

CHARLESTOWN BUDGET COMMISSION
Open Meeting/Regular Meeting
Minutes

JANUARY 29, 2026

1:00 p.m. Council Chambers

TOWN HALL

4540 South County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kenefick called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. In attendance were Greg Plunkett, Mike Marcelynas, Joseph Dolock, Council Liaison Stephen Stokes, Town Treasurer Patrick Gormley, Town Administrator Jeffrey Allen and Administrative Assistant Susan Shea.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Plunkett and seconded by Mr. Dolock to approve the January 27, 2026 minutes as presented. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

CHARLESTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT - 510

Present was Chief Michael Paliotta and Lt. Phil Gingerella.

The CPD annual report was previously emailed to the commission members.

The Chief reviewed his proposed budget, noting areas of increase and decrease. He requested funding for a canine program, stating that it would be a valuable tool for the department and the town. Chief Paliotta explained that the program would eliminate the need to request and pay for assistance from other departments that provide an officer and canine. The initial startup cost is estimated at \$20,000. He noted that it is highly likely the department could obtain the dog at no cost, and that the Department of Adult Corrections offers a training program. The canine would be used for search and rescue operations. Ongoing costs for the canine program are estimated at approximately \$4,000 per year.

There is a request in the budget for three new Dodge Durango SUV's.

510-6165

HVAC is 20 years old and is difficult to find replacement parts. The computer system in the HVAC was replaced 15 years ago.

Animal Control - 540

Chief Paliotta introduced our new Animal Control Officer Kim Martell. The budget is relatively level funded.

The increase in 540-6040 Maintenance & Repairs stems from preventative maintenance contracts due to the installation of a propane generator. For the 2027 budget, ACO Martell said she would like to start to replace some of the old guillotine doors, many of which are inoperable.

06 – COASTAL PONDS/HARBORMASTER BUDGET

Harbormaster Paul Casey was present. Mr. Casey stated that last year a new boat was purchased. They have 2 boats: one for Nini Pond (2025) and the other for Quonnie (2014).

520 – BUILDING/ZONING OFFICIAL

Building Official Joe Warner was present.

Mr. Warner explained that the revenue line for the current fiscal year reflects a significant increase in building permit revenue. This increase is attributable to the purchase and construction of several multi-million-dollar homes in town. He noted that this type of activity occurs every few years and should not be considered a normal or recurring revenue source.

430 – BOARD OF CANVASSERS AND 470 – TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk Amy Weinreich was present. Ms. Weinreich.

Board of Elections

The Town Clerk explained that the 456.95% increase from last year is due to elections being held this year, including a Primary in September and a General Election in November. In addition, a Rhode Island state statute requires municipalities to offer early voting for 20 days prior to statewide elections. There has been increased voter turnout, with a greater preference for early voting compared to mail ballots. These costs cannot be reduced, as they are mandated by state statute.

Town Clerk

The only noticeable change is in contractual salaries. The value of tax stamps has increased because of state law, which is reflected in the revenue section of the budget and will be discussed later in the budget process.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

The Commission will meet on the following dates:

February 6, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the following:

Park & Recreation (810, 815, 820, 830 and 850)

Tax Assessor (450)

Tax Collector (460)

Chariho (780)

Employee Benefits (920)

Professional Services (940)

Town Insurance (950)

Council Contingency (960)

EMA (530)

February 13, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the following:

Senior Center (800)

IT (445)

GIS (455)

Town Planner (480)

WWM (660)

Capital Improvements (990)

Transfers Out (995)

At 10:55 a.m. Mr. Plunkett moved to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Marcelynas seconding.
Motion carries.

Date Approved: February 6, 2026

Susan R. Shea, CMC
Administrative Assistant