

TOWN OF KENSINGTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 31, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.

DRAFT

Board Members Present	Sara Hamilton, Chair; Tom Balabon, Member; Ian O'Reilly, Member
Town Officials/Staff	Kathleen T. Felch, Town Administrator; Chief Scott Cain, Kensington Police Department; Chief Jeff DiBartolomeo, Kensington Fire Department; Sarah Wiggin, Town Clerk, Carlene Wiggin, Tax Collector
Presenters/Guests	Representative Susan Porcelli; Charlie Horn, Energy Committee; members of the public
Purpose	Regular Select Board meeting, including public comment, department and committee reports, appointments, permits, policy discussion, scheduling, and non-public session.
Minute Standard	Summary minutes organized in agenda order. Motions and votes are recorded in parliamentary form; discussion is summarized and is not a verbatim transcript.

1. Call to Order

Chair Sara Hamilton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

2. Public Comment

PFAS Investigation, Drinkwater Road

Representative Susan Porcelli addressed the Board regarding an environmental investigation at the Unitil property on Drinkwater Road and private-well sampling for PFAS, including PFOA and PFOS. She explained that the Town is not responsible for the investigation, testing, or remediation and identified the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services as the responsible agency.

Representative Porcelli requested that the Board host a 30-minute question-and-answer session for residents with representatives from the Department of Environmental Services, Unitil, and GZA. The Board expressed support for the request and directed that a suitable meeting date be coordinated with the Town Administrator. Representative Porcelli agreed to provide the participant names by email.

No additional public comment was offered at that time.

3. Agenda Adjustment

Chair Hamilton announced that the waiver requested by the Library, previously expected to be discussed at this meeting, had been withdrawn. No Board discussion or action was taken on the request.

4. Department and Staff Reports

Police Department

- Chief Scott Cain reported a busy two-week period involving several mental-health and search-related calls, including incidents involving individuals in wooded areas and mutual-aid assistance.
- Chief Cain thanked the Fire Department for assisting with an August 20 incident and for providing equipment used to retrieve firearms from the water.
- Chief Cain renewed discussion of acquiring a drone for search-and-rescue, officer safety, hazardous-material incidents, and faster location of missing or endangered persons. He emphasized that any use would be governed by procedures and policies and stated that he intended to revisit the matter as a possible warrant article.

Fire Department and Emergency Operations Center

- Chief Jeff DiBartolomeo announced a regional ALS information meeting for participating communities on September 10, 2026, at approximately 6:30 p.m. at the Timberlane Performing Arts Center in Plaistow. Chair Hamilton indicated that she could attend.
- The Fire Department will participate with its tanker in a rural-water-supply class and drill hosted by the Stratham Fire Department on October 3 and 4, 2026.
- The next Seabrook emergency drill is scheduled for September 23, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and will be evaluated by FEMA. Member Ian O'Reilly indicated that he could participate.
- Two Fire Department members are undertaking additional EOC-related training: one as a radiological officer and one in WebEOC. The radiological role includes iodine-tablet distribution, scanning, and required documentation.

Town Clerk

- Town Clerk Sarah Wiggin reported that the State Primary would be held the following week and reminded voters to bring photo identification.
- Ballot testing and counting had been posted for Wednesday morning in the main hall. The Clerk's window was expected to be closed from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and open during the evening to allow uninterrupted election preparation.
- Election setup and building access were being coordinated, with several individuals secured to assist.

Motion	Member Ian O'Reilly moved to appoint Joseph Pace as a Kensington election worker for the remainder of the 2026 election cycle, expiring December 2026.
Second	Member Tom Balabon seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion	Member Ian O'Reilly moved to appoint Russell Perry and Benjamin Cole as Kensington Selectmen Pro Tem for the September through December 2026 election schedule, as needed.
Second	The motion was seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Road Manager Report

- The overlay and new gravel shoulders on Stumpfield Road were completed. Stone shoulders were used on the steepest portion to mitigate erosion.
- Olivia Lane was reclaimed and repaved with 2 1/2 inches of base asphalt. Gravel shoulders remained to be completed.
- A tree issue on Muddy Pond Road was being addressed.

5. Energy Committee

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE)

Charlie Horn of the Energy Committee asked whether the Board had questions after reviewing the C-PACE materials. The Board discussed whether to proceed by public hearing or warrant article. Members noted that a public hearing would allow earlier consideration, provide an opportunity for focused public education, and avoid delaying interested property owners until March. The Board reached consensus to schedule a public hearing, with the date discussed as September 28, 2026, subject to required notice. The Town Administrator confirmed that she had the proposed notice language.

Window Dressers Program

Ms. Horn described Window Dressers as a Maine-based nonprofit volunteer program that builds interior window inserts. She stated that the inserts are designed to reduce heating costs, that pricing is available on a sliding scale, and that recipients or substitute volunteers generally assist with the community build.

The Energy Committee requested permission to provide information about the program at Old Home Day on September 12. The Board supported the request, subject to coordination with the Recreation Committee regarding space and setup. Chief DiBartolomeo asked questions about the insert materials and placement because of fire-safety considerations.

6. Town Road Use Permit

The Board reviewed a road-use permit application for the Cycle for Shelter fundraiser scheduled for September 13, 2026, with approximately 35 participants. The proposed route included Drinkwater Road, Osgood Road, Route 150 South, Trundle Bed Lane, Stumpfield Road, and Route 108 South. The Town had received the \$50 deposit. The Police Department indicated that it would follow up regarding event coordination.

Motion	Member Ian O'Reilly moved to approve the permit for use of Town roads for the Cycle for Shelter fundraiser on September 13, 2026, for approximately 35 participants.
Second	Member Tom Balabon seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

7. Veterans Tax Credit

The Board reviewed a veterans tax credit application associated with Billy Stella Realty Trust.

Motion	Member Ian O'Reilly moved to approve the veterans' tax credit application.
Second	Member Tom Balabon seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

8. Old Business and Policies

Planning Board Matter

Chair Hamilton advised that the Board did not yet have a response for the Planning Board because legal review was continuing. The Board would follow up when the response was ready.

Website Content Policy

The Board reviewed a draft website content policy addressing public-safety and emergency notices, health and welfare information, road closures, legal notices, election and Town Meeting information, board and committee announcements, and other content authorized by the Select Board or Town Administrator.

- Members emphasized accuracy, ease of navigation, manageable staff workload, and avoidance of outdated or duplicative documents.
- The Town Administrator explained current posting and linking practices, including department pages, forms and applications, and the possibility of a dedicated annual budget page.
- Member Balabon recommended adding clear criteria for content that should not be posted and cautioned against creating precedents or publishing private information.
- The Board discussed revisiting a previously presented artificial-intelligence search tool, including a possible trial near budget season and checking the experience of other municipalities.
- Member O'Reilly agreed to take another pass at the draft policy for later Board review. No formal vote was taken.

Social Services Procedure

The Board reviewed a proposed procedure distinguishing existing social-service agencies that have previously received voter approval from new requests. Existing agencies would continue through the established renewal process, while new applicants would be directed to the petitioned warrant-article process. The Board expressed general agreement with the procedure. The Town Administrator stated that it would be posted with Town policies and procedures. No formal vote was taken.

9. Address Change, Trundle Bed Lane

The Town Administrator presented a voluntary E911 address-change request for the barn property currently numbered 10 Trundle Bed Lane. She explained that 24 Trundle Bed Lane would better follow the existing street-number sequence and preserve numbering options for possible future subdivision. The residence at 53 Cottage Road would retain its Cottage Road address.

Motion	Member Ian O'Reilly moved to accept the address change from 10 Trundle Bed Lane to 24 Trundle Bed Lane so that the address aligns with the street-number sequence.
Second	Member Tom Balabon seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The Town Administrator also relayed a concern from the property owner regarding fireworks scheduled for Old Home Day near horses on the property. Chief DiBartolomeo stated that Fire Department coverage would be present for the fireworks. Chief Cain remarked that a police officer would be on duty but not necessarily at the fireworks presentation at the Town Park.

10. Budget Process and Meeting Schedule

The Town Administrator reported a conflict with the October 5 meeting and discussed the budget-review process with the Board. She had prepared a draft procedure and sample submission sheet intended to make department presentations more consistent and to assist members who had not previously completed a municipal budget cycle.

- The Board discussed the need for supporting detail on budget line items while avoiding unnecessary duplication of department budgeting work.
- The Board agreed to review the proposed budget procedure and provide comments at a future meeting. Department heads and other staff assisting with the budget would also review it.
- Budget meetings were scheduled for October 27 and October 29, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Limited routine business could be included if needed, but major discussion items would be avoided.
- The regular October 19 meeting remained scheduled. The October 5 meeting was canceled.
- The Board discussed holding a short additional meeting later in the week of October 12 if urgent business arose, with October 15 at approximately 6:30 p.m. identified as a possible hold date. No additional meeting was formally scheduled.

11. Additional Public Inquiry

A member of the public stated that he had come to support a neighbor's variance request for a garage. The Board and staff clarified that the matter was before the Zoning Board of Adjustment the following evening at 7:30 p.m.

12. Non-Public Session

Motion	Chair Sara Hamilton moved to enter non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a) for an employee matter and RSA 91-A:3, II(l) for legal advice at 7:37pm.
Second	Member Tom Balabon seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Motion	Member Tom Balabon moved to exit non-public session at 8:36pm.
Second	Member Ian O'Reilly seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

13. Actions Taken

Action	Disposition	Result
Election Worker	Appointed Joseph Pace through December 2026.	Approved unanimously
Selectmen Pro Tem	Appointed Russell Perry and Benjamin Cole for the September-December 2026 election schedule, as needed.	Approved unanimously
Road Use Permit	Approved Cycle for Shelter fundraiser road-use permit for September 13, 2026.	Approved unanimously
Veterans Tax Credit	Approved a one-year veterans tax credit application.	Approved unanimously
Address Change	Changed 10 Trundle Bed Lane to 24 Trundle Bed Lane.	Approved unanimously
Non-Public Session	Entered non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a) and II(l).	Approved unanimously

14. Follow-Up Items

- Coordinate the PFAS question-and-answer session and invited experts.
- Prepare and post the required C-PACE public-hearing notice.
- Coordinate the Window Dressers Old Home Day table.
- Revise the website content policy for later Board review.
- Combine the two provided documents as the Board's response to the Planning Board.
- Prepare for the October 27 and October 29 budget meetings.

15. Adjournment

Motion	Chair Sara Hamilton moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.
Second	Member Tom Balabon seconded.
Vote	Motion carried unanimously by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen T. Felch, Town Administrator