Town of Dunstable
Select Board Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2026

In attendance: Select Board Chair Ron Mikol, Select Board Vice Chair Leah Basbanes, Select Board Member David Tully, III, Town Administrator Jason Silva, Executive Assistant Sue Fayne, and Fire Chief William Farrell.

Call to Order
The Dunstable Select Board meeting was called to order by the Chair, who reviewed the agenda for the evening, including approval of prior meeting minutes, a one-day liquor license request, the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, permit fee revisions, Safe Harbor status discussion, forestry truck acquisition, FY2028 budget matters, and other business.

Public Comment
No public comments were offered.

Approval of Meeting Minutes July 28, 2026
The Board reviewed the meeting minutes from Julu 28, 2026 and with no discussion or amendments proposed, on a **motion** by Leah Basbanes and **seconded** by David Tully, III, it was **voted to approve** the meeting minutes from July 28, 2026. **The vote was unanimous.**

One Day Liquor License for Wedding at Camp Massapoag*
The Board considered a request from Christina Beyer for a one-day liquor license for the sale of wine and malt beverages at a wedding to be held at Camp Massapoag on August 22, 2026. Staff noted that several required items, including payment of the fee, an updated TIPS certification, and confirmation of the event end time, had not yet been received.

After discussion, the Board approved the request for the event from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., contingent upon receipt of all required application materials, payment of fees, proof that alcohol would be purchased from an authorized source, proof of insurance, compliance with storage and disposal requirements under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 138, and review and approval by the Police and Fire Chiefs, including any conditions they may impose.

On a **motion** by Leah Basbanes and **seconded** by David Tully, III, it was **voted to** approve the request from Christina Beyer, for a one-day liquor license for the Sale of Wine and/or Malt Beverages for a wedding at Camp Massapoag on Saturday, August 22, 2026 from 2 PM to 8 PM, subject to the following conditions:

- Delivery of and receipt of completed application and required forms and documents.
- Delivery of and receipt by the Licensing Authority of the required fee.
- Delivery of and receipt by the Licensing Authority of Proof that the alcohol will be purchased from an authorized source.
- Delivery of and receipt by the Licensing Authority of Proof of insurance.
- Proof that the applicant can receive proper delivery; provide proper storage and disposal of all alcoholic beverages purchased all in accordance with the requirements of G. L. c. 138.

The Board's approval is contingent upon review and approval by the Police Chief and Fire Chief and compliance with any additional conditions they may impose. **The vote was unanimous.**

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*

Fire Chief William Farrell presented the updated Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, noting that the previous plan had last been updated in 2000. The revised plan was developed in coordination with MEMA using the state's modern template and includes updated emergency response procedures, contact information, shelter locations, distribution points for emergency supplies, and designation of the Police Station as the primary Emergency Operations Center.

Chief Farrell explained that the new format is more streamlined than previous versions while maintaining all required elements. Discussion included plans for future training exercises, tabletop exercises, and annual emergency preparedness drills. The Board also discussed lessons learned from the recent Sky Meadow emergency response and the need for improved emergency notification capabilities, including implementation of a reverse-911 system.

Board members thanked Chief Farrell and all participants for their work on the extensive update process.

On a **motion** by Leah Basbanes and **seconded** by David Tully, III, it was **voted** to approve the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, as presented. **The vote was unanimous.**

Building, Gas & Plumbing Permit Fee Increases*

Sue Fayne presented proposed revisions to building, plumbing, and gas permit fees. She explained that the fees have generally remained unchanged since 2020, with building fees receiving only limited adjustments in FY2025. The proposal was developed after reviewing permit activity trends, consulting department inspectors, and comparing fees with neighboring communities including Groton, Tyngsborough, Pepperell, and Westford.

The proposed changes focus primarily on permit categories that generate the greatest volume, including new residential construction, additions, alterations, roofing, and solar projects. The revised structure simplifies certain fee calculations and is projected to increase annual permit revenue by approximately $8,800 and plumbing and gas permit revenue by approximately $1,700.

Board members discussed reinspection fees and the importance of recovering costs associated with failed inspections or missed appointments. Electrical permit fees were not included in the proposal and will be reviewed separately following additional discussions with the Electrical Inspector.

On a **motion** by Leah Basbanes and **seconded** by David Tully, III, it was **voted to approve** the creation of a Council on Aging Facebook page consistent with the rules and regulations of the Town's Social Media Policy. **The vote was unanimous.**

Safe Harbor Status Recommendation*

The Board discussed a request from the Affordable Housing Committee to investigate applying for Safe Harbor status under Chapter 40B. The Town Administrator reported that preliminary conversations with housing officials suggested that timing requirements related to project approvals may affect the Town's eligibility.

Board members agreed that additional research is needed to fully understand the application process, eligibility criteria, benefits, and potential drawbacks. Concerns were also raised regarding how Safe Harbor status could affect future housing projects that currently have community support.
No action was taken, and the Town Administrator will continue gathering information and report back to the Board

Approved September 8, 2026

Forestry Truck Purchase - Contract*

The Board took Item 8 out of order to accommodate Fire Chief Farrell.

Chief Farrell reviewed the status of the department's FEMA grant-funded forestry truck purchase. He explained that the previously approved vendor, Allegiance Fire Apparatus, was ultimately unable to provide a vehicle meeting FEMA and NFPA requirements under the proposed build process. Before construction began, the issue was identified, allowing the department to explore alternative vendors.

After soliciting additional proposals, the department selected Rebel Brush Trucks, a company specializing in brush trucks. The proposed vehicle meets the department's specifications, remains within the grant budget, and offers a shorter expected build timeframe, with delivery anticipated by March 1. The vehicle will be equipped with a diesel engine and a 400-gallon water tank, significantly increasing capacity over the current truck.

The Board discussed the procurement process and the cooperative purchasing agreement through which the purchase would be made.

On a **motion** by Leah Basbanes and **seconded** by David Tully, III, it was **voted** to void the signed quote with Allegiance Fire and Rescue for a new Forestry Truck for the Fire Department and approve entering a contract with Rebel Strike for the purchase of a new Forestry Truck for the Fire Department in the amount of $284,600 and authorize the Chair to sign the contract on behalf of the Board. The vote was unanimous.

FY28 Budget Update

The Town Administrator provided an update on the recently formed budget working group consisting of representatives from Dunstable, Groton, and the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District. The group has begun reviewing projected FY2028 budget challenges.

Current projections indicate budget deficits in both communities driven primarily by the school assessment required to maintain level services. Updated projections suggest that Dunstable's municipal budget position is stronger than previously forecast, but a significant overall deficit remains, largely attributable to school funding needs.

Discussion centered on long-term financial forecasting, anticipated three-year projections, and efforts to identify strategies for addressing future budget challenges. The Board also discussed the ongoing statewide concerns regarding the Chapter 70 school funding formula. Members noted recent state action to establish a working group to review

the formula but acknowledged that meaningful reforms are unlikely to affect FY2028 planning.
The Board expects additional information following the next budget working group meeting scheduled for late August and anticipates future joint discussions involving municipal and school officials.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair
The Board briefly discussed its upcoming meeting schedule and confirmed that regular Select Board meetings will continue on Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. No additional topics were raised under matters not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

On a motion by Vice Chair Basbanes and seconded by Member Tully, it was voted to adjourn at 6:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Fayne
Executive Assistant

Approved September 8, 2026