

CHARLESTOWN BUDGET COMMISSION
Open Meeting/Regular Meeting
Minutes

FEBRUARY 6, 2026

9:00 a.m. Council Chambers

TOWN HALL

4540 South County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kenefick called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. In attendance were Greg Plunkett, Mike Marcelynas, Joseph Dolock, Town Treasurer Patrick Gormley, Town Administrator Jeffrey Allen and Administrative Assistant Susan Shea. Absent was Council Liaison Stephen Stokes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Mr. Marcelynas and seconded by Mr. Plunkett to approve the January 29, 2026 minutes as amended. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

TAX ASSESSOR - 450

Present was Tax Assessor Kenneth Swain.

Mr. Swain reported there is a 6% increase in his budget: mostly contractual agreements. This year there is a statistical revaluation. Median increase is 21%. Because of the budget and the new tax base which has grown just under 1 billion dollars, the proposed tax rate is estimated at \$5.07 which is a decrease from the current rate of \$5.93.

CEMA - 530

CEMA Director Scott Kettelle was present.

Mr. Kettelle was tasked by Town Administrator Allen to review the department and to make changes where necessary to make it more efficient and fiscally sound.

Recreation Administration – 810

Park & Recreation Director Vicky Hilton and Assistant Parks & Recreation Director David Shoemaker were present.

Ms. Hilton gave an overview of the department over the past year.

In Rhode Island, a significant shift in how parking is taxed took effect recently as part of the **State Fiscal Year 2026 budget** (House Resolution 5076 Substitute A). This legislation has direct implications for towns like Charlestown that manage paid parking for beaches. Effective **October 1, 2025**, a **7% sales tax** is applied to all "short-term parking services." This includes any parking space where the duration of occupancy is **less than 30 days**.

The Parks and Recreation Commission will review options for incorporating the new 7% state sales tax into daily beach pass fees. As a result, adjustments to daily parking rates may be necessary to ensure compliance with state regulations.

The commission discussed the current rates and concluded that further discussion should take place on the day rates as well as seasonal and cottage passes when reviewing revenues in the budget.

Tax Collector – 460

Tax Collector JoAnne Santo was present. Ms. Santos gave a review of the activity in the tax department.

Chariho – 780

Funds for the contractual obligation for Charlestown students is based on the number of students who live in Charlestown and attend the Chariho school system (\$14,758,899)

Employee Benefits – 920

Mr. Gormley noted a slight decrease in employee benefits, attributable to the retirement of two long-time employees in 2025.

Professional Services – 940

Treasurer Gormley noted that our auditors are closing their audit section of their business, so the Town will be looking for new auditors.

Town Insurance – 950

Premiums for property, liability, and Worker's Compensation and Police Injured on Duty coverage. This also includes flood insurance for the two beach pavilions. Liability insurance maintained at \$5 million for the budget year.

Council Contingency - 960

Funds are set aside for emergencies and items not budgeted. Money can only be expended with Town Council approval.

Mr. Gormley confirmed that the next budget commission meeting scheduled for Friday, February 13th will be reviewing the following:

Senior Center – 800

IT – 445

GIS – 455

Town Planner – 480

WWM – 660

Capital Improvements – 990

Transfers Out – 955

Central Services – 490

Debt Service – 900

The BC set a future meeting date of Thursday, February 19th from 9:00 a.m. to Noon and will be reviewing the Revenue section of the budget.

At 11:20 a.m. Mr. Plunkett moved to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Marcelynas seconding. Motion carries.

Date Approved: March 9, 2026

Susan R. Shea, CMC
Administrative Assistant