

# Community Preservation Committee

## Meeting Minutes for 3/17/2026

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6dC-8dOPd0>

### Meeting Opening and Preliminary Technical Issues [00:00:00]

#### Meeting Opening and Attendance Confirmation

- The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meeting convened on Tuesday, March 17th, 2026, at 10:18 AM in Room A at 131 Pleasant Street.
- Opening greetings included St. Patrick's Day wishes and mention of Burns Day in April.
- Attendance was confirmed with all members present: Tom Dixon, Jesse Dutra, Neville Richen, John Schafer, Connie Patten, Tim Soverino, Jesse Dutra, Eleanor Antonietti, and Madam Chair Linda Williams.
- The agenda was approved unanimously.

### \*\*Agenda and Correspondence Overview\*\* [00:01:30]

- No new correspondence was received for this meeting; correspondence was expected for the next meeting regarding fund reallocation.
- No guests were present.
- Several requisitions were reviewed:
  - Mariah Mitchell: \$48,000
  - Linda Luring: \$16,430
  - St. Paul's: \$830,110
  - Racket Club: \$250,000
  - Interfaith Council: \$56,114 (monthly bills for assistance payments)
- Discussion noted that the Racket Club project is nearing fiscal year closeout; St. Paul's project has a significant outstanding balance; Linda Luring and Mariah Mitchell projects are ongoing.

### \*\*Questions on Requisitions and Project Billing\*\* [00:02:56]

- Clarification was given regarding St. Paul's large invoice appearing as a lump sum near project completion due to changes in billing (no monthly billing as before).
- Motion to approve requisitions was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

### \*\*Office Move and Staffing Advertising Issues\*\* [00:03:28]

- Discussion began concerning the administrative assistant job advertisement:
  - Confusion about where the ad was posted (town website confirmed, but not in newspapers as expected).

- The committee pays for newspaper ads but had not seen the ad run there.
- Agreement that the ad should appear in newspapers; possibility of running it themselves if necessary.
- Questions about HR's role in posting and managing the hiring process.

#### \*\*Review of Job Advertisement Contents\*\* [00:05:28]

- The job posting was read aloud, describing the position as:
  - "Community Preservation Committee Administrative Assistant" under the municipal housing director's supervision.
  - Duties: clerical support, agenda preparation, liaison tasks, records maintenance, grant application review, invoice processing, office management, and public response.
  - Qualifications: Associate degree or equivalent, Microsoft Office proficiency, Massachusetts driver's license, knowledge of municipal government and open meeting law preferred.
  - Part-time, 19 hours/week, pay range \$30.90 to \$42.48 per hour.
  - Application deadline: March 30th, 2026, 4 PM.
- Committee strongly objected because the ad did not reflect their agreed terms: the hours, job title, pay rate, and supervisory structure were incorrect.

#### \*\*Committee Objections to Job Ad and Staffing Plans\*\* [00:08:10]

- The ad described a \*\*part-time (19 hours/week) \*\* position, while the committee expected approximately \*\*30 hours/week with flexible scheduling\*\*.
- The title "Administrative Assistant" was rejected; the committee wanted a more senior "Administrator" role.
- The ad indicated supervision by the municipal housing director, which the committee and state representatives opposed to maintain independence and separation.
- There was concern that the posted ad did not reflect the committee's submitted job description and conditions, nor the state's guidance.
- Members expressed frustration that their efforts to modernize and clarify the role were ignored.

#### \*\*Motion to Remove Job Ad from Posting\*\* [00:10:26]

- A motion was made and seconded to request HR to take down the current job ad due to its inaccuracies and misrepresentation of the position.
- Discussion ensued whether this approach was adversarial or premature, with some recommending the Chair and Vice Chair meet with HR to clarify misunderstandings before removal.
- The committee recognized the importance of having the right job description to attract suitable candidates and avoid confusion.

#### \*\*Recommendations for Resolution and Communication\*\* [00:14:16]

- It was proposed that a meeting be scheduled including Chair, Vice Chair, HR Director, and Brian Turbitt (who would work directly with the new hire) to ensure alignment.
- The committee noted past back-and-forth communications with HR that had stalled.
- Emphasis was on maintaining a collaborative approach despite frustrations.

- The committee stressed the importance of the new hire managing all office functions independently, without town housing director oversight, to comply with state bond conditions and governance expectations.

#### \*\*Office Space, Equipment, and Operational Improvements\*\* [00:17:16]

- Discussion on office space needs: a smaller, more efficient footprint once digitization and reorganization occur.
- The new hire would manage all office equipment (e.g., copier, phones) and public records securely.
- Current inefficiencies include duplicate answering machines and underutilized space.
- Topham and Williams planned a Saturday session to reorganize the office.

#### \*\*Financial Management and Billing Updates\*\* [00:20:18]

- Rent for office space was unpaid for three months but has since been resolved with monthly invoicing established.
- Regular monthly expenses include Comcast, rent, Xerox machine, coffee machine, and water bills.
- The committee acknowledged the need for an administrative person to handle billing and correspondence efficiently.
- Williams described the challenge of managing meeting agendas and correspondence without dedicated support.

#### \*\*Project Assignment and Oversight\*\* [00:22:28]

- Members discussed the distribution of project management responsibilities among themselves to spread workload:
  - Neville: Mariah Mitchell, Linda Luring, Interfaith Council
  - Dutra: Racket Club, rain garden project
  - Soverino: African Meeting House, Center Street projects, Sanki
  - Schaefer: Landmark House
  - Topham and Antonetti: St. Mary's Church structure and rectory
- A spreadsheet from Brian Turbitt is expected to clarify project statuses and remaining funds, to be cleaned up and redistributed to members for tracking.

#### \*\*Project Funding, Reporting, and Financial Reconciliation\*\* [00:35:00]

- The committee reviewed the importance of matching invoices, check copies, and grant balances.
- Some discrepancies and miscalculations had been found in recent submissions, emphasizing the need for rigorous verification by project managers.
- Discussion on leftover funds and carryover balances, with the goal of recovering unused money for future allocations.
- The committee agreed to proceed cautiously on funding decisions until staffing and office organization stabilize.

#### \*\*Financial Reporting and State Compliance\*\* [00:45:00]

- The committee discussed differences between internal tracking spreadsheets and those maintained by finance staff.
- Brian Turbitt's spreadsheet is considered authoritative as it reflects actual payments and financial transactions.

- Committee members expressed concern about accuracy and consistency of financial records.
- Reporting to the state's Community Preservation Act (CPA) office is legally required; the committee affirmed intent to comply fully.
- Some debate on whether the CPC should continue preparing certain reports internally or rely on the town's finance department, with consensus that legal requirements must be met.

#### **\*\*Historical Context and Office Location\*\*** [00:54:00]

- Brief history of the CPC office location was shared, including former office sites and staffing arrangements.
- Discussion of potential future office moves, with some members interested in alternative space, but current dissatisfaction with proposed town office location.
- Parking and accessibility concerns for downtown offices were noted.

#### **\*\*Application Deadline Scheduling Discussion\*\*** [00:55:43]

- The committee considered moving the application deadline later in the year to avoid summer and early fall bottlenecks.
- Previously, early November deadlines were set to align with warrant article timelines and avoid conflicts at Town Meeting.
- With changes in procedure, deadlines could potentially be moved to September or later to ease applicant burden and improve process timing.

#### **\*\*Next Meeting and Closing Remarks\*\*** [00:57:25]

- The next CPC meeting was scheduled for April 21st, 2026, coinciding with school vacation week.
- Members confirmed availability and discussed potential scheduling conflicts due to personal travel and family events.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:16 AM with unanimous approval.
- Closing greetings included wishes for St. Patrick's Day and Easter.

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### **Key Insights and Conclusions**

- **\*\*Requisitions and project funding\*\*** are being closely monitored with large ongoing projects like St. Paul's and the Racket Club approaching fiscal completion.
- There is **\*\*significant frustration regarding the job advertisement\*\*** for the new administrative position, which does not reflect the committee's agreed-upon terms or state guidance.
- The committee demands a **\*\*30-hour flexible workweek\*\*** for an **\*\*"Administrator" role\*\*** independent of the municipal housing director, contrary to the current ad's part-time assistant position under housing.
- A motion was made to remove the current job ad, though some members prefer a **\*\*collaborative meeting with HR\*\*** to clarify requirements before taking adversarial actions.

- The committee plans to **\*\*digitize and reorganize the office\*\*** to reduce space needs and improve efficiency, aiming for a **\*\*modernized, standalone office\*\*** with clear operational control.
- Financial tracking and reporting are complex; the committee is working to **\*\*reconcile internal project spreadsheets with town finance records\*\*** and maintain compliance with state CPA reporting.
- Project management responsibilities are being distributed among members, with a goal to improve oversight and accountability.
- There are interest in adjusting **\*\*application deadlines\*\*** to optimize participation and reduce seasonal challenges.
- The committee is committed to **\*\*legal compliance and transparent communication\*\*** with the town, state, and involved organizations despite current administrative challenges.

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| Summary Table: Job Advertisement vs. Committee Expectations |                                                                               |                                                      |                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Aspect                                                      | Posted Job Ad                                                                 | Committee Expectations                               | Status/Notes                                            |
| Job Title                                                   | Administrative Assistant                                                      | Administrator                                        | Committee rejects "assistant" title                     |
| Supervisor                                                  | Municipal Housing Director                                                    | Directly accountable to CPC Chair & Vice Chair       | State and committee oppose housing director supervision |
| Hours per Week                                              | 19 hours (part-time)                                                          | Approximately 30 hours with flexible scheduling      | Committee insists on ~30 hours                          |
| Pay Rate                                                    | \$30.90 - \$42.48 per hour                                                    | Negotiated pay rate based on workload                | Posted rate lower than expected                         |
| Duties                                                      | Clerical support, agenda prep, liaison, records, grant monitoring, office ops | Similar but with greater autonomy and responsibility | Committee wants clear administrator role                |
| Posting Location                                            | Town website only (not in newspapers)                                         | Town website + newspaper advertising                 | Committee paying for newspaper ads                      |
| Application Deadline                                        | March 30, 2026, 4 PM                                                          | Agreed timeline but pending repost                   | Committee wants ad removed and corrected                |

## Project Management Assignments Summary

|                     |                                                   |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Member              | Assigned Projects / Areas                         |
| Richen              | Mariah Mitchell, Linda Luring, Interfaith Council |
| Dutra               | Racket Club, Rain Garden                          |
| Soverino            | African Meeting House, Center Street, Sanki       |
| Schafer             | Landmark House                                    |
| Antonietti & Topham | St. Mary Structure and Rectory                    |
| Others              | Awaiting clarification and spreadsheet updates    |

### Financial Oversight Highlights

- Ongoing efforts to ensure \*\*invoices, checks, and grant balances match\*\* precisely.
  - Recovery of unused funds is a priority to maximize future funding availability.
  - Finance department's records (Brian Turbitt's spreadsheets) are primary references for payment status.
  - Legal reporting to state CPA office is mandatory; committee affirms commitment to compliance.
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### Follow-up Actions

- Chair and Vice Chair to arrange meeting with HR Director and Brian Turbitt to resolve job description and posting issues.
  - Office reorganization session planned to streamline space and operations.
  - Distribution and cleanup of project management spreadsheet for clarity and accountability.
  - Continued monitoring of project requisitions and financial reports to maintain fiscal responsibility.
  - Consideration of adjusting application deadlines for better stakeholder engagement.
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This summary captures the comprehensive discussion of the CPC meeting held March 17th, 2026, highlighting key administrative, financial, and operational issues strictly based on the transcript content without extrapolation.