



Select Board Record of Meeting
March 24, 2026
Windsor Town Office

Note: This record of meetings may not be considered an official public record until such time as they are read and accepted by the Select Board Members.

Members Attending: Ray Bates, Thomas McNaughton, Allison Whynot, William Appel Jr.

Public Attending: Tom Reed, Carol Chavarie, Nancy Fish, Ed Pollard, Dustin Creamer

RSU #12: Howard Tuttle – Superintendent RSU #12, Michelle Grant – RSU #12 Business Manager

Employees Attending: Haleigh Moran – Town Manager, Moira Teekema

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m. Thomas McNaughton

RSU #12 Budget Presentation – Howard Tuttle

- RSU #12 District Budget Meeting will be held May 20, 2026 at Chelsea Elementary School, 6:30 p.m.
- RSU #12 Budget Referendum will be held June 9, 2026 at all local polling locations

RSU #12 Budget preliminary draft budget information. See attached.

- District includes Alna, Chelsea, Palermo, Somerville, Whitefield, Windsor, and Westport Island.

RSU #12 Long Range Plan Goals – pg 4

- Foster a safe learning environment
- Deliver a personalized, relevant, and rigorous curriculum
- Foster parental involvement in student learning
- Hire, retain, and develop talented educators
- Maximize the use of resources
- Encourage community involvement
- Maintain a continuous improvement process
- Currently there are no new programs being implemented.
- Sections of the roof of the Whitefield School need repair. This has been delayed in the past.
- There are a lot of retirements up and coming. Several new teachers will be on-boarded.
- State stopped the program to pay for WiFi hardware and connectivity development. William Appel Jr. questioned if this hardware is being leased or is owned by the schools. Howard Tuttle confirmed that this equipment is owned.
- Insured Value Factor has increased by 10% and will be on top of tuition increase. FY2026 Insured Value Factor was 6% on top of tuition increases.

- \$500,000.00 is being paid to private schools to maintain their facilities.
- William Appel Jr. asked about any changes in the 20 different schools within the district.
- At this time there are no net new positions.
- RSU #12 has continued to exceed the state for grade level education expectations. See page 6.

Ongoing RSU #12 Efficiencies – pg 7.

- These include partnerships, grants and creativity programs
 - Education Service Center Collaboration has continued with Wiscasset and Bath. Boothbay is looking to join in to help save on costs for Special Education programs and includes administrative subsidies.
 - RSU #12 is saving on Behavior, Autism, and Life Skill Programming. Chelsea is able to host these programs at a significant savings as students do not have to be sent outside the school district.
- Allison Whynot brought up that Palermo needs a new school built. Howard Tuttle stated that Palermo is #11 on the list for replacement according to the state.
- Liberty is also looking into joining RSU #12 from RSU #3. This would provide more subsidy to RSU #12 based on number of students.
- Performance Contract Energy Savings includes the Solar Agreement and Electric Buses on page 7 as well.
 - The Solar Agreement pays for the Electric Bus energy costs and a fuel savings for diesel of \$20,000.00 annually. Ed Pollard did state that RSU #12 was able to lock in an older rate for electricity to defer increased costs for energy needs.
 - Electric buses are able to run complete route with one charge. This can be up to 100 miles round trip. There had been a heating issue with one of the buses, which has been resolved.

Improvements over Last Five Years – pg 8.

- Chelsea and Whitefield have received federal grants for after-school programming with the 21st Century Community Learning Center. Windsor did not qualify for this grant.
- Buses have received ventilation and technology upgrades.
 - Tom McNaughton wondered if new buses are included in these costs.
 - Howard Tuttle explained that buses are retired in their 10th year of service and two new buses are added. There is no longer a mandate for electric buses, reducing costs significantly. At this time all new buses will be diesel.
- Special education vans have been purchased.
 - Tom McNaughton asked if parents are contributing to the this type of transport. Howard Tuttle explained that these vans are for wheelchair access, other special and behavioral needs and they do try to place multiple students on these transports to mitigate costs.
- RSU #12 has recently received three new bus drivers through the Bus Driver course offered through Adult Education grants. At this time there is one driver retiring, and one driver position available for each Windsor and Chelsea.
- EASE grant which was established in response to school shooting legislature provides for an additional social worker at each school. At this time it will be funded through June 2026. Grant details are being evaluated on a monthly basis to provide funds to cover this social worker. Funds are not being guaranteed.

Student count FY2026 and FY2027 have been stable. If Liberty gets to join RSU #12 then it will increase by 80 students. Student number determines the subsidy the state provides. Over previous years the student count for Maine has decreased by an average of 3.5%.

- Nancy Fish asked if the student count includes home schooling, private schools not supported by the state and Charter institutions.

- William Appel Jr. also inquired into the number of students in Charters.
- Ray Bates requested information also about whether these students are picked up in a centralized location or transported by the district's buses.
- Howard Tuttle responded that there are about 15-20 students going to Charter Schools. Maine Arts Academy has students picked up in Windsor and surrounding towns. The schools have their own buses. Erskine Academy, Maine Arts Academy, among others have their own transportation.
- Coney High School had stopped sending buses to Windsor in 2012 and is now looking into providing transportation to and from Windsor to increase their student count.

RSU #12 Valuation – pg 12 &13

- State subsidies have been dropping district wide in recent years.
- The three year rolling average for the district for increased valuation has increased 15% FY2027.
- Three year rolling average for the state is up 14%.
- Property Valuation for Windsor three year rolling average has increased \$50,000,000.00 FY2027.
- The district fund balance is being used to reduce costs to residents. Schools received COVID funds and before these funds were applied to new programs, the districts put aside money in the Fund balance to ensure some reduction in increased costs.

Important Facts about the FY2027 Budget – pg 14 &15

- Overall controllable costs have increased only 2.1% from FY2026 to FY2027.
- Uncontrollable costs have greatly increased.
 - Tuition has increased an additional 6%, whereas in the past it only increased 2%.
 - Additionally the costs for Special Education Programs and the Insured Value Factor has increased.
 - Health Insurance has also increased significantly. MaineCare has changed their eligibility resulting in an additional 34 employees needing health insurance.
 - RSU #12 has budgeted for an increase of 15% to make sure that costs will be covered. The School Board is hoping that the percentage will only be 10% but they cannot guarantee numbers until the insurance companies provide this information in April.
- The Department of Education in Maine uses a three year rolling average to determine valuation. Maine revenue is based on home sales. This changes annually based on property values.
- Subsidy Depression is another large uncontrolled factor. Rising property values decrease the amount of subsidy the state provides to schools. This shifts more cost to local taxpayers. There is a possible solution being proposed in legislature however there is nothing forthcoming at this time.
- **IDEA** – Special Education. Federal law states that \$1,000,000.00 is to be applied to these programs. Special Education costs have increased 19% across the state and RSU #12.
- Nancy Fish questioned the costs of tuition and these additional programs. Since there is an additional increase to Special Education are the taxpayers calculating an Increased Insured Value on top of the tuition increase and normal Insured Value Increase.
 - Howard Tuttle confirmed that Special Education Programs only added to the normal tuition and 10% Insured Value Factor. Special Education does not have its own 10% Insured Value Factor to add to these costs.

Total Proposed Budget – pg 18

- FY2026 was \$28,640,726.82. The proposed FY2027 is \$30,186,402.81. This is an increase of 5.3%.
- State subsidy has increased from \$11,434,503.64 FY2026 to \$12,138,138.17 FY2027. This is for district RSU #12 overall.
- Total Local Cost has increased from \$16,036,862.18 FY2026 to \$16,887,607.81 FY2027. This constitutes at 5.2% increase for residents. There is a breakdown on page 23.
- Page 19 shows a complete breakdown for each department budget.

- Facilities and Maintenance has the largest increase from FY2026 to FY2027. There is a 9% increase due to roof repairs and replacements at Whitefield and Palermo as well as maintenance that had been postponed in the past.

Potential Growth: Liberty Joining RSU #12.

- Liberty wants to be removed from RSU #3. Currently there are 80 students attending Mount View due to the fire at Liberty School. Palermo does have room at their facility due to the student number decrease from FY2026 to FY2027. Currently Palermo offers one teacher per grade and will remain if Liberty joins. There will be no additional costs for teachers or administration.
- There will need to be an additional bus due to increased student transportation needed.
- Special Education will be difficult to estimate until students are enrolled.
- Liberty’s tax revenue would offset any additional costs.
- RSU #3 currently bases their tuition costs on property values not on student count. This increased the cost of tuition for residents of Liberty but will decrease significantly due to RSU #12 student count calculation.
- Page 26 shows a simulation of costs and revenue if Liberty is added to RSU #12.
- Concerns have been brought forth as to if the students would transfer to Palermo. Mount View is a brand new elementary school, whereas Palermo is an older facility which will have repairs completed FY2027.
- Palermo school is currently #11 on the list for a new school, and an increase in students from Liberty could possibly push that facility to have a greater chance of replacement sooner.

LD 2226: Proposed important school funding legislation.

- This would propose a new formula to create fairness and redistribution of cost to all school districts. Instead of Southern Maine and Northern Maine having significantly different subsidies the legislation would equal out these numbers for all of Maine easing the costs for rural locations.
- Currently there is a bill that is being proposed that would increase the Debt Ceiling for Projects. This Debt Ceiling has not been increased since 2011. The proposed increase would add an additional \$150,000,000.00 to the budget. This is being rumored at this time with no specific legislation proposed.

Howard Tuttle also announced that Monique Cummings, one of Windsor’s School Board Representatives has been appointed Chair of the School Board.

Departments

Public Works – presented by Allison Whynot

- Truck #5 – Sander Control Button is not functioning. This is an older model and so replacement button cannot be purchased. A new Sander Control unit will be digital and cost around \$3,000.00. Tim Coston is looking into obtaining parts from old truck models similar to Truck #5 to avoid this additional cost.
- This button controls whether or not the sander is running. This pauses its function so that the truck can be navigated around corners while sanding to decrease over-sanding in these areas.

Ray Bates discussed the March 31st Special Select Board Meeting to discuss the Warrant Articles that will be placed on the Town Ballot.

- Tom Reed asked if there could be a warrant added for his proposed Municipal Building. He wants to see if there is any interest from the Town. At this time there is also no emergency shelter available in town.

Originally when the Town owned the school a shelter was in the construction plans. Once Windsor Elementary was placed in RSU #12 to reduce costs to residents, the shelter was removed from further construction.

- This new building could include a resident emergency shelter.
- William Appel Jr. asked if this was included in the Comprehensive Plan. Nancy Fish stated that this Municipal Building is outside of the Comprehensive Plan which will be voted on in November at the Town Meeting. However, it will be mentioned in the discussion for the Comprehensive Plan which is a 10 year scenario of town development.

Ray Bates made a motion to approve amended Meeting Minutes for March 10, 2026, seconded by William Appel Jr., approved 4-0-0.

Ray Bates made a motion to accept payment warrants #40 and #41, seconded by Allison Whynot, approved 4-0-0.

Town Manager/Select Board Items

- Haleigh Moran will be reviewing the Employee Policy.
- She will also be discussing the Cannabis Ordinance with Kelly.
- Select Board reviewed the conditions of the Cannabis Ordinance previously discussed in the March 10, 2026 Select Board meeting.

- William Appel Jr. asked if Joyce Perry has had any further discussion of access to Rest Haven Cemetery for burial equipment.
- He suggested there might be options for entry on Maxcy's Mills Road and on rt. 32. If the steel posts could be moved can equipment be brought in? Tom Reed stated that the concrete pillars along the lanes have been placed as cars would run over burial plots. That is why the steel posts are placed so narrow and the shoulder had been widened for visitors.
- Timing is problematic to resolve the issue of entry. Emergency action might be required for May burials. No resolution with Devin Noonan is forthcoming.
- Tom McNaughton suggested Haleigh Moran to contact the grave digger to inquire about his equipment and the option of using another entrance.

General Fund Revenue discussion. Haleigh Moran proposed reductions and increases in certain areas of revenue lines.

- Solid Waste Fees – decrease from \$115,000.00 to \$113,000.00.
- Revenue Sharing – decrease from \$375,000.00 to \$300,000.00 based on current revenue balances.
- Tree Growth & Veterans Reimbursement – this will increase from \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00.
- Misc. Town Revenue – increase from \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00. This includes any additional funds and is based on previous years numbers.

Discussion was also had about **Health Insurance for Administration and Public Works.**

- Public Works currently is budgeted for 3 full-time employees. At this time one employee uses insurance as a supplement to other insurance. A discussion in executive session will include the possibility of changing this budget line.

Since there are changes being made the budget, previously approved by the Select Board and Budget Committee will be reopened. Changes can be made until the vote at the Town Meeting by the Select Board only. The budget will be presented again to the Budget Committee and voted on again. This will be presented at the Town Meeting. If residents change any items on the budget at the Town Meeting the budget will be reopened at that time and reported accordingly.

MMA/KVCOG have not confirmed any numbers for their budget lines. Haleigh Moran will contact them once more to inquire.

A new Town Meeting Moderator will be proposed. Carol Chavarie will be contacting Jeff Frankel who has performed this service in the past.

- Town vote will be June 9, 2026.
- Town Meeting will be June 10, 2026.

County Budget Updates – Ray Bates

- First Public Meeting will be held March 25, 2026 in Waterville.
- Second Public Meeting will be held April 1, 2026 in Augusta.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Tom McNaughton adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- **Tuesday, March 31, 2026: Special Select Board Meeting – Executive Session at 6:00 p.m. to be followed by public meeting at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Monday, April 6, 2026: Planning Board Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**
- **Tuesday, April 7, 2026: Select Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.**
- **Thursday, April 9, 2026: Windsor Educational Reed Fund at 5:00 p.m.**
- **Thursday, April 16, 2026: Comprehensive Work Group at 6:00 p.m.**
- **Tuesday, April 21, 2026: Select Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Moira Teekema
Selectboard Secretary