

**Town of Needham
Select Board
Minutes for Tuesday, June 24, 2025
Select Board Chambers and
Via ZOOM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89068374046>**

6:00 p.m. Call to Order

A meeting of the Select Board was convened by Chair Heidi Frail. Those present were Marianne Cooley, Joshua Levy, Kevin Keane, and Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick. David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance and Katie King, Deputy Town Manager were also in attendance. Vice Chair Cathy Dowd joined via Zoom.

6:01 p.m. Public Comment Period

Bob Baker, 57 Gayland Road, reported on the progress of bringing disc golf to Needham. Disc golf is a low cost, accessible and ecologically friendly sport. Mr. Baker thanked Board members and the Park and Recreation Commission for their receptiveness to the idea of bringing disc golf to the Needham Town Forest. He noted that he hoped to secure funding to establish a course in 2026. He added that disc golf is not an activity that excludes or endangers other Town Forest users; signage would make it clear that all other activities take precedence.

Kate Linzmeyer, 7 Stonecrest Drive, member of Act for Needham, reported that she attended a visioning session for the Pollard project. She commented on the robust discussion from a variety of stakeholders. A common theme was the desire for the new school to be a community asset. She expressed that an auditorium and theatre space should be prioritized and noted that several other MSBA-supported middle school projects included such facilities. She added that community use of these facilities could create additional revenue to offset maintenance costs.

Miles Yountz, 14 Hillside Avenue, spoke to the Board about his experiences participating in High School theater shows every year as a rising junior at NHS. He noted that the productions he has participated in often sell out and there are inevitably people who are not able to attend due to lack of space. He believes that the Needham Public Schools community will benefit from a performance center that has the space and technology to support the thriving program.

Louisa Krauss, 66 Hunnewell Street, a rising sophomore at NHS, commented that the productions that take place in Needham are a significant part of the culture of arts in Town. The productions provide opportunities for students to learn leadership and responsibility, including in the extensive technical roles. Specifically, the outdated sound and lighting systems present various challenges for production. As a member of the pit orchestra providing music for musicals, she noted that emergency exits are often compromised due to the placement and spacing of the

orchestra. She urged the Board to take advantage of the opportunity to transform the Pollard space.

- 6:11 p.m. Public Hearing: Recycling and Transfer Station User Fees and Charges
Presenters: Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling Advisory Committee, David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Finance, Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works, Cecilia Simchak, Assistant Director of Finance, Matthew DeMarrais, Superintendent of the Recycling & Solid Waste Division

The Solid Waste Disposal & Recycling Advisory Committee and staff reviewed the recommended changes to the RTS rates and charges. The proposed changes would become effective October 1, 2025. It is anticipated that the Select Board will vote on the proposed rates at its meeting on July 22, 2025. The changes are specifically related to box springs/mattresses and truck tires. These changes reflect that the cost to the Town to dispose of these items exceed the current charge to residents. Mr. Keane asked how many boxsprings are disposed of per year, to which Mr. DeMarrais responded approximately 1,000 per year.

- 6:19 p.m. Kate Fitzpatrick Day Proclamation

In celebration of Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick's retirement after 35 years of dedication to the Town of Needham, Select Board members acknowledged the many accomplishments and qualities of Ms. Fitzpatrick during her leadership. Select Board members highlighted Ms. Fitzpatrick's contributions to the Town, local government, and the role of women in government. They emphasized the immense success of Ms. Fitzpatrick's efforts towards achieving stability and longevity for Needham, recognizing her level-headed, gracious, and optimistic attitude that set the stage for many positive changes within local government.

Matt Borrelli, former Select Board member, expressed his appreciation for Ms. Fitzpatrick during his time on the Select Board and the Finance Committee, especially her ability to bring teams together to achieve long-term common goals. Mr. Borrelli announced the establishment of a trust fund in Ms. Fitzpatrick's honor.

Michael Fee, elected Town Moderator, expressed his appreciation for Ms. Fitzpatrick and her dedication, expertise, and respect that she has had for the Town structure and institutions.

State Senator Rebecca Rausch described Ms. Fitzpatrick as an exemplary public servant; her well-earned and well-deserved reputation is a testament to active listening, finding common ground, and leading friends and colleagues through change that takes a positive attitude and optimism. Senator Rausch read a citation from the Massachusetts Senate in recognition of Ms. Fitzpatrick's 35 years of service. The Senate will also adopt a formal resolution in her honor during their upcoming session.

Representative Josh Tarsky emphasized Ms. Fitzpatrick's impact on all areas of the Town and surrounding towns as well, and thanked Ms. Fitzpatrick for her service. He likewise noted that the Massachusetts House of Representatives will adopt a formal resolution honoring her public service.

Following comments from the Board and other members of the Needham community, Vice Chair Cathy Dowd read the Kate Fitzpatrick Day Proclamation, highlighting the significant contributions made by Ms. Fitzpatrick throughout her 35 years of service to the Town of Needham.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve and sign the Kate Fitzpatrick Day Proclamation.

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

Following this motion, Ms. Fitzpatrick reflected on her 35 years in Needham since 1990, focusing on the work that has been accomplished in Town during this time. She was confident that new leadership is well-rooted in the current systems and in new ideas that are to come. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve Needham as Town Manager.

6:58 p.m.

Poet Laureate Update

Presenters: Rob MacLean, Library Director, Anne Nydam, Poet Laureate

Mr. MacLean provided an update on the Poet Laureate program, noting that the program launched in early December and has included a website, logo, and bookmarks, assisted by Library staff. Ms. Nydam spoke on her time as Poet Laureate thus far, including:

- Monthly poetry discussion group at the Needham Public Library
- Poetry program for teens at the Needham Public Library
- Poetry workshops with 2nd and 4th grade classes at Mitchell Elementary School
- Writing workshop with the poetry discussion group at Needham Public Library
- National Great Poetry Reading Day Program at Center at the Heights
- Poetry stations during Needham Open Studios

Ms. Nydam emphasized the role of poetry in connecting with others and understanding how others view the world we also experience. She also read an original poem entitled "Home":

Each of us is home

To many homes.

The place you're born

May settle in the heart -

For some, New England's maple-sweetened hills, For some, a scene of other trees on other earth. The place you went to school

May live in you-

Lessons like the slant of sun,

Arrangements of worn desks,
 Voices in whatever language
 Cradled childhood dreams.
 A home may be
 The city where you joined someone,
 The house where family grew,
 The place you came to rest.
 A song may carry you like home,
 That book that always draws you in,
 The face of one who loves you,
 Their voice, their touch:
 Where you belong.
 We carry many homes within us,
 Packed like sweaters
 Still carrying familiar scents
 And whispered memories.
 But for all the gathered homes
 Folded in our hearts,
 Layered, tattered, outgrown, loved,
 We share the same home
 Here. This home
 Comes wrapped in trees,
 Displayed on granite ledge,
 Tied with a ribbon of river.
 We share this home
 In checkout lines, familiar streets,
 The trill of wrens and shrill of hawks,
 The snow, the mud.
 We share the fireworks and fire trucks, Playground and commuter rail,
 Parking lots and parks.
 And in this shared place
 We are home to one another.
 Our faces, our voices,
 Our fears and joys, frustration and generosity - Each of us the fabric of each others'
 lives:
 And each of us is home.

7:05 p.m.

Trust Funds

Presenter: David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance

Mr. Davison discussed a pending change to the Town's trust funds with the Board.
 Mr. Davison noted the pending addition of the Kathleen "Kate" P. Fitzpatrick
 Professional Development Fund and sought the Board's acceptance of this trust.
 Mr. Davison emphasized that Ms. Fitzpatrick has been committed to professional
 development over many decades and this fund will honor her for years to come.

Board members expressed their gratitude and appreciation to Ms. Fitzpatrick.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board accept donations for the establishment of a new trust fund to be known as the Kathleen “Kate” P. Fitzpatrick Professional Development Fund and that the funds be transferred to the custody of the Treasurer Collector and maintained by the Commissioners of Trust Funds. The funds may be expended at the discretion of the Town Manager on expenses for professional development for management-level Town employees but not the Town Manager. Expenses may include but are not strictly limited to conferences, seminar registration fees and travel expenses related to said conference or seminar. Use of the funds is allowed at times when the usual funding source cannot fully cover costs. Both principal and interest may be expended, but a permanent balance of \$3,000 must be maintained.

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:09 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Grant of Location – 36 Coulton Park
Presenter: Joanne Callender, Eversource Energy

Eversource Energy requested permission to install approximately 6 feet of conduit in Coulton Park. The reason for this work is to provide service to 36 Coulton Park.

The Department of Public Works has approved this petition, based on Eversource Energy’s commitment to adhere to the Town’s regulation that all conduit installed must be 3” schedule 40 minimum; and, that when buried, that conduit must be placed at 24” below grade to the top of the conduit.

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 6 feet of conduit in Coulton Park. Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:11 p.m. Public Hearing: Eversource Grant of Location – 9 Alden Road
Presenters: Joanne Callender, Eversource Energy, Joe Prondak, Building Commissioner

Eversource Energy requested permission to install approximately 7 feet of conduit in Alden Road. The reason for this work is to move existing overhead service underground for 9 Alden Road.

The Department of Public Works has approved this petition, based on Eversource Energy’s commitment to adhere to the Town’s regulation that all conduit installed must be 3” schedule 40 minimum; and, that when buried, that conduit must be placed at 24” below grade to the top of the conduit.

Joe Prondak, Building Commissioner, noted that this work has already been completed. Given that this was an existing home and there was no building permit

issued, an inspector approved the work underground. The pole appears to be located on private property; however, it is located on public property. Mr. Prondak noted that he has implemented a new policy that when Town staff takes in a permit for any underground service, they hold off on any inspections on that work until either it is confirmed that no grant of location is required, or a grant of location has been issued by the Board.

Motion by Mr. Keane that the Board vote to approve and sign a petition from Eversource Energy to install approximately 9 feet of conduit in Alden Road. Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:16 p.m. Set Water and Sewer Rates
Presenters: David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance, Carys Lustig, Director of Public Works, Cecilia Simchak, Assistant Director of Finance

Mr. Davison reviewed the three potential water and sewer rates scenarios that were presented to the Board at their prior meeting. Each would raise the necessary revenue in order to meet the Town's budget obligations for water and sewer operations for FY2026. Board members asked specific questions about each proposed scenario, the groups impacted by these various scenarios, and a comparison of the subsidies for both sewer and water. Mr. Davison emphasized that for any given customer, the change of rates will be different.

Motion by Mr. Levy that the Board approve the water and sewer rates identified as Alternative 70 and that they be effective July 1, 2025; that the Board approve a Septage Disposal fee of \$85.00 per 1,000 gallons. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

7:51 p.m. Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda
Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to approve the Appointment Calendar and Consent Agenda with the exception of Item 1. Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call vote.

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

1.	Jacob Shapiro	Council of Economic Advisors Term Exp: 6/30/2026
2.	Rich Adduci	Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund Committee: Term Exp: 6/30/2028
3.	Pardis Springer	Human Rights Committee Term Exp: 6/30/2027

CONSENT AGENDA

1.	Approve Open Session Minutes of May 27, 2025.
2.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Free Public Library: \$94.14 from an anonymous donor

3.	Accept the following donation made to Needham Public Health: • \$30 from Claire Blum for Needham's Gift of Warmth program
4.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund: • \$100 from the Rotary Club of Needham
5.	Accept the following donation made to the Needham Tree Fund: • \$250 from the Needham High School Class of 2025
6.	Approve the 2025 Weekday and Sunday Entertainment licenses for the Rotary Club of Needham Carnival running from July 24 to July 27, 2025, pending receipt of all required paperwork and approval from the following departments: Police, Fire, Park and Recreation, and Public Works.
7.	Approve the following penalties for violations of M.G.L., Ch 138, Sec. 34 (sale of alcohol to a minor) and the Town of Needham Regulations for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (failure to use ID scanner and failure of staff to be sufficiently trained) on March 19, 2025: • PM Story Corp, dba Little Spoon: One six-day and one one-day license suspension • Fusion Cuisine, dba Gari: Two one-day license suspensions
8.	Approve the following penalty for violations of M.G.L., Ch 138, Sec. 34 (sale of alcohol to a minor) and the Town of Needham Regulations for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (failure to use ID scanner) on March 19, 2025: • Needham Lending Company, LLC dba Sheraton Needham Hotel: One one-day license suspension and one one-day license suspension held in abeyance until March 19, 2026
9.	Approve and Sign Water Sewer Abatement 1344
10.	In accordance with Section 20B of the Town Charter, and upon the recommendation of the Town Manager after consultation with the Human Resources Advisory Committee, adopt a revised classification and compensation plan (Schedule C) for FY2026

7:51 p.m. FY2024 Financial Audit
Presenters: CBIZ Advisors, LLC (Independent Auditors), David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance

Mr. Davison and Mr. McIntyre, representative of the audit firm CBIZ Advisors, LLC (formerly Marcum LLP), updated the Board as to their work and audit of the Town's general purpose financial statements for fiscal year 2024. Challenges with staff vacancies and software have contributed to a delay in completing this audit past the usual six-month timeframe. Mr. Davison noted that the Town agrees with the recommendations from CBIZ Advisors, especially with a new procedure in terms of having a more permanent correction to the reconciliation process. From a financial standpoint, there were no areas of concern regarding the Town's financial position.

Mr. McIntyre stated that there were no significant issues in the audit, however the key receivable account reconciliations were not completed until later than standard, within 6 months. Mr. McIntyre reviewed the audit, focusing on the long-term perspective financial statements and the short-term perspective as well. He also reviewed the Needham Retirement System financial balance sheet and the post-employment benefit trust fund balance sheet. There have been substantial increases driven by investment earnings. He noted that Needham has a rapid pay out schedule of paying off debt, a key metric that rating agencies use. Discussion ensued regarding the causes of the delay of the audit and potential solutions.

8:14 p.m. Town Manager

Town Manager Report

- Ms. Fitzpatrick attended the School Committee meeting last week at which they voted to approve Unit A (Main Teacher's Contract). The School Committee and Administration reported that they had lost ground against comparable salaries. Ms. Fitzpatrick noted that future challenges will be sustainability for salary growth.
- With the permission of the Board, Ms. Fitzpatrick will send a letter to the Joint Committee on the Environment in support of House Bill 1018.

8:19 p.m. Board Discussion

Open Meeting Law Complaint

Barbara McDonald filed an Open Meeting Law Complaint Form with the Select Board on June 16, 2025. In this complaint, Ms. McDonald alleged violations of the Open Meeting Law relating to the recent appointment to fill a vacancy on the Needham Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Town Counsel Chris Heep outlined the various arguments of the complaint, notably that the complainant argued that Cathy Dowd and Jim Flanagan formed a subcommittee and that as a result they were subject to the Open Meeting Law. Mr. Heep responded that Ms. Dowd and Mr. Flanagan did not intend to create a subcommittee; the Select Board did not discuss the appointment process or take a vote to create a subcommittee. He continued that he believes Ms. Dowd acted in accordance with the Select Board's appointment policy which gives the Vice Chair standing responsibility to engage in this review process independently. Mr. Heep cited two recent examples where the same process was followed. Additionally, the two finalists' names were disclosed in the Agenda Packet that was published at the same time as the agenda itself. Finally, the complainant asserted that the discussion held at the June 10, 2025 Select Board meeting should have included a broader discussion on all applicants. Mr. Heep noted that the Open Meeting Law does not require such discussion. Discussion ensued regarding the hypothetical proceedings of events if the interviews had been held in Executive Session and an appropriate response to the complaint.

**Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to authorize Town Counsel to prepare and submit a response to the Open Meeting Law complaint.
Second: Mr. Keane. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call.**

Committee Reports

Mr. Keane reported that the Stormwater By-Law Working Group continues its work. The DPW team is working on a background memo, and the Committee intends to report back in mid-July.

Ms. Cooley asked if Mr. Keane will remain on the Memorial Park Trustees Committee or if Ms. Frail will replace him. Ms. Frail noted that Mr. Keane will remain on the Committee and that the allocation of Board members on committees is on the Goals list for this summer.

Mr. Keane reported that the Branding & Town Seal Committee received an iteration from the illustrator and will conduct another round of revisions.

Ms. Frail reported that the Council of Economic Advisors met and welcomed new members. They also heard from Lee Newman about potential developments in Town and potential impacts on Needham. Ms. Frail also reported that the Large House Committee met, as well as the Off-Leash Dog Park Pilot public forum.

8:41 p.m.

Adjourn

Motion by Ms. Cooley that the Board vote to adjourn the Select Board Meeting of Tuesday, June 24, 2025.

Second: Mr. Levy. Unanimously approved 5-0 by roll call.

A list of all documents used at this Select Board meeting is available at:
<http://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=99&Type=&ADID>

The next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

A video recording of the June 24, 2025 Select Board meeting can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6-Uf03VEPU> or at <https://www.needhamchannel.org/2025/06/needham-select-board-6-24-25/>.