



Town of Nantucket Capital Program Committee January 30, 2026

Attending Members:	Jill Vieth, Chair, Howard Matz, Vice Chair, Peter Kaizer, Dawn Hill, Caroline Baltzer, Liza Hatton
Staff:	Susan Carmel, Deputy Finance Director
Absent	

The Capital Program Committee meeting on January 30, 2026, discussed the ranking system for capital projects, noting a higher percentage of binary categories. Key points included the need for a clearer definition of categories and the potential for a March meeting to refine criteria. The committee reviewed a spreadsheet showing \$56 million above the mean and \$9 million within one standard deviation. Specific projects like the \$500,000 fertilizer request and the \$1 million coastal resiliency funding were debated. The committee also discussed the town's employee housing project, emphasizing the need for affordable housing to retain town employees. The meeting discussed the feasibility of town employee housing, noting that municipal preference is possible but challenging. Christy Kickham emphasized the need for housing to attract local talent. The committee debated the Island Home project, highlighting its necessity but financial strain. Dawn Hill argued it's the only viable local solution for skilled nursing care. The group also considered debt exclusions for Somerset sewer and sidewalk improvements, with a focus on betterment assessments to alleviate tax burdens. The final report will include these discussions and recommendations.

Capital Program Committee Meeting Introduction

- Jill Vieth calls the meeting to order at 10:08 am on Friday, January 30, 2026.
- Approval of the agenda is made by Christy Kickham and seconded by Peter Kaizer
- Roll call vote: Christy aye, Peter aye, Howard aye, Caroline aye, Liza aye, Dawn aye, Jill aye
- Motion passes unanimously
- Public comment is opened and closed by Jill Vieth.
- Motion to approve previous meeting's minutes is made by Christy Kickham and seconded by Peter Kaizer
- Roll call vote: Christy aye, Peter aye, Howard aye, Liza aye, Caroline aye, Dawn aye, Jill aye
- Motion passes unanimously

Review of Spreadsheet and Ranking System

- Jill Vieth suggests pulling up the spreadsheet for review.
- Susan Carmel mentions the spreadsheet was sent to everyone on Tuesday.
- Discussion on the new ranking requirements and system, with some members finding them too binary.
- Christy Kickham and Howard Matz discuss the relevance of certain questions in the ranking system.

Discussion on Ranking System and Spreadsheet

- Jill Vieth asks if the ranking system reflects the committee's conversations and meetings.
- Caroline Robinson Baltzer and Liza Hatton express concerns about the consistency of rankings for certain categories.
- Suggestions are made for a meeting in March to clarify the meaning of categories and improve consistency.
- Jill Vieth and others discuss the importance of capturing relevant information during interviews rather than in the ranking system.

Review of Specific Requests and Funding

- Jill Vieth and others discuss the funding for fertilizer, questioning its necessity and cost.
- Peter Kaizer provides a summary of the total funding requests and their distribution.
- Discussion on the importance of consistent rankings and the tight range of scores.
- Howard Matz and others discuss the need for a meeting to reword and reconsider certain questions in the ranking system.

Detailed Review of Requests Above the Mean

- Jill Vieth and others discuss specific requests above the mean, including the Harbormaster building and hardstand work.
- Howard Matz explains the urgency and cost implications of completing all three hardstand projects simultaneously.
- Dawn Hill raises concerns about four major projects not being recommended.
- Discussion on the feasibility of increasing funding for certain projects, such as the airport hardstand work.

Review of Requests Within the Standard Deviation

- Jill Vieth and others discuss requests within the standard deviation, including the DPW central fleet and transit van.
- Christy Kickham raises concerns about the disposition of vehicles being replaced.
- Discussion on the importance of having compact fire engines for rapid response and accessibility.
- Liza Hatton and others discuss the benefits of smaller, more agile vehicles in densely populated areas.

Discussion on Coastal Resiliency Funding

- Caroline Robinson Baltzer and others express concerns about the impact of not funding coastal resiliency efforts.
- Howard Matz and others discuss the importance of securing grants and the challenges of applying for them without funding.
- Jill Vieth and others discuss the history and use of coastal resiliency funds, including the impact of grants on the budget.
- Dawn Hill and others discuss the need for specific projects to be presented for funding in the future.

Review of Requests Below the Standard Deviation

- Jill Vieth and others discuss requests below the standard deviation, including the Nevens debris removal.
- Christy Kickham and others express support for the town taking responsibility for cleanup efforts.
- Discussion on the potential for federal and state grants to assist with cleanup costs.
- Dawn Hill raises concerns about four major debt exclusions not being recommended.

Final Discussion and Voting on Requests

- Jill Vieth and others discuss the importance of town employee housing and the challenges of constructing housing.
- Howard Matz and others express concerns about the cost and feasibility of town-built housing.
- Dawn Hill discusses potential opportunities for private developers to build housing at a lower cost.
- The committee votes to move certain requests, such as the Nevens debris removal, above the standard deviation.

Discussion on Municipal Employee Housing and Legal Considerations

- Dawn Hill and Howard Matz discuss the feasibility of municipal employee housing, mentioning a lawsuit that initially precluded it but later found it possible with proper structuring.
- Jill Vieth suggests a new approach to housing, emphasizing the need for municipal control and flexibility in AMI levels.
- Dawn Hill expresses doubt about giving municipal preference, while Howard Matz asserts it is possible based on his research.
- Christy Kickham highlights the financial challenges of housing projects and the need to accommodate overages for housing to attract department heads.

Challenges with Airport Housing and Staffing Issues

- Christy Kickham discusses the inefficiency of the airport housing project and the need for more housing to accommodate staff.
- Jill Vieth and Christy Kickham agree on the importance of hiring within the town and the challenges of getting department heads from off-island.
- Howard Matz mentions the airport housing issue was not needed but was ineffective.
- The group discusses the dilution of resources and the need for better use of property for housing.

Exploring Public Land Leasing and Town Employee Housing

- Howard Matz brings up the idea of leasing public land to private developers, citing a successful example in Tacoma.
- Jill Vieth supports town employee housing but suggests waiting to see what other projects come online.
- Howard Matz emphasizes the committee's role in approving wise town projects and the need for definitive plans and budgets.
- Liza Hatton stresses the urgency of housing needs and the need for immediate solutions.

Proposed Solutions and Financial Considerations

- Jill Vieth suggests having a fund ready to buy housing units when opportunities arise.
- Howard Matz and Jill Vieth discuss the bedroom count and the feasibility of solving the housing problem with existing units.
- Liza Hatton and Jill Vieth agree on the need for a sense of urgency and better ways to help Christy Kickham achieve her goals.
- The group discusses the financial implications of housing projects and the need for a more efficient use of resources.

Debate on Island Home Project and Financial Viability

- Dawn Hill presents Our Island Home project as a necessary service with no local alternative for skilled nursing care.
- Howard Matz suggests exploring alternative ways to provide services without a new building.
- Christy Kickham and Dawn Hill discuss the emotional and financial aspects of the Island Home project.
- The group debates the feasibility of the project and the need for significant subsidies to make it financially viable.

Community Support and Alternative Solutions

- Caroline Robinson Baltzer suggests reframing the Island Home project as a housing issue rather than an emotional one.

- The group discusses the challenges of generating community support and the need for significant philanthropy.
- Dawn Hill emphasizes the lack of local alternatives and the need for government-subsidized care.
- The group considers the impact of the project on the community and the need for a comprehensive solution.

Finalizing Recommendations and Next Steps

- The group discusses the final recommendations for the report, including comments on the Island Home project and other capital projects.
- Howard Matz and Sue Carmel will work on the report, incorporating feedback from the meeting.
- The group agrees to review the draft report and make any necessary edits before final approval.
- The meeting concludes with plans to reconvene to finalize the report and ensure all comments are addressed.
- Motion to adjourn made by Peter Kaizer, seconded by Christy Kickham
- Roll call vote: Peter aye, Christy aye, Howard aye, Caroline aye, Liza aye, Dawn aye, Jill aye
- Motion passed unanimously