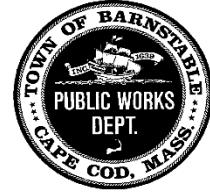


BARNSTABLE
Water Resources



**Town of Barnstable
Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan
Ad Hoc Committee**

Meeting Minutes

Date: January 12, 2026

**Location: Department of Public Works Conference Room,
382 Falmouth Road, Hyannis, MA 02601**

*This meeting is being recorded and will be posted for future viewing on the Town of Barnstable's
Government Access Channel:*

<http://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1>

Committee Members Present:

Scott Horsley, Chair; Brian Hughes, Vice Chair; Tom Cambareri; Zee Crocker; Rob O'Leary; Louise O'Neil; Butch Roberts; Kris Clark, Town Council; Gordon Starr, Town Council

Committee Members Absent:

Paul Neary; Glenn Snell

Others in Attendance (in Person):

Amber Unruh, Special Projects Manager, Department of Public Works; Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Department of Public Works; Christopher Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works; Tom McKean, Director, Health Division; Tom Lee, Chair, Board of Health; Barry Sheingold, Town Council

Others in Attendance (via Zoom):

Rob Steen, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works; Griffin Beaudoin, Town Engineer, Department of Public Works

Agenda:

Call to Order

Scott Horsley, Chair, called the January 12, 2026 meeting of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan Ad Hoc Committee to order at 5:01 PM. The meeting of the committee was held in-person with committee members attending in the Department of Public Works Conference Room located at 382 Falmouth Road, Hyannis MA 02601. Two members of the Department of Public Works Staff, Rob Steen, Assistant Director, and Griffin Beaudoin, Town Engineer, attended via Zoom.

Administrative Items

a) Recording Notice

Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works, read the notice of meeting recording

b) Roll Call

Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, Department of Public Works, conducted a roll call from the committee. The attendance of members is reflected above.

In response to a question Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, about the need to conduct roll call votes, Chris clarified that while Rob Steen, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works, was attending via Zoom, roll call votes are not necessary as Rob Steen is staff support and not a voting member of the committee.

During the Roll Call, Rob Steen noted that the audio on Zoom was muted. Chris unmuted the audio and noted that the meeting audio was being recorded on multiple devices.

c) Approval of November 18, 2025 Minutes

Scott Horsley, Chair, entertains a motion to approve the November 18, 2025 meeting minutes. Councilor Clark moves to approve the minutes. Butch Roberts seconds. The committee votes to approve the November 18, 2025 meeting minutes. Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, abstains due to his absence from the previous meeting.

Conversation with Board of Health/Health Division Regarding Feedback on Proposed Recommendations

Scott Horsley, Chair, thanks Tom McKean, Director, Health Division, and Tom Lee, Chair, Board of Health, for their feedback on the proposed recommendations. Scott notes that the decision was made to postpone the December meeting in favor of allowing everyone time to review the feedback and coordinate a time to meet with Tom McKean and Tom Lee. He invites Tom Lee to discuss each point in the response, and notes that Amber Unruh, Special Project Manager, Department of Public Works, has additional slides and data regarding setbacks that will be shared at the relevant time.

- Tom Lee starts the discussion on the first item, which pertains to the Town's Watershed Permit Application and questions what effect the recommendation has on the permitting and what the committee's desire is with the recommendation.
 - Scott responds that one reason to do this is the Massachusetts Estuaries Program (MEP) model is not perfect and there are unknowns about exactly how much nitrogen will be removed through the CWMP. He notes another reason is to expedite when results could be seen in the estuaries. Many areas of the CWMP have time-to-travel over 5 years, and there is a desire to see change as soon as possible.
 - Zee Crocker responds that there was a water quality advisory committee that existed previously which was disbanded by the Town Council several years ago. He does not feel it adequate to point to MassDEP as having the answer and that nothing else needs to be done to improve water quality. He notes one reason for this thinking is that MassDEP's designation of Nitrogen Sensitive Areas (NSA) is a recent advancement, whereas scientists have known about these areas for decades. For 50 years the problem has been ignored, and the problem is now at the forefront and is dangerous for human health, the economy, and Cape Cod overall. We need to take proactive steps. There are tools available such as cranberry bog restoration, and one of those tools is advancements in septic system technologies. Zee assumes that these technologies will eventually become what Title 5 is now, and Title 5 will go the way of cesspools. He views the efforts of this committee as looking at steps to potentially protect the community from water quality issues.

Councilor Starr joined the meeting in-person.

- Zee notes another reason is the financial impact of the CWMP and reiterates questions from previous meetings wondering if the Town will be able to afford the full 30-year plan. There are billions of dollars involved from many sources. If this is not achievable, a discussion needs to be had about how to build and work towards alternatives now. There is a need to go beyond what the regulatory solution is.
- Tom McKean emphasizes that the work done by the committee should not be disregarded and that later feedback items deal with the bulk of the committee's work.
- Tom Lee notes his understanding that, if the Watershed Permit is approved, there is a monitoring component to track how much nitrogen is removed. Part of that is the ability to make adjustments to improve nitrogen removal. He also notes that the Board of Health has to consider the financial impacts to residents, which he estimates Best Available Technology is around \$50,000. There is a messaging change as the Watershed Permit does not require residents to upgrade their systems, but this recommendation would.
 - Zee responds that cheap is relative. His calculations show that the actual cost for sewerizing one parcel is between \$150,000-\$200,000. The assumption of \$50,000 for Best Available Technology is one-third the price and a potentially lower-cost solution. He

notes there is a State Tax Credit for up to \$18,000, which approximately 60% of the Town makes enough to get the full amount. He guesses that, of the property owners near the water, 90%-95% of property owners will “easily” be able to take full advantage of the Tax Credit.

- Councilor Starr notes there is a bill to make the full \$18,000 available to everyone, regardless of income.
- Scott adds, in relation to economic questions, that Phase 3 of the CWMP is the most difficult to sewer due to density and the need for additional pump stations. Implementing these systems would be cost-effective and give the Town experience with them. This will allow the Town to make decisions later about Phase 3 alternatives. With this recommendation, there is not a huge number of systems that would be required to upgrade annually, and a discussion has been had about financing options, including with Mark Milne, Director, Finance Division. There was SRF money available and said money may be available again, according to Scott’s sources at MassDEP. Scott clarifies that the Watershed Permit includes looking at alternatives throughout the duration. This recommendation could be considered as an alternative to sewerage at some point.
 - Chris Gadd, Communications Assistant, notes that the usage of technologies other than sewer would be in addition to the plan, not in substitution.
 - Scott disagrees, noting his understanding that the CWMP accounts for other technologies to be implemented.
 - Rob Steen, Assistant Director, Department of Public Works clarifies that both Chris and Scott are correct in their statements. The current thinking places innovative/alternative septic systems as an addition to the current plan. Scott is referring to the possibility of using I/A systems along with sewer and other alternative approaches, potentially making elements of the CWMP, particularly in Phase 3, accomplished without sewer.
- Tom Lee opens the discussion for his second point of feedback, which pertains to allowing residents to volunteer to upgrade their septic system and not requiring residents to upgrade. He notes that some properties around the water have already installed I/A septic systems. Additional communication efforts could be made to encourage additional implementation. The preference of some Board of Health members is this approach, and he wonders if there are other ways to encourage implementation.

Rob O’Leary joined the meeting in-person.

- Zee notes that Tom Lee holds another position which would allow the encouragement of installing I/A septic systems, that being Tom Lee’s position on the Conservation Commission. Through that, owners of waterfront sites could negotiate with the Conservation Commission using I/A septic systems as a tool. There should be a way for people to get something out of installing I/A septic systems. Other communities have taken a similar approach. One such

approach is the ability to use Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). He alludes to Councilor Starr's mention of State Legislation being considered that would allow the Town to use taxes to encourage people. He is all for encouraging people to take this approach but expresses frustration if nothing were to be done.

- Scott suggests the volunteer approach could be in addition to regulations, which he is open to debating the specifics of that regulation. He also notes a 4:1 mitigation buffer through the Conservation Commission which could have nitrogen-reducing systems as one of the mitigation approaches. He notes his desire to have some regulatory approach but is open to what exactly that is. On top of the regulations, incentives could be investigated and considered. He senses there will not be a lot of volunteers.
- Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, asks if the suggestion to move from a regulation to a volunteer approach is due to cost differentials. He wonders, if the Town were to come up with a way to offset costs, would that affect this thinking?
 - Tom Lee responds, in response to Zee's comments about the Conservation Commission, approximately 4 years ago there was a discussion between the members of the Commission about allowing I/A septic systems as a form of mitigation. This would have required new regulations, and the Commission found it difficult to formulate the amount of mitigation from I/A septic systems, and as such it did not move forward. He notes that, like Rob Steen, he considers load more important than flow. He looks at how much load can be reduced by I/A septic systems. Regarding the ADU conversation, he notes it is a challenge for the Board of Health currently. There are people before the Board looking at ways to add an ADU and seeing if one can be installed with the current system or if an I/A septic system is necessary. There is a deficiency in Board of Health Regulations pertaining to ADUs and I/A septic systems, which he anticipates addressing this year. He also notes existing regulations that are inconsistent between chapters, which causes confusion. He is focused on getting these regulations tidied up.
- Brian asks Tom Lee to clarify his position on a volunteer approach
 - Tom Lee responds that, if there is a credit to the residents, the "door" would be opened more by asking residents to volunteer. He acknowledges that many of the parcels in the recommended setback are next to the water, but many of the applications in front of the Board of Health are land-rich and pocket-poor, with limited money. There are many factors that go into these decisions, one of which is considering if residents will be able to afford such an action.
 - Scott notes that Tisbury offers town financing and breaks based on income. There are potential opportunities. His guess is that many in the recommended area will be able to afford an upgrade, but there will certainly be some who cannot.
- Scott moves the conversation to Tom Lee's third feedback point which relates to the recommended setback distances. He notes that Amber has prepared several maps and suggests

Amber goes through them. Prior to Amber beginning, he asks if Tom Lee's point is to start with 100-foot setbacks.

- Tom Lee responds that there are regulations that could be made right now within the 100-foot setbacks. This would be the starter point.
 - Tom McKean notes this could possibly be expanded to 300- or 500-foot setbacks.
- Amber presents 4 maps of Barnstable, each with different setbacks. She notes the grayed-out areas respond to existing sewer, and the CWMP Phases, including the stages which for this exercise have been combined into Phase 2 areas.
 - The first map presented (labeled "Version 4") is Tom Lee's 100-foot setback recommendation, which also removes waters draining to nitrogen-sensitive areas, with the exception of the Marstons Mills River.
- Scott asks to clarify where the setback is measured from and whether any amount of parcel within the setback would trigger this regulation.
 - Amber responds that Scott is correct, any amount of parcel within the setback means that parcel would be considered in the setback. The water line is determined based on where the nearest property line ends to the estuary. She notes a yellow area on the map which represents the Osterville Main Street District, which the Board of Health is looking to address.
 - Tom McKean notes the Osterville Main Street item is number 6 on the list of feedback.
- Scott asks how many parcels are included in the Version 4 map.
 - Amber responds there are 1,140 total parcels in the Version 4 map, but only 410 would be subject to Tom Lee's proposed recommendations. This is due to parcels being in Phase 1 or Phase 2, or being unable to be developed.
- Scott asks to confirm that the only difference between the 1,140 parcels and the 410 parcels are those parcels included in Phases 1 or 2 of the CWMP.
 - Amber adds that parcels that are not developable are also excluded.
- Amber presents the next map (labeled "Version 3") which uses the rules from the Version 4 map but increases the setback distance to 350 feet. This distance is based on groundwater travel time, which 350 feet equates to approximately 1 year of. This version would have 698 parcels subject to the regulations.
- Amber presents the next map (labeled "Version 2") which follows the recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee that had previously been discussed, except decreasing the setback distance to 500 feet and including parcels previously in the stages. This version also modifies the recommendation related to Grand Island and Little Island to adhere to setbacks only, not the full

island as was previously recommended. This version would have 1,222 parcels subject to the regulations.

- Amber presents the next map (“Version 1”) which is the original setback figure, with a setback of 1,000 feet and including Grand Island and Little Island. The only change from maps presented at previous meetings are the parcels added to Phase 2 from the stages. This version would have 2,075 parcels subject to the regulations.

Amber displays a summary table listing each map version, with columns denoting total parcels and parcels that would be subject to the regulation. The table includes a row with totals, and also breaks each version down by waterbody.

- Brian asks to scroll through every map to provide a graphical representation of the growth of each setback.
- Scott asks Tom Lee and Tom McKean whether the 100-foot or 350-foot setback would be more amenable to the Board of Health.
 - Tom Lee responds that the 100-foot setback is currently under the Board of Health’s jurisdiction and is easy to implement. The 350-foot setback was chosen because it is one year of travel, whereas the 1,000-foot setback is 3 years’ time-to-travel. He has talked to one member of the Board about this, and the 350-foot setback was received positively. However, he has not talked to the full Board about this. Depending on these discussions, he will have to talk with the rest of the Board on their feelings.
- Butch Roberts notes that the proposed recommendation relies on people who are already working on their septic system, so there is already an investment in it. A previous figure identified approximately 5% of systems in Town that this would apply to annually.
 - Tom McKean notes his and Tom Lee’s understanding that the recommendation would be a “blanket” approach for everyone within the setback
 - Tom Lee notes there is a timeline on the original recommendation based on time. There are triggers based on new construction or selling the house, which he disagrees with. If the septic system is not failing, the owner should not be made to replace it. He agrees with using the failure of the septic system. He notes there is a time-based limit.
 - Chris notes that the recommendation utilizes the triggers and a time limit of 20 years after which the system would be upgraded even if a trigger was not hit.
 - Scott notes that the triggers are negotiable. There would be discussions needed with the Board of Health to see what makes sense. This approach was modeled after Tisbury, and they have found people to be more understanding as the property owner is doing work to the property and not just being told to upgrade the septic system. He clarifies these upgrades would be over a longer period of time, not all at once.

- Brian notes that initial discussions may have included a more immediate upgrade timeline, but the committee has since pulled back on that idea.
 - Zee notes that math shows about 5% of properties per year, and the numbers are small.
- Scott moves the conversation to Tom Lee's fourth feedback point which relates to the scientific basis for the recommendation. He reiterates that 350 feet is roughly one year time-to-travel, which is the scientific basis. To him, sooner is better.
 - Tom Lee notes a concern from the Board of Health to have some scientific justification for the recommendation.
 - Scott responds that the numbers which Amber presented are the scientific aspect of the recommendation.
 - Zee notes there is data showing that time-to-travel through the sandy soils of Cape Cod is minimal. He has seen data from Falmouth which shows what's going on. The groundwater along Route 28 has a travel time of 30-50 years, so even after sewer is installed there will be some time before there is impact. There should be a pincer effect where sewer addresses the interior and I/A systems address the coastline.
 - Rob Steen adds that, when looking at a scientific basis between the different setback distances regarding Nitrogen, there isn't much except the number of systems captured and therefore the amount of nitrogen removed. There is nothing "magic" about different setback distances.
 - Tom Cambareri asks what is wrong with this approach. There is a policy decision to make about enhancing nitrogen removal from groundwater. He is leaning towards the 1,000-foot setback as there is a greater amount of nitrogen that would be removed. The CWMP focuses on many approaches. Aggressively implementing alternative technology there is a greater chance of success overall.
- Scott notes another item relating to cost, which is that a homeowner requiring an upgrade for an addition or system failure, there is already money being spent to comply with Title 5. The nitrogen element is the marginal cost, which is probably half of the \$50,000 that was mentioned earlier.
 - Tom Lee notes he believes the cost will likely be closer to \$35,000-\$40,000.
 - Scott notes that NitROE is offering a 20% discount to municipalities who take this approach.
- Brian notes that, if a 350-foot setback distance were utilized, there is still a backlog of groundwater that would be filtering through and still getting to the estuary. There is a discussion of how many years of grace period is desired.
 - Tom Lee reiterates that the further the setback distance goes, the more chance of having a land-rich pocket-poor situation.

- Tom McKean asks to confirm that a 2-year time-to-travel would be a 700-foot setback and three-years would be 1,050 feet.
 - Scott confirms this is correct.
 - Tom Camabreri clarifies that each year of time-to-travel is approximately 350 feet
- Councilor Clark notes her assumption that waterfront property owners would want to make an investment to preserve their property value. They are the ones most affected by water quality and are the primary beneficiaries of the system. Her precinct is not getting sewer but still contributes to it. There are programs to help offset pressures for waterfront properties, but they are also the primary beneficiaries.
 - Tom Lee notes that available programs are still loans, not grants, and still need to be paid back.
 - Councilor Clark notes there are some more programs in the works, including the modification of the State Tax Credit. These all rely on the taxpayers to affect one property owner and increase their property value.
- Scott moves the conversation to the rest of the feedback points, which he notes have largely been covered in the previous discussions. He invites Tom Lee to address any points not previously discussed.
- Tom Lee notes that feedback item 6 relates to the Osterville Commercial area. This request comes from the inspector overseeing that area who, three years ago, noted the area has a lot of nitrogen from commercial properties. The parcels are tight in that area, and if sewer is not an option, then it should be a Best Available Technology septic system.
 - Zee notes that hopefully Osterville gets sewerized. If there is a cluster-system approach it could be accomplished using public space.
 - Amber notes that the area is currently anticipated to receive sewer as part of Phase 2 of the CWMP.
 - Tom McKean notes that this comes from one of the Board Members who requested to address commercial areas. Main Street, Osterville, is an example of one of these areas. Windmill Plaza, Cotuit, is another example.
- Councilor Sheingold asks if abutters of ponds and lakes whose property is also contributing to nitrogen could be made to install a phosphorous-reducing I/A system following the same guidelines as the current recommendation.
 - Scott responds that there is a separate recommendation for ponds and lakes, which is separate from this initiative. There could be future consideration for the idea. The issue is a lack of available phosphorous-reducing I/A technologies, which will hopefully change in the coming years.

- Councilor Sheingold relays concerns he has heard about property owners having to install an I/A system to address nitrogen then in 5-7 years having to install another I/A system to address phosphorous, both of which are significant investments. There should be thought given to this.
 - Tom Lee notes his understanding that the recommendation proposed by the committee is for coastal waters, not for ponds and lakes. There is only one system that addresses nitrogen and phosphorous and it is not generally approved.
- Scott remarks that there has been a lot of time put into this effort, and this is the primary recommendation from the committee. He suggests that if the committee can get Tom McKean and Tom Lee on board with recommending this to the Board of Health, that will be a good step forward. He asks how close the committee's current recommendation is to their liking.
 - Councilor Clark wonders if it will be helpful to make a presentation to the Board of Health
 - Scott responds to Councilor Clark that this will be done, and clarifies his question is more a straw poll. If Tom McKean and Tom Lee are "no go" than this is a waste of time.
 - Tom McKean responds that a 1,000-foot setback sounds good based on the explanation of time-to-travel. He asks if Mashpee has approved of this, as he thought they had.
 - Tom Lee responds that Mashpee has a 1,000-feet buffer zone through their Board of Health, but their requirements for I/A systems are very lax.
 - Scott notes that Tisbury is not restricting their regulation to distances, they are requiring it everywhere within the watershed.
 - Zee remarks that his interpretation of the committee was to move the Town from the "bleeding edge" to the "leading edge". He asks what the downside is of adopting the stronger regulation. He understands the potential financial impact, but the downside is de minimis and the financial risk of individuals is a burden that the Town is collectively taking on. If we save one person \$10,000, there is still pollution that needs to be cleaned up. He argues there is a larger issue of older people who claim not to generate much and not wanting to contribute to a solution. His response is that there are thousands of them and thousands not in that situation, so we all must work towards a solution. He notes that house transfers happen approximately every 7 years, and each transfer can bring with it a different demographic. There should be steps to address these differences. Sewer is important, but I/A technology is also important to learn how to adapt. He remarks to not let "perfect" be the enemy of "good". There is a way to treat the "sick patient", and he encourages taking the risk to start solving the problem.
- Scott notes his optimism with presenting to the Board of Health and the Town Council and getting them to agree on this recommendation. However, this is unlikely if Tom McKean and Tom Lee oppose it.
 - Tom McKean notes that he and Tom Lee are not opposed to the recommendation.

- Tom Lee notes that they are thinking of the overall package and how it will be presented to the residents. There needs to be an allowance for those residents unable to afford the upgrade
- Scott asks if the Town offers any financial assistance for any analogous items
 - Kelly Collopy, Communications Manager, Department of Public Works, responds that financial assistance is available through the Cape Cod AquiFund through a loan to finance sewer connection. She notes the three costs associated with connecting to sewer and notes the sewer assessment can be financed through the treasurer/tax collector's office. There is no money off, it just extends the length of the payments up to 30 years. The actual connection can be financed through the AquiFund at either 0% or 2% interest, or 4% interest for condominiums. Sewer connections are the only item available for 0% interest. Septic upgrades can be financed through the AquiFund for mandated upgrades. Those wishing to "do good" and upgrade their septic system without a mandate would be unable to use the AquiFund.
- Scott asks to confirm that, if the Board of Health passes these regulations, a property owner would qualify for a 0% interest loan through the AquiFund.
 - Kelly responds this is incorrect. The 0% interest rate is only for sewer connections. There are 2% and 4% interest rates for septic system upgrades.
- Zee asks to confirm that the 2% and 4% are available only once a property owner is mandated to connect.
 - Kelly confirms this is correct.
- Rob O'Leary asks if the AquiFund is financially stable and able to handle additional demand.
 - Kelly responds that, while she cannot speak for the AquiFund, the AquiFund is well capitalized. The DPW coordinates with a representative from the AquiFund to provide information on anticipated connections and other information to assist the AquiFund. If these recommendations were passed, the DPW would let the AquiFund know how many parcels are affected so they can properly prepare.
- Tom McKean inquires about a property owner who was unable to get a loan through the AquiFund due to poor credit and wondered if Kelly has any insight into that.
 - Kelly responds that she can't answer that as she doesn't work for the AquiFund
 - Tom McKean notes that you don't automatically get a loan
- Brian asks how much the committee should concern itself with financials. The basic task of the committee is to reduce nitrogen; the secondary element is finance. It's been pointed out that these recommendations are presented to Town Council with information on finance, and it is up to the Town Council to determine financial assistance, if any.

- Kelly notes that, if these recommendations are passed, it will fall on her and someone from the Board of Health to communicate the changes and available resources. This is what she was hired to do.
- Zee remarks that there is a small number, approximately 50, who would hit the trigger to upgrade each year. Of those, he would be shocked if it's 10% of people who need financial assistance. This is based on the demographics of Cape Cod.
 - Scott provides some rough calculations which amount to 20 people needing some form of assistance.
 - Kelly adds that financial assistance is generally the same for sewer connections and mandated septic system upgrades. An exception to this is the lack of a sewer assessment when doing a septic system upgrade. The usage of resources is affected by education and outreach. There are people who go before the Board of Health asking for assistance "all the time".
- Scott notes, in response to Tom Lee's question about financial assistance, there are opportunities available such as the Cape Cod AquiFund and the State Tax Credit. There would also be the opportunity to offer a waiver under the "Manifest and Justice" clause of Title 5, in a worst-case scenario.
- Councilor Starr opines that the financial question should be removed from the Board of Health. They should not be the ones looking through people's finances or listening to their stories.
 - Tom Lee responds that the Board is the one hearing the financial concerns.
 - Kelly notes that every department that interacts with a project, including DPW, Board of Health, and Treasurer/Tax Collector, all hear the same sentiments. It would be impossible to solve everyone's problems.
- Zee notes a unique experience with an individual who was unable to afford an I/A septic system, which resulted in the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition stepping in, and the Board of Health changing the house from a 2-bedroom to a 4-bedroom house. The valuation of the house skyrocketed and the owner ended up selling for double the original value of the home. There are different parts, and therefore different approaches, to potential relief.
- Councilor Sheingold recalls an element of condominium law which requires owners to invest in necessary items otherwise they will be forced to sell their property. This may be something to consider, although he is not certain of the legal abilities to implement it.
 - Tom Lee responds this would be fine for condominiums, but not for single-family homes.
- Scott asks if there is any desire to change the current recommendation for a 1,000-foot setback to help the recommendation get through. He is in favor of getting something done.

- Rob O'Leary asks if the 1,000-foot setback is acceptable to the Board of Health
 - Tom Lee responds that, based on his conversations with one member of the Board of Health, that member is more inclined to use a 350-foot setback. Personally, he doesn't mind a further distance, but he needs to bring the discussion to the Board of Health and discuss it in its entirety.
- Rob O'Leary says he doesn't see a problem with the committee asking the Town Council for financial relief for I/A septic systems. This is a priority, and we should want to be at 1,000 feet. We've gone through the hard work, and we could add a request for financial relief. We should be aggressive about environmental impacts while also being aggressive about financial assistance.
- Councilor Clark notes that Mark Milne presented at the last Town Council meeting regarding the financial status of the CWMP and recommends everyone to watch it. It was explained that there are suggestions of a tax override or special fund for consideration by the Town Council as there are "head winds".
 - Councilor Starr notes that Mark Milne was aiming for the Spring of 2027 but was also only looking 5 years ahead. Looking at the program as a whole is "too fuzzy" according to Mark Milne.
- Scott suggests there could be a pitch to show this as being a financially attractive alternative. There are private finances, State Tax Credits, and there is cost savings based on the marginal cost of between sewer and I/A septic systems.
 - Rob O'Leary adds that there is an impact further down the road on sewer and mitigation, and this could possibly save the Town money in the future.
 - Scott opines that over a short period of time the data should be convincing. The effectiveness of systems is increasing and the cost is decreasing.
 - Zee comments that the recommendations can be aspirational, with the 1,000-foot setback and an ability to provide financial relief to a small group who need it. The plan is adaptive and financial relief could be modified if desired in the next 5-year update.
 - Tom Cambreri opines that the committee should hit the ground running. There could be 300,000 gallons per day being addressed. There needs to be innovation associated with this plan and get nitrogen removal at the forefront. He sees new pipes being installed as going to four-story developments and not getting nitrogen out of the ground.
- Councilor Starr asks if there was sufficient nitrogen removal from Grand Island and Little Island, would the Town be able to get credit for that. Could we adjust other areas in the watershed as a result and remove the need for sewer?
 - Tom Cambareri responds that we should be able to.
 - Scott responds that we would need to redefine the model. There is potential for this.
 - Zee responds that it is a complicated modeling question. Based on the current model it likely wouldn't be possible, but the current model is 25 years old and should be updated.

It relies on one sentinel station, which does not fully capture everything. A better model should allow what Councilor Starr suggests. Math done by the Barnstable Clean Water Coalition suggests that Grand Island and Little Island generate 25% of the excess nitrogen load.

- Tom McKean suggests that the wording of the proposed recommendation be clarified, as the presented wording suggests that any property not part of Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the CWMP would have this applied to them, such as areas of West Barnstable.
 - Zee notes this is a draft and can be recirculated.
 - Scott notes his understanding of Tom McKean's edit but notes uncertainty of the solution.
 - Tom Cambareri suggests "within the CWMP boundary" as a solution.
- Councilor Starr asks how the modeling gets redone.
 - Zee responds that it should be the United States Geological Survey (USGS). They are the gold standard. This is an ask of the municipality to other municipalities. The Cape Cod Commission has been talking with USGS already about this effort.
 - Tom Cambreri notes the current political situation has resulted in key modelers being forced to retire.
 - Scott remarks on previous conversations with USGS that indicated advantages of updating the MEP model. The USGS model includes time-to-travel, which the current MEP model does not include.
 - Amber clarifies that it assumes a steady state of the load and does not look at nitrogen coming from other areas.
 - Scott suggests that MEP is concerned with the USGS model being adopted and needing to pause efforts based on the MEP model. Looking at other models could be an ask of the Town Council.
- Tom McKean asks what the committee's timeline is for going to the Town Council.
 - Scott remarks it was December of last year.
 - Tom McKean suggests the committee hold a workshop during the Board of Health's March meeting, noting that that February meeting is booked with a workshop on tobacco.
 - Zee notes that we should get there sooner rather than later.
 - Scott relays his thoughts that the committee wraps up, potentially in February 2026, then sends the report to Town Council and presents it in February. The next step is to go to the Board of Health with the Town Council's vote, which leads to the March meeting of the Board of Health.
 - Tom McKean suggests the committee present to the Board of Health at the March 24, 2026 meeting, held at Town Hall.

- Brian asks the councilors in the room what their sense is for the potential reaction of the Town Council to the presentation, which will address technical solutions while asking for financial support for certain residents.
 - Councilor Clark suggests talking with Mark Milne first.
 - Councilor Starr notes that he has not seen other communities assist residents financially in regard to I/A Septic Systems. It is difficult to give money to private projects/citizens.
 - Tom McKean notes that residents are directed to the AquiFund in every case.
 - Kelly confirms that if this were a policy which got implemented, the Town would direct residents to the AquiFund for financial assistance.
 - Councilor Starr opines that this is a regional problem, specially making it equitable.
- Rob O'Leary asks if the AquiFund is through the state or the county.
 - Kelly responds that it is run by the county.
 - Scott notes that the money comes from the state.
- Rob O'Leary asks if the AquiFund could be more generous in situations where an I/A septic system upgrade is required.
 - Kelly responds that she has no say in the AquiFund, and only communicates that it is available.
 - Rob O'Leary suggests it may be worth reaching out to them to at least ask the question.
- Rob O'Leary asks if the funding is "locked up" in state law, noting there was a state & local conversation about it.
 - Tom Cambareri responds that the AquiFund came from a state law which Barnstable County jumped on. If they hadn't, it would have been administered by each town.
- Rob O'Leary notes his assumption that Cape Cod got most of the money that came from the State Law
 - Tom Cambareri responds that this is correct.
- Rob O'Leary again suggests making the AquiFund more generous or at least making the ask.
 - Kelly responds that it may be worth having a representative from the AquiFund attend the presentation. She believes the AquiFund briefed the Town Council before but could be wrong. She notes that everyone she has worked with at the AquiFund has been very helpful and willing to be part of presentations.
- Scott asks Kelly to attend the Board of Health meeting on March 24 and the Town Council meeting where the committee presents the recommendation.
 - Kelly responds that she will likely be at both meetings.

- Councilor Sheingold asks whether the AquiFund relies on federal money and whether there is adequate funding going forward.
 - Kelly responds she believes it is State money but emphasizes the desire to have a representative from the AquiFund to answer these questions.
 - Tom Lee notes there may be SRF funding involved.
- Councilor Sheingold notes that when the Town Council discussed adopting the Stretch Code, there were discussions on the security of the funding and where it comes from.
 - Kelly notes her recommendation to have someone from the AquiFund either present or actively involved in creating the presentation, if there is a feeling that finances will be brought up.
- Tom McKean asks to confirm that an AquiFund loan is over 20 years
 - Kelly confirms this is correct
 - The committee estimates the monthly payment to be approximately \$100 on a \$50,000 loan over 20 years.
- Councilor Clark notes another consideration is a regional position for monitoring. This is integral to I/A septic systems.
 - Scott responds that this consideration ties into the RME. There is a template from Pleasant Bay which allows 10% of systems to be inspected per month. This was done by MASSTC.
- Tom Lee comments that there is a discussion about whether these systems are labeled as Innovative/Alternative (I/A) or Nitrogen Reducing (NR) or Best Available Nitrogen Reducing Technology (BANRT). He believes the committee should use “Best Available Technology” to keep the terminology consistent.
- Tom Lee comments that MassDEP maintains a list of the Best Available Nitrogen Reducing Technology and the Town should not maintain its own list, instead just refer to the MassDEP list.
 - Scott notes this makes sense.
 - Kelly notes that the DPW directs people to the MassDEP list.
 - Rob Steen notes the downside of this approach is that MassDEP’s list can be broad and may not reach the level of treatment that the Town wants. This could result in someone being able to install a less-than-ideal system, and the Town having no way to prevent it.
- A discussion is had between multiple committee members about the treatment levels of systems currently on the MassDEP list, with the question specifically about systems that do not achieve at least 10mg/L of removal.

Chris pulls up the MassDEP list of Best Available Nitrogen Reducing Technologies from the MassDEP website. The list shows technologies which do not achieve at least 10mg/L.

- Scott notes his assumption is the committee would like to stick with the original recommendation of a 1,000-foot setback and if there is any disagreement with that.
 - No disagreements are heard.
- Scott notes his assumption that Tom Lee and Tom McKean will do their best to help the committee and to continue to discuss and work with the committee.
- Scott assigns himself the task of working on editing the report to Town Council and send it to the committee prior to the next meeting.
- Brian asks what the purpose of the February meeting will be
- Rob Steen asks, regarding the order of meetings, whether it makes sense to go to Town Council first as it seems backwards. He assumes that Town Council would be the final stop, with the Board of Health already on board with the recommendations. Putting Town Council first could put the Board of Health in an awkward position as it asks the Board to address something that already has Town Council approval.
 - Scott opines that he has a better shot of getting this through with the Town Council than Board of Health. He notes that the Board of Health does not have to listen to the Town Council, they are independent and don't have to take the recommendation of Town Council.
 - Tom Lee agrees with Rob Steen's proposal that the committee should go to the Board of Health first.
 - Zee notes this means waiting until March.
 - Tom Cambareri notes we are an advisory committee to the Town Council and report to them. He notes this is a complex, messy practice and the committee needs to move forward now.
- Councilor Sheingold asks if the regulations will be through the Town Council or the Board of Health, or both.
 - Scott responds that it will be through the Board of Health. Town Council would make a recommendation to the Board of Health if they agree with the proposed recommendations.

Several overlapping conversations occur

- Scott asks Councilor Clark about the process of getting on the Town Council's agenda and how soon the committee could get in front of them.

- Councillor Clark suggests for Scott to meet with the Town Manager, Town Council president, and herself to discuss getting this on the agenda.
- Scott suggests that the committee sets a February meeting date, which will help inform other scheduling items. He notes he does not have a preference regarding the order in which the committee goes in front of Town Council or Board of Health.
- Rob O'Leary asks if the Board of Health would be more open to the proposal, or act differently if the committee went to them first.
 - Tom Lee suggests going to the Board of Health first to get the support.
- Zee asks to confirm that the first available time in front of the Board of Health is in March.
 - Tom McKean confirms this, noting the scheduled Tobacco workshop in February.
 - Zee suggests the committee goes in front of the Board of Health in March, then in front of Town Council in April.
 - Councillor Clark notes that April is budget season and is more difficult to schedule.
- Tom McKean suggests a first reading of the proposed recommendations at the February Board of Health Meeting, which will give the Board something to digest.
 - Tom Lee suggests there could be a separate workshop meeting on this matter, which would give time to the Board of Health to review, and not take up space at a regular Board of Health meeting. This would be in early March. He will have to check with the other Board members for their availability.
- Scott returns to scheduling the next meeting of the committee. It should occur before the meeting with the Board of Health. It will also allow him time to revise the proposal document.
 - Tom McKean asks if the updated recommendation will still include the "sale" trigger, not just basing it off a system inspection.
 - Scott responds that it will be included and if the Board of Health wants to adjust it that is fine. The idea is to make it as comprehensive as possible.
- Tom Cambareri asks if it would be worthwhile to have a scope of work for implementation, discussing what additional investigation may be necessary.
 - Scott suggests this is what the Board of Health will be doing.
 - Tom agrees and notes it may be helpful and relieve some pressure from the Board of Health.
 - Tom McKean notes the Board of Health will need a map and list of all properties that this will apply to.
 - Tom Cambareri notes the DPW has a good handle of the associated data, but there are questions of what else may be needed to make a solid proposal.

- Scott asks if there is any issue with DPW getting the data
 - Rob Steen responds that the DPW already started scoping out regulations. This was then put on the backburner to confirm the basic concepts. If the concepts are developed enough, the DPW can work with the Legal Department to develop regulations.
- Tom Camabareri suggests a bulleted list of actions that need to happen for this effort.
 - Scott suggests Tom Camabareri work on this and bring it to the next meeting.
 - Zee adds that there was previous discussion about what would need to change for the Town to look at load instead of flow, and that may be useful to include. He suggests that if word gets out about properties being allowed to get more bedrooms, there will be a large, positive response of people putting in these systems.
 - Brian notes that someone who needs financial assistance for septic systems would not be able to afford another bedroom
 - Zee clarifies this would apply to the entire town. The intent is to get systems installed so the Town can learn from them.
- A discussion is had about the timing of the next meeting. After some discussion, it is decided that that committee will meet on Monday, February 2, 2026 at 5:00 PM in the Selectman's Conference Room, Town Hall.
 - Tom Lee notes he intends to attend to hear any changes that may occur.
- Scott thanks Tom Lee and Tom McKean for coming in
 - Tom McKean notes there are no promises, but they will do their best.
 - Scott notes his understanding.

Several overlapping conversations occur.

Public Comment/Questions

No matters were heard.

Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

No matters were heard.

Adjournment

Scott Horsley, Chair, entertains a motion to adjourn. Brian Hughes, Vice Chair, moves to adjourn the meeting. Butch Roberts seconds. The meeting is adjourned at 6:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher Gadd, Communications Assistant, Barnstable Department of Public Works