

MINUTES

Cumberland Town Council Meeting
Town Council Chambers
Monday, March 9, 2026
5:00 P.M. Budget Workshop

7:13 P.M. Call to Order

Present: Councilors Douglass, Filson, Magoun, Michalak, Thorsson, and Vail

Excused: Councilor Edes

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Michalak, seconded by Councilor Magoun, to accept the February 23, 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE: 5-0-1 (Douglass abstained) MOTION PASSES

II. MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Sturgis reported that budget season has begun and we are very excited to come in with a 3% increase this year, which was our goal. It is important to stress that 3% is the highest number that the Town budget will increase. That has not factored in any new growth, which we know at this point in time will be at least \$15 million in value, due to new construction. The revaluation will be the ultimate wrinkle because it is a changing landscape when it comes to the allocation and distribution of the tax burden across the Town as a result of the revaluation. If nothing changes, we know that the tax increase will be 3% or less on the Town side. The County is looking at an approximately 13% increase this year. He is very proud and grateful to our department heads and the work they did to get us to this point with our budget.

III. PUBLIC DISCUSSION

No public discussion (there were no members of the public present).

IV. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Opportunity for Public Comment. Per Article 2, Section 7 of the Town Charter, there will be an opportunity for public comment on each item on the agenda. Comments are limited to 5 minutes per person.

26 – 022 To hold a public hearing to consider and act on a liquor license renewal for Flannel Shirt Food Company LLC (Dara Bistro) for the period of March 28, 2026 to March 27, 2027.

Chairwoman Filson said that Dara Bistro is located at 371 Tuttle Road, it has a Class A liquor license, and the renewal period is for March 28, 2026 through March 27, 2027.

There were no members of the public present for public comment.

Motion by Councilor Douglass, seconded by Councilor Michalak, to approve the liquor license renewal for Flannel Shirt Food Company LLC (Dara Bistro) for the period of March 28, 2026 to March 27, 2027.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

26 – 023 To reappoint William Longley as Code Enforcement Officer and Dan Small as alternate from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027.

Chairwoman Filson said that this is an annual appointment.

There were no members of the public present for public comment.

Motion by Councilor Michalak, seconded by Councilor Vail, to reappoint William Longley as Code Enforcement Officer and Dan Small as alternate from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

26 – 024 To set a public hearing date of March 23rd to set sewer user fees.

Town Manager Sturgis said that there are some significant capital improvements that need to take place in the sewer system over the next few years, so the reserve account has to be built up to meet that.

There were no members of the public present for public comment.

Motion by Councilor Douglass, seconded by Councilor Vail, to set a public hearing date of March 23rd to set sewer user fees.

VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS

V. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Michalak – he donated \$20 to the food pantry, as he does at every meeting.

He is pleased that our budget this year has a proposed 3% increase. He would like to find a way to do the engineering on Greely Road and the Bruce Hill water project during fiscal year 2027.

Town Manager Sturgis said that most of the engineering work on Greely Road has already been completed as part of the work that has already been done there. We can look at perhaps bonding the remaining portion or looking at different ways to pay for it over the next two-year cycle.

Councilor Michalak said that after the budget review is completed, he would like to get back to looking at Town road standards and long-term capital planning.

Councilor Vail – we began our budget review process earlier this evening. Our debt service is a significant part of our budget (7%). It's \$1.2 million per year. Planning is prudent, and he would like to drill down into debt service at our next budget meeting.

There was another joint meeting with Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, North Yarmouth, and Yarmouth. He read the goals that they identified:

For some time now, the Town Manager's and a group of elected officials from Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Yarmouth, and North Yarmouth have been meeting periodically to discuss regionalization opportunities. At the last meeting with Town Manager's present, they asked the elected officials to meet on their own to identify areas where they should focus their efforts. The electors have met a couple of times, and we started by identifying why we support municipal regionalization efforts to justify the work, not only

to ourselves, but to our constituents. Explore economies of scale, address regional issues, share best practices across municipalities, share available incoming staff, reduce competition, demonstrate creative

problem solving for efficiencies effectiveness, reduce duplicate or inefficient spending to prevent runaway tax increases. Next, we focus on what could be regionalized. We recognize that these are low hanging fruit and that while some towns have already regionalized this work, or are considering it, some regionalized ideas may not work for everyone. Our intent would respond to our request for direction by giving you a clear signal that this is the direction we want our towns to move in.

Dispatch: look at joining the county dispatch center for savings.

Mutual Aid and Mutual Safety: North Yarmouth is already participating.

Harbor Master: for towns whose needs and current capacity are currently mismatched.

Software Licenses: before purchasing new software, municipality should be asking the county and other municipalities what they're using, if they can add more licenses or contracts at a lower cost than our purchasing standalone licensing.

Staffing: institutionalized shared trading, backfilling, to keep operations running smoothly without increasing hiring on the margins. Increased employee opportunities for advancement within the regions.

Specialized Staffing Equipment Needs: where towns have occasional leads for specialty skills or equipment, town staff should collaborate on joint purchases and shared employees.

Examples: Town A needs someone who's licensed to apply herbicide for invasive species for three workdays a year. Town B has a licensed employee. Rather than Town A hire outside the company, the two Towns create a fair rate for in-kind barter for Town B to lend out the employee.

More examples: communication staff, webmaster, written and video communication, municipal TV streaming of public meetings, shared positions were appropriate, especially to create capacity for smaller towns.

There were lots of productive ideas and we all know that the elephant in the room is the school district. The end goal is by the municipal elected officials showing leadership, we can draw the school in and create a broader based working group of ideas and goals.

Councilor Thorsson – she also attended the joint meeting with Councilor Vail. Some additional things that were discussed were asking the county to take the lead on training for employees, a municipal shared equipment library, invasive species management, and staff, so we're not poaching each other. Revaluations were also discussed. Yarmouth shared their experience of not having a revaluation for quite a while and then having done one. 60% of Yarmouth households saw some sort of increase.

When we get to the TIF section of our budget review, she would like to discuss whether we have room to throttle anything into the general fund. 3% is great, but we can get it even lower, that would be better.

Flash Vote was also discussed, but she was not able to answer questions as to how much it costs, is the data shared, and if so when will we see it? This information will be helpful to share at future meetings.

Town Manager Sturgis said that he would have the Communications Director talk about this at the next Council meeting.

Councilor Douglass – she asked if there is any information on the new dock at Broad Cove Reserve.

Town Manager Sturgis said that we have received the grant and work should begin in the fall.

Upcoming budget workshop schedule (all at 5:00 p.m.)

March 16th

March 23rd

March 30th

April 6th

April 27th

May 11th public hearing on adoption of FY27 Municipal Budget at 7:00 p.m.

Councilor Magoun – the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will meet tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Chairwoman Filson – Nomination papers are now available. On the Town Council there is 1 at-large and 1 center seat available. For MSAD 51 Board of Directors there are 2 seats available. There is also a seat for the Portland Water District. Nomination papers are due by April 9th at 6:00 p.m.

The library will host 2 informational sessions for anyone who is interested in learning more about running for any of the above-mentioned positions. The first one is on Wednesday, March 11th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and Thursday, March 12th from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

She had the opportunity to participate in Read Across America along with some Town staff members. It was a great time and it is a great program.

- VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION** pursuant to Title 1 M.R.S.A., § 405(6)(C) re: acquisition of real property.
Motion by Councilor Douglass, seconded by Councilor Michalak, to recess to Executive Session pursuant to Title 1 M.R.S.A., § 405(6)(C) re: acquisition of real property.
VOTE: 6-0
TIME: 8:01 P.M.

Reconvene to regular session at 8:55 P.M.

- VII. ADJOURNMENT**
Motion by Councilor Vail, seconded by Councilor Magoun, to adjourn.
VOTE: 6-0 UNANIMOUS
TIME: 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Brenda L. Moore
Council Secretary