



The Town of Barnstable

Office of Town Manager

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May 26, 2026

To: Barnstable Town Councilors

From: Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

RE: Town Manager update for May 13, 2026, through May 26, 2026

1. We remain on schedule with the budget action calendar. The Fiscal Year 2027 proposed operating budget is posted on the Town website. FY 2027 Operating Budget is available at the following link: <https://city-barnstable-ma-cleardoc.cleargov.com/22636/1031780/d>. Additionally, it can be accessed from the Town's home, Finance, and Town Manager's pages. Hard copies of the budget document will be provided to the Town Council prior to the public hearings on the operating budget which are scheduled to begin on June 11, 2026. The first reading of the operating budget appropriation orders will take place at the May 28, 2026 Town Council meeting. The [Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Improvement Plan](#) is available on the Town's website at the link provided. For information on our fiscal year budgets, please view the Town's Open Budget website at <http://budget.townofbarnstable.us>.
2. On May 20, 2026, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued its decision in Helen Banevicius et al v. Town of Barnstable et al, affirming the Superior Court's dismissal of the lawsuit and ruling in favor of the Town and Bog Partners LLC, the purchaser of the Jenkins Bog property. In this matter, plaintiffs, consisting of abutting property owners and a nonprofit preservation group, challenged the sale of the Jenkins Bog property in Centerville. Under Chapter 61A, which provides favorable tax treatment for properties used for agricultural and horticultural purposes, the seller of such a property is required to notify the Town and various Town boards, along with the state forester, of an upcoming sale of the property so that the Town may consider whether to exercise its right of first refusal to purchase the property. The notice that was sent by the seller of the property was not sent to all of the entities specified in the statute. The plaintiffs claimed that the sale was invalid because the seller did not comply with the notice requirements and further claimed that the Town was required to enforce the notice provisions of Chapter 61A. While the Court agreed that the statutory notice process had not been strictly

followed, it held that the plaintiffs did not have legal standing to challenge the transaction, as the interests they claimed they had in this matter were not interests that the statute sought to protect. The Court concluded that the statute protects municipal interests, not the interests of abutters or private organizations. Furthermore, the Court held that the Town acted appropriately and sufficiently in notifying the seller of its defective notice and found that the Town had no obligation to take steps to enforce compliance with the statutory notice requirements.

3. The Town's Open Budget website will be replaced with a new version of transparency software provided by ClearGov in Fiscal Year 2027 (after July 1, 2026). The ClearGov solution will offer more robust financial visualizations of the Town's operating and capital budgets transforming data into dynamic, interactive visuals for residents to explore the budget at their own pace. The site will include an AI powered chatbot which can deliver instant responses which should help residents better understand budgets, spending, and financial priorities. We will keep you advised as this effort advances.
4. The Town was awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) to complete a data-driven Affordable Housing Market Feasibility Study to inform recommendations to amend the Town's Inclusionary Affordable Housing ordinance. The goal of this project is to improve the Town's existing ordinance to produce meaningful numbers of affordable housing units without imposing requirements that create a hardship for development of new projects. The Town has selected RKG Associates in collaboration with Tighe & Bond to lead this effort. At this time, RKG Associates is working on a Baseline Market Analysis to evaluate Barnstable's local real estate market conditions. The study is anticipated to be completed by December 2026.
5. Please join the Town of Barnstable Shellfishing Team at Scudder Lane, Barnstable for a free Learn to Shellfish for Razor Clams class. May 31st at 6:15 AM. The class is limited to 20 people. To register for the class please call 508-790-6272.
6. Kelly Collopy, DPW Communications Manager, will provide a Water Resources Update including the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.