/10/25 5:30 PM to: 12/10/25 6:40 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Rec Secretary (* Ms. Stevens was not in attendance), Richard Steel, Scott McCallister, Lauren McNamara, Sandra Bullock, Kim Kalajainen, Barry Sheckley

CC: Dan Cunningham, First Selectman, Kevin Gervais, Finance Director

Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room

Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order & Pledge

Note Acting Chair Dan Cunningham called the December 10th, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 5:36 p.m. and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Cunningham did roll call; a quorum was present.

2. Election of Officers

Note Mr. Cunningham called for nominations for BOF Chair.

Decision MOTION (1)

Ms. Kalajainen nominated Dr. McCallister as BOF Chair.

Ms. Bullock seconded the nomination.

There were no further nominations.

Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0. Dr. McCallister is the BOF Chair.

Note Newly elected Chair Mr. McCallister called for nominations for Vice Chair and said he would like to entertain a motion to nominate Mr. Steel as Vice Chair.

Decision MOTION (2)

Ms. Kalajainen nominated Mr. Steel as Vice Chair.

Mr. Sheckley seconded the nomination.

There were no further nominations.

Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0. Mr. Steel is Vice Chair

Note Dr. McCallister noted that they need to add New Business, item a- the 2026 Board of Finance Meeting Calendar, to the agenda.

Decision MOTION (3)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to add the 2026 calendar to New Business.

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3. Delegations

3-1. Jamie Barr Shelburn of 31 Mcelaney Drive

Note Ms. Barr Shelburn offered some of the following remarks:

*She requested that the Board move meeting times from 5:30 PM to later to align with other town meetings and to allow working families to attend the public comment portion.

*She reminded the Board that Cannabis Grant funds (\$25,000) are legally intended for substance abuse prevention and recovery.

She expressed concern that proposed uses (EV signs, gardening, art) might risk audit issues.


3-2. Lisa McGowan of 33 Spinnaker

Note Ms. McGowan said she's also here representing the Youth and Family Services Board and argued that the \$25,000 should be used to transition a part-time wellness/prevention coordinator to a full-time role, noting this was the understanding during the budget season, which she detailed. She voiced opposition to using the funds for general civic engagement.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes

4-1. Meeting Minutes of November 12th, 2025

Note see attached minutes.

 [Minutes of Board of Finance November 12th 2025 Regular Meeting 11_12_25.pdf](#)

Decision MOTION (4)

Mr. Steel moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 12th, 2025, as submitted.

Ms. Bullock seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 4-0-2.

Ms. Kalajainen and Mr. Sheckley both abstained from the vote.

5. Reports

5-1. First Selectman

Note Mr. Cunningham shared some of the following:

* The Board of Selectmen is considering a speed camera ordinance.

The primary goal is enforcement; it will create a revenue stream.

A traffic study is required before implementation, and a vote is expected at the next meeting.

*Department heads are meeting to prepare preliminary budgets; cooperation across boards was emphasized.

*The Jingle 5K and the Light Parade are taking place this coming weekend.

*In terms of the Route 161/I-95 Project, periodic blasting continues.

Text alerts are available for residents and special care is being taken regarding a nearby daycare facility.

5-2. Finance Director

Note Mr. Gervais noted that the BOE Quarterly Report is in the Member Packet for this evening.

Note Ms. Kalajainen raised concerns regarding the lack of narrative explanation for budget variances. The Board discussed the need for a BOE representative to attend meetings regularly starting in the new year to improve communication.

Note Mr. Gervais reported some of the following:

*The FY2024 audit is expected in February.

The goal is to further reduce the audit turnaround time for FY2025 to 4.5 months.

*2027 budget insights include an 15% increase for health insurance and a 58% increase in legal fees due to a transition to a new firm and alignment with regional market rates.

Note The Board had a brief discussion about the possibility of exploring new legal options and soliciting RFPs for that purpose.

Note Mr. Gervais detailed the Pension ADC (Actuarially Determined Contribution):

*Payments have risen from \$500,000 to a projected \$1.4 million.

*The primary driver is the private duty road jobs for police (e.g., utility traffic control) which have no pension earnings cap, unlike standard overtime.

High earnings in the final years of service are driving up long-term pension liabilities.

*The town has increased the billing fee for private duty from 12% to 25% to cover these costs. New employees are now placed in a 401A (Defined Contribution) plan rather than the pension.

Note Mr. Gervais also shared the following:

*In terms of the Fund Balance, current projections show the fund balance may drop slightly below the 17% target (two months of working capital) if the full budgeted million dollars is utilized.

*For tax collection, as of Nov 30th, 2025, the collection rate is 56.81%, up 35 basis points year-over-year. The budgeted collection rate has been tightened from 98.2% to 99%.

Note Mr. Steel inquired about changes in veterans' benefits and their impact on collection rates. The Assessor's upcoming presentation to the Board of Selectmen scheduled for next week to discuss veteran exemptions was mentioned, with more information to follow.

Note Mr. Gervais provided an update on the town's cannabis funds, noting consistent monthly income around \$160,000 from the local dispensary.

Note He noted the six potential uses for the funds, which were discussed:

1. Streetscape improvements
2. Youth employment training programs
3. Services for individuals released from corrections
4. Mental health/addiction services
5. Youth service bureaus
6. Community civic engagement efforts

Note The town has \$36,730 accumulated and \$25,000 already approved for specific projects. There are also \$180,000 in opioid funds available.

Note Mr. Steel expressed caution about committing to ongoing expenses as cannabis funds may fluctuate.

Note Mr. Gervais also announced an upcoming Water Department request for a bond transfer of approximately \$170,000 for PAS mitigation, and a \$6 million bond authorization for the Colony Road Bridge project, with 80% of funding expected from federal sources.

6. New Business

6-1. 2026 BOF Meeting Schedule

Note see attachment.

 [BOF-2026-Meeting-Schedule.pdf](#)

Note The Board reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2026, which sets regular meetings for 5:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, beginning January 14th and ending December 9th.

Note There was a discussion regarding the 5:30 p.m. start time versus historical precedents or individual preferences for a later time.

Note Dr. McCallister expressed a preference for maintaining the current 5:30 p.m. time, noting it has been the standard for a long time. He stated he is not inclined to change the schedule based on a single suggestion without further evidence of a broader conflict.

Note Chair McCallister will solicit feedback and discuss challenges regarding the time outside of the formal meeting. If a change is deemed necessary, it will be brought back to the Board for a formal discussion.

Note MOTION (5)

Mr. Steel moved to approve the 2026 Regular Meeting Schedule.

Ms. Bullock seconded the motion.

Decision A discrepancy was noted between the active meeting time (5:30 p.m.) and the formal bylaws. This was identified as a housekeeping issue. Since it was not on the current agenda, it will be added to the next meeting's agenda to ensure the bylaws and actual practices are legally in sync.

Note Mr. Steel added that the schedule will intensify between March and April, often requiring multiple meetings per week. The 2025 calendar will be circulated as a reference.

Decision MOTION (5) Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

7. Old Business

7-1. Appointments to CIP Committee

Note i. Two (2) Members of Board of Finance

Note ii. One (1) Citizen Appointment

Note The Board discussed appointments for two Board of Finance (BOF) representatives and one citizen representative to the CIP Committee.

Note Mr. Gervais explained that the committee meets roughly four times a month (weekly) from January through mid-March. Meetings typically run from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00/6:00 p.m. to accommodate department heads and site visits (e.g., inspecting facilities like the aquatic center).

Note The committee acts as a budget tool to vet and shave down capital requests (such as reducing \$30 million in requests to a \$7.5 million package) before forwarding recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and eventually the BOF.

Note Mr. Sheckley volunteered, noting that he served last year and found it enjoyable and forward-thinking to see the town's long-term assets and goals.

Note Ms. McNamara volunteered to serve alongside Mr. Sheckley, with the caveat that she may have occasional scheduling conflicts.

Note Dr. McCallister emphasized that the process builds accountability, ensuring departments actually spend funds on the projects they proposed.

Decision MOTION (6)

Mr. Steel moved to appoint Mr. Sheckley and Ms. McNamara as the BOF representatives to the CIP Committee.

Ms. Bullock seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 4-0-2.

Mr. Sheckley and Ms. McNamara abstained from the vote.

Task ☐ No candidate was ready for the citizen representative seat. Dr. McCallister will work with the Board offline to identify a volunteer

8. Public Discussion

Note There was none.

9. Board Comments

Note Mr. Steel addressed several points raised during earlier public delegations:

*He advocated for keeping the 5:30 p.m. start time to support town employees who present to the Board, noting that the hybrid Zoom option and two separate public comment sections provide ample access for the public.

*He clarified that while the use of cannabis funds wasn't what was originally anticipated, the town verified the legal status and criteria. He noted it is fiscally prudent not to use non-reliable, one-time funding sources for permanent salaries.

Note Mr. Steel, Dr. McCallister and Ms. McNamara welcomed new members Ms. Bullock, Mr. Sheckley, and Ms. Kalajainen.

Note Dr. McCallister offered that senior members (himself, Mr. Steel, or Ms. McNamara are available to shadow or support the new members as they learn the Board's processes.

Note Dr. McCallister thanked the Board for electing him Chair. He noted that he's committed to maintaining the non-partisan, civil, and productive precedent set by the previous leadership.

10. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (7)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to adjourn the December 10th, 2025, Regular BOF Meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

Task Summary

New Tasks

Task ☐ No candidate was ready for the citizen representative seat. Dr. McCallister will work with the Board offline to identify a volunteer