SELECT BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of June 9, 2026. The meeting took place in person in Room A of the Meeting Trailer at 131 Pleasant. Members present were Matt Fee, Brooke Mohr and Jill Vieth. Robert DeCosta participated remotely. Dawn E. Hill joined the meeting later as noted.

Also present were Town Manager C. Elizabeth Gibson, Deputy Town Managers Gregg Tivnan and Rick Sears, and Michelle Ferguson and Maddie Shea of Raftelis.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Mohr called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

II. ANNUAL SELECT BOARD GOVERNANCE RETREAT

Ms. Ferguson reviewed the agenda for the meeting, noted the use of a presentation that will be added to the Board's agenda packet, and reviewed some ground rules for the meeting as to listening, participating and consensus-building. Ms. Ferguson asked the Board members to review expectations for today's session. Ms. Mohr said she finds the annual governance meeting very helpful for the Board's working relationship with each other, with discussion as to how they will function effectively together. Mr. Fee spoke on his commitment to seeing through the projects or initiatives he has helped start or progress. He noted the need for patience. Ms. Vieth said she is planning to listen and learn. Mr. DeCosta said he plans to mostly listen as well.

Chair Hill joined the meeting at 8:15 AM.

Ms. Gibson said she appreciates the opportunity to review roles and communications and to check in on where Town government has been and where it is now. Mr. Tivnan concurred and said a seat at the table is helpful and good for the relationship between staff and the Board. Mr. Sears agreed and said that communications is important, and often differs from Board member to Board member. Chair Hill said she considers this an important meeting, especially when there are new Board members; and, appreciates the opportunity to re-group and hopefully get on the same page with the basics.

Ms. Ferguson asked the Board members to comment on what keeps them engaged and motivated. Mr. Fee said conservation and preservation are very important to him. Chair Hill said she wants to see things through that she has been part of, such as the new Our Island Home and strives to keep meetings running effectively. Ms. Mohr said she initially ran with a goal of investing in housing, which she said has progressed significantly. She said she finds the work gratifying. She said she has a strong commitment to representing unheard voices and increasing community engagement. Ms. Vieth said she likes to figure things out and work through a process and listen and learn from people's perspectives. She added that in her prior work she is used to compromising. Mr. DeCosta commented that there weren't many people running and he felt he should step in.

Ms. Ferguson noted that the Board governs as a body and in order to make progress, it must work together. She asked the members what they think good governance looks like. Ms. Mohr said collaboration is important and involves compromise. She said the Board's Strategic Plan is important and helps guide the Board's focus as well as staff's, toward agreed upon goals. Chair Hill concurred and added that finding common ground is important for effective governance. She said a challenge is working in the unexpected. Mr. Fee agreed and said it is important to have the proper information and analysis for decision-making. Ms. Vieth said being responsive to the community is important. Ms. Mohr commented that being able to communicate the “big picture” is especially necessary. Mr. Sears noted the need to focus on specific projects and the discipline to stick with them and not continuously add new ones. Discussion followed about the importance of values in government, including honesty, having the space to be able to explain a decision or disagreement, responsiveness, adjusting expectations, how decisions are made, the greater good, effective communication of context. Mr. DeCosta said it is important to back the staff. He said he personally does not worry about how people view his decisions, he focuses on making the decisions and that his reasons are solid. He added that his priority for the next three years is developing a realistic spending plan. Ms. Ferguson asked if unanimity is important. Discussion followed with Board members indicating that on some issues it is but that members will have different opinions on many issues; and, the importance of respect for alternative opinions and not actively working to undermine whatever the Board voted.

Discussion followed as to how Board members bring issues they consider important
to the full Board. Chair Hill noted opportunities on the Board’s meeting agenda for that. Ms. Mohr said the annual Strategic Planning retreat is another opportunity.

She reviewed the working relationship of the Board members and the Town Manager and staff. Board members commented as well. Ms. Vieth said she would prefer more debate among Board members. Chair Hill noted that is do-able but within the confines of the meeting structure. Ms. Mohr said that getting points across and listening are important but that arguing may not be effective. She agreed with Chair Hill that maintaining a level of control over the structure of a meeting is necessary. Discussion followed as to the pros and cons of conflict. The use of workshop meetings for more informal conversational discussion was reviewed. Ms. Ferguson asked what the Board wants to be known for. Chair Hill responded progress on projects for the community; collaboration and recognition of transparency in decision making. Mr. Fee said “better than when we found it”. Ms. Mohr said broader input and community engagement with an array of perspectives. Ms. Vieth said she would like people to feel they have an open relationship with the Town; and, feel heard.

Ms. Ferguson reviewed the customary relationship between the Board and Town staff, using a dichotomy diagram, as included in the meeting packet. Ms. Ferguson also reviewed the provisions of the Town Charter with respect to Board and staff roles. Discussion followed as to how this works in practice and the purpose of these provisions; and, shared expectations as to the working relationship.

Mr. DeCosta re-reviewed the issue of debate among Board members. Discussion followed as to that being healthy, and done in an orderly manner through the Chair. Discussion turned to the purpose of questions at meetings and through other avenues, including how these are asked and how these can be most effectively and efficiently asked by Board members and/or answered by Board members or staff.

Discussion followed as to the working relationship between the Board and Town Manager and staff and the elements that make it effective.

The meeting was recessed at 11:30 AM for lunch and resumed at 11:50 AM. Ms. Vieth left the meeting at 11:30 AM and did not return.

Ms. Gibson reviewed the “state of the organization”, including departments under Town Administration as well as significant projects and initiatives pending or underway; and, on the horizon. Mr. DeCosta asked about the hiring process. Ms. Gibson explained the charter provisions. Mr. DeCosta stated that he would like to have a Board discussion sooner rather than later as to capital projects. Some discussion followed. Mr. DeCosta advocated for the Board to have serious discussions about capital project prioritization and spending, and said this is what he wants to focus on this year. Discussion followed on capital projects, costs and impact on the taxpayer.

Ms. Ferguson led a review and further discussion as to the elements of effective governing bodies. She asked if the Board had any other input on making its meetings effective. Mr. Fee noted that the presentations given to the Board now are much improved from 10 or more years ago.

Ms. Ferguson asked if the Board has any next steps or closing comments. Board members generally indicated that the meeting was helpful.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mohr moved to adjourn at 12:23 PM; seconded by Mr. Fee; by roll call vote: Chair Hill – Yes; Mr. DeCosta – Yes; Mr. Fee – Yes; Ms. Mohr – Yes.

Approved the 24th day of June 2026.

SELECT BOARD
JUNE 9, 2026 – 9:00 AM
MEETING TRAILER, ROOM A
131 PLEASANT STREET
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

List of documents used at the meeting:

II. Memo from Michelle Ferguson of Raftelis; Raftelis Governance Retreat presentation