

**MINUTES OF THE
Town Council**

**Regular Meeting of
September 14, 2026**

The Town Council held a meeting on Monday, September 14, 2026, at the Media Center at Salem High School Salem, NH.

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Bryant, Councilor Jeffrey Hatch, Councilor Cathy Stacey, Councilor Paul Pelletier, Councilor Lisa Withrow, Councilor D.J. Bettencourt, Councilor Joe Sweeney, Councilor Bonnie Wright, Councilor Keith Stramaglia, and Joe Devine (Town Manager).

ABSENT:

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Bryant began by calling the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Bryant led the Town Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Meeting Minutes

MOTION: by Councilor Withrow

Move to approve the Town Council Public Session Meeting Minutes from August 3, 2026.

SECOND: by Councilor Stacey

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: by Councilor Withrow

Move to approve the Town Council Public Session Meeting Minutes from August 17, 2026.

SECOND: by Councilor Stacey

VOTE: 7-0-0

The motion passed unanimously.

3. Chairman Comments:

None.

4. Approve Consent Agenda

MOTION: by Councilor Sweeney

Move to approve the September 14, 2026 Consent Agenda; and further to acknowledge acceptance of the following donations with gratitude:

Community Services Department:

- *Friendship & Garden Club - \$2500 - Plantings at Hedgehog Park*

- *Friends of Salem Recreation \$400 - Plantings at Hedgehog Park*
- *Friends of Chris Tardif - \$50 to Senior Services Division*

Police Department:

- *CLMN Enterprises - \$500 - National Night Out*
- *Lowell Five- \$250 - National Night Out*
- *Route 97 Automotive - \$500 - National Night Out*
- *Salem Lions Club - \$500 - National Night Out*
- *Stand Up Salem - \$2,726.05 - Community Services Unit*

Municipal Services Department:

- *Salem Area Women's Club - \$500 Value - Free Library Shed at Town Hall*

SECOND: by Councilor Pelletier

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Additions and/or Requests by Public or Council by Vote

None.

6. Employee of the Month Recognition (August and September)

Manager Devine stated that August Employee of the Month was Police Officer Mike Cummings.

Joel Dolan, Police Chief, stated that Officer Cummings received six nominations which spoke to his performance. Officer Cummings is assigned to the Special Services Division. Over his twelve years in the Police Department, he had earned a reputation as someone others could count on. Officer Cummings was also the Field Training Officer for new employees and was the person they went to for advice. He did all of this with a positive attitude and a smile.

The Council congratulated Officer Cummings on his selection as the August Employee of the Month.

Manager Devine stated that the September Employee of the Month was Bridget Gard, an Administrative Secretary in the Planning Division of the Community Development Department.

Jacob LaFontaine, Planning Director, stated that Ms. Gard was the point of contact for developers and residents coming to the Planning Division. She approached the job with professionalism and a helpful attitude. It made a positive impact with the public and many of them provided feedback on the good job that she was doing. He presented an example of the feedback that they received.

The Council congratulated Ms. Gard on her selection as the September Employee of the Month.

7. Municipal Building Advisory Committee (MBAC) and TGAS – Review Conceptual Design for South Fire Station

Manager Devine stated that this was an update from MBAC and TGAS on the conceptual design for the South Fire Station.

1
2 James Pacheco, MBAC Chair, stated that it was an exciting second project as they were finishing
3 up the first project. It had a building condition score of 36 which was one of the lowest scores
4 among all Town buildings. He provided a quick history of the South Fire Station project and the
5 issues that led to this proposal. TGAS had been working on a schematic for the new building.
6

7 Ted Galante, TGAS, spoke about how the Police Station had turned out and how he was proud of
8 the way that it turned out. The site plan for the South Fire Station was being modified a lot
9 although the building was pretty much where the current building was. There was an apparatus
10 bay and a living quarters section with a turnaround/drive-through section. A slide showing the
11 building layout was presented with red showing the hot zone area including a decontamination
12 room. There were some transition areas with HVAC set up for the decontamination process. The
13 green area included a kitchen and sleeping quarters. The apparatus bay had a mezzanine for
14 additional storage space and confined space training. An image of what the building would look
15 like was shown next. Some interior conceptual pictures were presented of the rooms and the
16 apparatus bay. They were working on figuring out what fixtures would be required. The outside
17 conceptual was presented in the next slides. They were delivering a set of design documents for
18 the middle of November.
19

20 Marc Lehoullier, Trident Group, stated that about a year ago, the Town Council had chosen the
21 plan to demolish and replace the current South Fire Station. They had been working through
22 some conceptual designs before settling on the current one. The cost was expected to remain in
23 the \$10 to \$11 million range. The current estimate was just over \$10 million. Some changes were
24 made to the plan in order to keep it in the proposed range. They would go through a full review
25 and present a total figure for the Warrant Article by the beginning of December.
26

27 Mr. Pacheco stated that they were looking to have a South Fire Station Finance Working Group
28 similar to what was done with the Police Station. The membership was proposed to include the
29 Finance Director, two Town Council members, two Budget Committee members, and one
30 Finance Committee member.
31

32 Chairman Bryant asked if any Councilors wanted to volunteer to be on the committee.
33

34 Councilor Stramaglia and Councilor Withrow volunteered to serve on the committee.
35

36 Chairman Bryant asked if the other Fire Stations had decontamination rooms.
37

38 Fire Chief Craig Lemire stated that the North Fire Station had some of that although it was not
39 perfect.
40

41 Councilor Withrow asked if it was planned for expansion or if there was a need for expansion.
42

43 Chief Lemire stated that he believed the new fire station would be suitable for the district for
44 decades. He did not believe that they would change the number of staff present at that station for
45 the foreseeable future.
46

1 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

2 *Move that Town Council appoints Councilor Stramaglia and Councilor Withrow of the Town*
3 *Council to the South Fire Station Finance Working Group, requests the Budget Committee*
4 *appoint two members to the South Fire Station Finance Working Group, and further request*
5 *the Finance Committee appoint one member to the South Fire Station Finance Working*
6 *Group.*

7 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stacey

8 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

9 **The motion passed unanimously.**

10
11 **8. First Read**

12 **a. Resolution No. 2026-14 - Community Development Department – Consider**
13 **Amendment to Commercial Tax Credit Program Criteria**

14 Manager Devine stated that this was to cover proposed amendments to the Commercial Tax
15 Credit Program. The Economic Development Committee had reviewed the changes.

16
17 Crayton Brubaker, Assistant Planner, stated that he was there to present changes to the Salem
18 Commercial Tax Credit Program in light of the three applications that were received. They had a
19 chance to see what was working and what needed improvement. It was focused more on
20 redevelopment of property. The changes included updating the list of public benefits and
21 clarifying the process including having a recommendation from the Economic Development
22 Committee to the Town Council.

23
24 Councilor Withrow stated that there was no requirement for expected growth of the business. It
25 allowed any growth of the business to qualify. She asked if any type of improvement would
26 qualify.

27
28 Mr. Brubaker answered yes. The thought process was to keep things more generalized.

29
30 Councilor Withrow stated that she did not want someone in the future to say that those were not
31 good enough jobs so it should not qualify. She wondered if they should put some language in
32 there to confirm that there was not specific limitation on the type of job.

33
34 Mr. Brubaker stated that they could take a look at that. It was tough to quantify a certain type of
35 job given the array of businesses that they had.

36
37 Councilor Withrow stated that she just did not want to see someone shut down later.

38
39 Mr. Brubaker stated that anything that added to or expanded the business would qualify.

40
41 Councilor Withrow stated that when the Council first looked at this, she thought it would be for
42 revitalization. That meant a dilapidated building not stick built from a piece of land. This
43 proposal includes both of those. Councilor Withrow was concerned about that because someone
44 coming and building a new building had done the math. They had determined it would be
45 beneficial to them and would do it regardless of any incentive. The Town should collect all of the
46 taxes due on that. The focus should be on fixing buildings that currently look bad for the town

1 and that was what she would be looking to support. She would not be supporting this for new
2 construction.

3
4 Mr. Brubaker stated that the program was broken out into two tables. If this program passed,
5 then new construction would not be eligible for the tax exemption.

6
7 Councilor Withrow stated that she saw a lot of references to new construction in the document.
8 She asked if someone put a shed on the property and tore it down after a couple of years, would
9 they be able to get the benefit.

10
11 Mr. Brubaker answered that they put the definition of the term new construction in the document
12 and stated that it was ineligible for this program.

13
14 Councilor Withrow asked if they should define what a structure was then.

15
16 Mr. Brubaker stated that it was covered in the definition which he read.

17
18 Councilor Withrow stated that her concern was the definition of structure. She gave an example
19 of how someone could get around the restriction and stated that there should be a clearer
20 definition of structure in the document.

21
22 Mr. Brubaker stated that they could refine the definition. He stated that a shed would not qualify.

23
24 Councilor Withrow stated that it would be replaced with something more than 20% larger so it
25 would qualify.

26
27 Mr. Brubaker agreed with her.

28
29 Councilor Withrow stated that they needed to quantify what counted as a structure.

30
31 Mr. Brubaker stated that they would take a look at that.

32
33 Councilor Sweeney asked what it would be considered if someone built an office building on the
34 corner of an existing parking lot.

35
36 Councilor Withrow stated that she thought it was new construction. They would build it
37 regardless of the credit.

38
39 Councilor Sweeney stated okay. He asked what would be revitalization then under this program.
40 Councilor Sweeney stated that he felt that there should be some metric that for a certain number
41 of new jobs per increase in valuation, the project would qualify for the credit. He felt it should be
42 a jobs program. That brought more economic benefit to the town than redeveloping a strip mall
43 and keeping the number of jobs the same.

1 Councilor Bettencourt stated that he was not opposed to tax credits but there was a loss of
2 revenue on the front end that they hoped to make up on the back end. He wanted to know the
3 return on investment for the tax credit. They could target it towards the benefits.

4
5 Mr. Brubaker stated that two applications have been approved, but the exemption has not gone
6 into effect yet. It would start next April.

7
8 Councilor Bettencourt stated that it was too soon to tell now.

9
10 Councilor Withrow stated that she took this credit as for revitalization. If there was a strip mall
11 that looked old and the owners used this as an incentive to fix it up, then it was good for the
12 town. It was not for new construction.

13
14 Councilor Sweeney stated that he agreed completely. He wanted to ensure that it was clear for
15 the future.

16
17 Councilor Withrow stated that it seemed Mr. Brubaker had some work to do in cleaning this up.
18 She offered to work with him in order to clean the language up so that she could support it.

19
20 Mr. Brubaker stated that he would contact her to discuss it.

21
22 Councilor Bettencourt asked what they were doing to promote the tax credit.

23
24 Manager Devine stated that they made developers aware of the program when they came in. The
25 State was also trying to make people aware of it.

26
27 Mr. Brubaker stated that the Economic Development Committee was looking to hold an event to
28 get the word out about this tax credit as well once the changes were approved.

29
30 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

31 *Move that the Salem Town Council hereby recognizes September 14, 2026 as the first reading*
32 *for consideration of Resolution No. 2026-14 to consider amendments to the Commercial Tax*
33 *Credit Program Criteria. We further recommend a second reading be scheduled for September*
34 *28, 2026.*

35 **SECOND:** by Councilor Withrow

36 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

37 **The motion passed unanimously.**

38
39 **b. Resolution No. 2026-16 – Request to Unmerge Lots at 5 Frary Street**

40 Manager Devine stated that NTC Real Estate Development, LLC, was looking to reverse an
41 involuntary merger of lots at 5 Frary Street. Staff from Planning and Assessing had reviewed the
42 application and had no objections.

43
44 Bernard Campbell, Attorney for the applicant, stated that the history was included in a letter
45 addressed to the Town Council Chair. He had since spoken with the Planning Director to answer
46 some questions that the Planning Director had. The property was divided into a bunch of lots

back in 1952 in a plan that was recorded in the Registry of Deeds. Although the lots were consolidated into one parcel on the 1962 Tax Map, there were separate conveyances of the lots up until 1987. It showed that the owners believed them to be separate lots. The applicant was looking to unmerge three of the five lots from the tax map parcel. The other two lots had been merged by usage. The three lots may be redeveloped in the future if this is approved, which would require going before the Zoning Board.

Councilor Withrow asked if the two remaining lots would be considered voluntarily merged now.

Attorney Campbell stated that their position was that those two lots, J and L, had been voluntarily merged by action because of the septic system.

MOTION: by Councilor Sweeney

Move that the Salem Town Council hereby recognizes September 14, 2026 as the first reading for consideration of Resolution No. 2026-16 to consider a request by NTC Real Estate Development, LLC. represented by Attorney Bernard Campbell to unmerge lots at 5 Frary Street (Map 15, Lots 4848).

We hereby recommend a second reading and public hearing be scheduled for September 28, 2026.

SECOND: by Councilor Withrow

VOTE: 8-0-0

The motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 2026-17 - Finance Department - Review Town Wide Fee Schedule

Manager Devine stated that the packet had a memo from the Finance Department.

Nicole McGee, Finance Director, stated that there were some changes to the fee schedule being proposed. The Sewer Rate was proposed to increase from \$5.75 to \$6.15 per 100 cubic feet, and the Water Rate was proposed to increase from \$4.75 to \$5.60 per 100 cubic feet. Windham customers would be charged 15% more for their water rate. The Landfill Permit Sticker was proposed to increase from \$60 to \$70. New fees were proposed for mattress and box spring disposal at \$7 for each. They would no longer be part of the bulky item coupon. The bank had started charging less for bad checks, so the rates were proposed to decrease from \$67 to \$32 for physical checks and from \$40 to \$25 for Clerkworks payments.

Councilor Stacey stated that they received a lot of mattresses on a weekly basis. She asked if they knew what that was costing the Town of Salem.

Ms. McGee stated that it was currently part of their tonnage fee. She calculated out the cost using the weight of a mattress and the current tonnage fee.

Chairman Bryant stated that if the mattress was wet then it weighed three and a half times more.

1 Ms. McGee stated that they could set it at \$25.

2
3 Councilor Stacey stated that she thought \$25 was a reasonable fee.

4
5 Councilor Withrow agreed.

6
7 Councilor Stacey stated that they were dealing with up to 90 mattresses per week.

8
9 Chairman Bryant stated that the people who deliver box springs and mattresses usually take the
10 old ones with them. He did not see \$25 as a problem.

11
12 Ms. McGee stated that she was happy to amend the fee to \$25.

13
14 Councilor Withrow stated that she assumed that this was temporary because the Finance
15 Committee was going to be reviewing this.

16
17 Ms. McGee stated that the changes would take effect on January 1st. She expected that the
18 Finance Committee would be reviewing the fee schedule in the next few months, but there was a
19 lot of content in the schedule. It would be difficult to go through it thoroughly in a few months.

20
21 Councilor Withrow asked if the schedule could be amended at any time.

22
23 Ms. McGee answered yes. The solid waste contract had not been finalized so she would be
24 coming back to adjust the fees once she had the new rates.

25
26 Councilor Pelletier asked about an error that Manager Devine sent a message about.

27
28 Manager Devine stated that it was related to the budget not the fee schedule.

29
30 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

31 *Move that the Salem, NH Town Council recognizes September 14, 2026 as the first reading for*
32 *consideration of Resolution No. 2025-17 to adopt the 2027 Town Wide Fee Schedule.*

33
34 *We hereby recommend a second reading/public hearing be scheduled for September 28, 2026.*

35 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stacey

36 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

37 **The motion passed unanimously.**

38
39 **d. Resolution No. 2026-18 - Consider Zoning Amendments – Salem Municipal**
40 **Code (SMC) Chapter 490 – Attachment 1 – Permitted Use Table**

41 Manager Devine stated that the next three items related to Zoning Amendments.

42
43 Mr. Lafontaine stated that the Planning Board had been workshopping some zoning
44 amendments. The first item involved cleaning up the Permitted Use Table. There were a number
45 of educational uses listed in the Permitted Use Table. The Planning Board voted to consolidate
46 them into one educational use category. They also had separate categories for churches and

1 religious institutions even though it was not how Salem traditionally dealt with these uses. The
2 proposal was to consolidate them into one category. The third item involved allowing personal
3 services in the Business Office District so that the ordinance reflected the environment in the two
4 districts under this Zoning Classification. There were existing personal service businesses in the
5 district already.

6
7 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

8 *Move that the Salem Town Council hereby recognizes September 14, 2026 as the first reading*
9 *for consideration of Resolution No. 2026-18 to consider amendments to Salem Municipal*
10 *Code (SMC) Chapter 490 (Zoning) – Attachment No. 1 – Permitted Use Table as*
11 *recommended by the Planning Board.*

12
13 *We hereby recommend a second reading and public hearing be scheduled for September 28,*
14 *2026.*

15 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stacey

16 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

17 **The motion passed unanimously.**

18
19 **e. Resolution No. 2026-19 – Consider Zoning Amendments – Salem Municipal**
20 **Code (SMC) Chapter 490-501 – Multi-Family/Mixed Use Developments**

21 Mr. Lafontaine stated that the next proposed change was in order to comply with State Law.
22 State Law now required municipalities to allow multi-family in commercial districts. The
23 municipality can ensure there is adequate infrastructure and that language was incorporated into
24 this amendment. The proposals for multi-family housing would still be subject to the
25 dimensional requirements such as setbacks. The town was also allowed to regulate the ground
26 floor space. The Town wanted to have mixed use development already and they looked into
27 recommendations for how much ground floor space should be required as commercial. The
28 recommendation was for 33% commercial use, and they took the threshold requirement from the
29 Master Plan. The final point was that the development could not be an incompatible use such as
30 housing in an industrial area.

31
32 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

33 *Move that the Salem Town Council hereby recognizes September 14, 2026 as the first reading*
34 *for consideration of Resolution No. 2026-19 to consider amendments to Salem Municipal*
35 *Code (SMC) Chapter 490-501 (Zoning) – Multi-Family/Mixed Use Developments*

36
37 *We hereby recommend a second reading and public hearing be scheduled for September 28,*
38 *2026.*

39 **SECOND:** by Councilor Wright

40 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

41 **The motion passed unanimously.**

42
43 **f. Resolution No. 2026-20 – Consider Zoning Amendments – Salem Municipal**
44 **Code (SMC) Chapter 490-501 – Cigar Bars and Kennels**

45 Mr. Lafontaine stated that the last amendment related to cigar bars and kennels in that the change
46 would establish a 750-foot buffer between the use and residential dwellings. They had

1 complaints about adverse impacts from cigar bars when everyone was leaving at 1 AM as the
2 place closed. Regarding the kennels, he had a resident who would contact him at 5 or 6AM when
3 the dogs were dropped off at the neighboring kennel to show that the barking was incessant. In
4 speaking with the business owner, they stated that they were short-staffed, so they had trouble
5 keeping up with the dogs.

6
7 Councilor Pelletier asked if the 750-foot buffer was in all directions because it would eliminate a
8 lot of North Broadway as a location for a cigar bar.

9
10 Mr. Lafontaine stated that it would be all around the property. The GIS Manager created a map
11 showing where cigar bars would still be allowed.

12
13 Councilor Pelletier asked what would happen if a cigar bar went in and then residential
14 apartments were built nearby.

15
16 Mr. Lafontaine answered that the cigar bar would have precedence because it was there first.

17
18 Councilor Withrow stated that she viewed cigar bars as similar to other bars and restaurants. She
19 did not believe it should be included in this. Kennels were a different story because the barking
20 was a constant noise that you could not get rid of.

21
22 Mr. Lafontaine stated that it was okay to proceed with one and not the other use.

23
24 Councilor Sweeney asked if they would be allowed to pursue a definition of nightclub that was
25 not necessarily a cigar bar.

26
27 Mr. Lafontaine stated that they looked into it. The definition of nightclub was rather ambiguous.
28 He could provide some more information on cigar bars if they wanted.

29
30 Councilor Stacey asked how they defined kennels. She gave an example of someone who owned
31 more than five dogs that were outside and constantly barking all of the time.

32
33 Mr. Lafontaine stated that the ordinance had a definition of kennel and it had been applied to
34 residential properties in the past. They had used a threshold of five dogs even if the dogs were
35 owned by the property owner as personal dogs. They knew that there were potential adverse
36 impacts from kennels.

37
38 Councilor Stacey asked if the 750-foot rule would apply to her scenario.

39
40 Mr. Lafontaine stated that they had addressed that in some cases by informing the people that it
41 might constitute a kennel.

42
43 Councilor Withrow asked if she could make a motion to remove cigar bars from the proposed
44 amendment.

45
46 Chairman Bryant answered yes.

1
2 **MOTION:** by Councilor Withrow

3 *Move that the Salem Town Council hereby recognizes September 14, 2026 as the first reading*
4 *for consideration of Resolution No. 2026-20 to consider amendments to Salem Municipal*
5 *Code (SMC) Chapter 490-501 (Zoning) – Proximity of Kennels to Residential Districts. We*
6 *hereby recommend a second reading and public hearing be scheduled for September 28, 2026.*

7 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stacey

8 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

9 **The motion passed unanimously.**

10
11
12 **9. First Read/Waiver**

13 **a. Resolution No. 2026-21 – Municipal Services Department – Request Disbursement of**
14 **\$200,000.00 from the Roadway Improvements Capital Reserve Fund for the Bridge**
15 **Street Bridge Construction Project.**

16 Manager Devine stated that the Municipal Services Director was present to speak on this topic.

17
18 Wayne Amaral, Municipal Services Director, stated that this item was to cover the extra
19 engineering costs due to the high water levels that set back the construction work.

20
21 Chairman Bryant stated that the pumps that were used did not seem to have been large enough
22 for this project.

23
24 Mr. Amaral stated that the contractor had a lot of pumps and there were some challenges with the
25 water levels. The storms that happened were heavy rainstorms.

26
27 Councilor Stacey asked when the project would be complete.

28
29 Mr. Amaral stated that they were looking at December 4th.

30
31 Councilor Withrow asked if it did something to the Road Program.

32
33 Mr. Amaral answered no. These funds were not allocated to any purpose currently. It did remove
34 funds from the reserve account.

35
36 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

37 *Move that the Salem, NH Town Council adopts Resolution No. 2026-21. relating to the*
38 *authorization to disburse \$200,000.00 from the Roadway Improvement Capital Reserve Fund*
39 *for additional costs of the Bridge Street Bridge Construction Project; and further waives the*
40 *requirement for a second reading. This Resolution shall take effect upon its passage as*
41 *follows:*

42 **Resolution #2026-21**

43 **Authorize Disbursement of Roadway Improvement Capital Reserve Funds to the**
44 **Bridge Street Replacement Project**
45

1 **WHEREAS: The Municipal Services Department – Engineering Division, submitted an**
2 **application in May 2018 to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation - State Aid**
3 **Bridge Program for design, engineering, and construction of the Bridge Street Bridge.**

4
5 **WHEREAS: NHDOT has determined that a project to replace Bridge Street Bridge over**
6 **Spicket River in the Town of Salem is an eligible project for funding under the State Bridge**
7 **Aid Program and Federal Bridge Aid Program created under the Federal Bipartisan**
8 **Infrastructure Law (BIL).**

9
10 **WHEREAS: On May 20, 2024, The Salem Town Council with full administrative authority**
11 **voted to enter into, and execute all agreements, and documents related to the final design,**
12 **engineering, bidding and permitting, of the Bridge Street Bridge replacement as part of the**
13 **LPA State Project # 44309.**

14
15 **WHEREAS: The Bridge Street Project has been delayed due to site constraints inclusive of**
16 **high water flows this spring, active soil and artesian groundwater conditions, limited working**
17 **room to abutters, overhead electric utilities and deep bedrock.**

18
19 **WHEREAS: These delays have caused an increase in cost of engineering oversight and**
20 **review, as a result, additional funding is requested for both the Engineer of Record and the**
21 **Engineering construction oversight.**

22
23 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SALEM TOWN COUNCIL THAT:**
24 **The Town Council, as agents to expend the Salem Roadway Improvements Capital Reserve**
25 **Fund, hereby authorizes \$200,000.00 be disbursed for the additional cost relating to the**
26 **Bridge Street Bridge construction project.**

27 **SECOND:** by Councilor Pelletier

28 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

29 **The motion passed unanimously.**

30
31 **10. New Business**

- 32 **a. Municipal Services Department – Public Hearing – Accept Donation from**
33 **Friendship and Garden Club Valued at \$9,200.00 for Installation of Flowers and**
34 **other Plantings, and a Bench at Michele Memorial Park**

35 Manager Devine stated that this was to accept a donation.

36
37 Chairman Bryant opened the Public Hearing at 8:24 PM.

38
39 Mr. Pacheco stated that the Friendship and Garden Club offered to put in some pretty flowers to
40 spruce up the area around the new pickleball courts at Michele Memorial Park.

41
42 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

43 **Move in accordance with RSA 31:95(e) that the Salem Town Council hereby accepts with**
44 **gratitude a donation from the Salem Friendship and Garden Club for the cost of the**
45 **installation of flowers, various plantings, and a bench at Michelle Memorial Park with such**
46 **services valued at \$9,200.00.**

1
2 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stacey

3
4 Chairman Bryant asked if anyone wanted to speak on this item. No one came forward.

5
6 Chairman Bryant closed the Public Hearing at 8:26 PM.

7
8 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

9 **The motion passed unanimously.**

10
11
12 **b. Municipal Services Department – Public Hearing – Accept Donation from Salem**
13 **Historical Society Valued at \$11,430.00 for Services Relating to Repair and**
14 **Resetting of Gravestones at the Salem Center Burying Ground**

15 Manager Devine stated that this was also a Public Hearing on accepting a donation from the
16 Salem Historical Society.

17
18 Chairman Bryant opened the Public Hearing at 8:26 PM.

19
20 Mr. Amaral stated that this donation was to repair and reset gravestones in the Salem Common
21 Burial Ground. They did this a few years ago and it was very successful, so they were looking to
22 do another round.

23
24 Brian Flanagan, President of the Salem Historical Society, stated that Kai Nalenz of Gravestone
25 Services of New England, LLC had done the work from the last round in 2017 and did a fantastic
26 job. They spoke with him and received a quote to do the work this September. Salem Public TV
27 was planning to film the work to record it for educational purposes.

28
29 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

30 ***Move in accordance with RSA 31:95(e) that the Salem Town Council hereby accepts with***
31 ***gratitude a donation from the Salem Historical Society of the cost for the repair and resetting***
32 ***of gravestones at the Salem Center Burying Ground with such services valued at \$11,430.00.***

33 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stacey

34 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

35 **The motion passed unanimously.**

36
37
38 Chairman Bryant closed the Public Hearing at 8:28 PM.

39
40 **c. Municipal Services Department – Consider Lease Agreements with T-Mobile for**
41 **Cellular Antenna on Water Tanks**

42 Mr. Amaral stated that they were looking for approval for the Town Manager to sign two new
43 lease agreements for cellular antenna at the Lawrence Road Water Tank and the Howard Street
44 Water Tank.

45
46 Chairman Bryant asked if there were any questions.

1
2 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney
3 *Move that the Town Council approved the Third Amendment to the Standard Communication*
4 *Site Lease Agreement with T-Mobile; with such term extending the lease agreement to 2061;*
5 *and further authorizes Town Manager Joseph Devine to execute the agreement with T-Mobile*
6 *for use of the Lawrence Road Water Tank located at 82 Lawrence Road.*

7 **SECOND:** by Councilor Stramaglia

8 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

9 **The motion passed unanimously.**

10
11 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney
12 *Move that the Town Council approved the Second Amendment to the Standard*
13 *Communication Site Lease Agreement with T-Mobile; with such term extending the lease*
14 *agreement to 2057; and further authorizes Town Manager Joseph Devine to execute the*
15 *agreement with T-Mobile for use of the Howard Street Water Tank located at 20-26 Howard*
16 *Street.*

17 **SECOND:** by Councilor Withrow

18 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

19 **The motion passed unanimously.**

20
21
22
23 **d. Municipal Building Advisory Committee (MBAC) – Consider Amendments to**
24 **MBAC Charter**

25 Manager Devine stated that this was a Bylaw change for MBAC.

26
27 Mr. Pacheco stated that they were looking to add the Superintendent of Facilities as a voting
28 member and remove the Project Engineer as a voting member. They were looking to change
29 from weekly meetings to meetings at the Chair's discretion.

30
31 Councilor Bettencourt asked if they had an even number of members on the committee.

32
33 Councilor Stacey answered that there were nine members.

34
35 Manager Devine stated that there were seven voting members and three non-voting members.

36
37 **MOTION:** by Councilor Stramaglia

38 *Move that the Town Council approves the proposed changes to the Municipal Building*
39 *Committee (MBAC) charter as recommended by MBAC.*

40 **SECOND:** by Councilor Sweeney

41 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

42 **The motion passed unanimously.**

43
44
45 **e. Community Development Department – Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**
46 **Presentation and Report**

1 Manager Devine stated that this was an update from the Assistant Planner.

2
3 Mr. Brubaker presented the list of CIP Committee Members. The Committee reviewed capital
4 projects and prioritized them over the six years of the plan. The goal was to stabilize the tax rate.
5 He covered what Capital Projects were. The Committee had a streamlined process this year that
6 finished in July. Projects were graded on readiness and significance using a scale of 1 to 4. The
7 2027 total recommended amount had to fall between a floor of \$3,824,320 and a ceiling of
8 \$5,483,486. The actual recommended amount was a 2027 tax impact of \$5,400,000. These
9 projects included one water project and one sewer project. Five projects were recommended for
10 deferral. They worked with MBAC to get an overview of the different public facilities needs.
11 The top two projects in the CIP were the Lawrence Road Fire Station and Phase 2 of the
12 Municipal Services Building improvements. Mr. Brubaker explained what the deferral
13 recommendation meant.

14
15 Chairman Bryant stated that there was no motion required.

16
17 Councilor Bettencourt stated that it was concerning that they only looked at the first year tax
18 impact because a majority of the projects were proposed to be bonded. He spoke about looking at
19 the future amounts to see what the bond payments would do versus existing bond payments.
20 Councilor Bettencourt stated that it was a flaw to only look at the first year tax impact.

21
22 Councilor Sweeney stated that the CIP Committee did look at the future impacts of projects. It
23 would impact the future ceilings.

24
25 Councilor Bettencourt stated that it should be a more holistic approach and factoring the highest
26 bond payment.

27
28 Councilor Sweeney stated that they looked at it when considering the project.

29
30 Councilor Bettencourt stated that he understood it was one factor among a couple of them. It just
31 seemed like a flaw in the process.

32
33 Councilor Withrow stated that she agreed, but she also felt that looking at the full picture was the
34 Council's job when it came time to set the budget.

35
36 Manager Devine stated that the \$5.4 million figure was not the figure that the Council would be
37 seeing because he had lowered it based on debt service and lease payments that needed to be
38 made.

39
40 Councilor Pelletier asked about the Lake and Bluff Street water main extension and where the
41 funding was coming from.

42
43 Mr. Brubaker answered that it came from the Water Fund.

44
45 **f. Finance Department - Consider Request for Waiver of Sewer Demand and Benefit**
46 **Assessment (DBA) Fee at 65 Wheeler Avenue**

1 Ms. McGee stated that this was a property that had a betterment assessment and has now added
2 an accessory dwelling unit. She was requesting that the Council waive the DBA for this
3 accessory dwelling unit as the property had previously paid a betterment assessment.
4

5 **MOTION:** by Councilor Sweeney

6 *Move that the Town Council grants a request for a waiver of the sewer portion of the Demand*
7 *and Benefit Assessment (DBA) as requested by property owners at 65 Wheeler Avenue as*
8 *authorized under Salem Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 455-4(E).*

9 **SECOND:** by Councilor Withrow

10 **VOTE:** 8-0-0

11 **The motion passed unanimously.**
12
13

14 **g. Town Manager Update/Questions from the Council**

15 Manager Devine stated that the Town of Salem was being recognized by the New England
16 Waterworks Association for thirty years of membership. The Town Website was ADA-
17 compliant. Beginning September 8th, the Inspectional Services Division now had afternoon
18 counter hours from 3:30 to 4:30. Ermer Road Intersection construction has started. They had
19 reviewed the plans for Brunello Road and determined that a connection to Route 28 was no
20 longer necessary. He also stated that Salem did not use Flock cameras. They only had traffic
21 cameras and those were not recorded.
22

23 Councilor Stramaglia asked about a Flock camera pointing into Salem from Methuen.
24

25 Manager Devine stated that he would have to look into it because he was not aware of that and
26 any legal issues regarding it.
27

28 Councilor Bettencourt stated that he wanted to congratulate the people who got the Town
29 Website ADA Compliant because there was a lot of work that went into doing that. He asked if
30 they were planning to make a switchover to Arlington earlier this year.
31

32 Manager Devine answered no. They were still looking to switchover sometime after Halloween.
33 The Municipal Services Director would be coming in with a water update at the next meeting.
34

35 Councilor Stacey wanted to make it clear that Clean Choice Energy was not the company that
36 Salem used for their electricity. It was a much higher rate with Clean Choice than the deal the
37 Town had.
38

39 Manager Devine stated that Salem used Freedom Energy.
40

41 Councilor Withrow wanted to discuss the Finance Committee. She felt that there should be some
42 communication from the Town Council to the Finance Committee. Councilor Withrow stated
43 that she attended their last meeting.
44

45 Councilor Stacey stated that she thought the Finance Committee would be autonomous from the
46 Town Council.

1
2 Manager Devine stated that they were an autonomous committee that was tasked with making
3 recommendations to the Town Council. The Council would then decide whether or not to follow
4 those recommendations.

5
6 Councilor Stacey asked if there was any confusion with the instructions.

7
8 Councilor Withrow stated that she just wanted the Council to have some conversations with the
9 Finance Committee to keep up with what was happening with them.

10
11 Councilor Bettencourt asked if the Council had set Budget Goals.

12
13 Chairman Bryant stated that the first Budget Discussion was on October 1st at 6 PM.

14
15 Councilor Bettencourt stated that they may want to move that up so that some direction was
16 provided.

17
18 Manager Devine stated that he brought it up at one of the summer meetings. The direction was to
19 be as low as possible and keep it under CPI.

20
21 Councilor Bettencourt stated that keeping it under the CPI. They may want to give more robust
22 goals in the future.

23
24 Councilor Stacey stated that they needed to be more robust. It should include the Warrant
25 Articles and an understanding of those impacts.

26
27 Councilor Withrow stated that she wanted to help keep the Finance Committee on track.

28
29 Chairman Bryant stated that she could provide some assistance without telling them what to do.

30
31 Manager Devine stated that the next meeting would be at the new Police Station.

32
33 Chairman Bryant stated that tours would be given at the new Police Station from 10 to 12 on this
34 coming Saturday.

35
36 **11. Old Business/Tabled and Pending**

37
38 **12. Upcoming Meetings**

- 39
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41
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43
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45
46
- September 28, 2026
 - October 1, 2026 (2027 Budget Presentation/Discussion on Warrant Articles) – 6:00 p.m.
 - October 5, 2026 (Regular Meeting) – 7:00 p.m.
 - October 7, 2026 (Preliminary Discussion on 2027 Budget and Warrant Articles) - 6:00 p.m.
 - October 14, 2026 (Vote on 2027 Budget and Warrant Articles) – 6:00 p.m.

- October 19, 2026 (Regular Meeting) – 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT AT 8:59 P.M.**MOTION:** by Councilor Withrow***Move to adjourn at 8:59 PM.*****SECOND:** by Councilor Sweeney**VOTE:** 8-0-0**The motion passed unanimously.**Notes/minutes taken by: Jeremiah LamsonApproved: Town Council

Date Approved: _____