



SELECT BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 22, 2025  
7:00 PM  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
15 CHARTER ROAD

Present: Dean Charter, Alissa Nicol, David Martin, Jim Snyder-Grant, Fran Arsenault

Additional Attendees: Town Manager John Mangiaratti, Assistant Town Manager Thom Begin,

**I. New/Special Business**

**I.** Workshop with Acton Select Board, Acton Finance Committee, Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee, Boxborough Select Board and Boxborough Finance Committee

Mr. Charter called the meeting of the Acton Select Board to order at 7:02 PM. All members were present.

ABRSC Chair Tori Campbell offered opening remarks to begin the joint meeting.

**A. Acton Select Board**

Mr. Charter shared the following comments:

- His family has benefitted from the Acton school system.
- Departmental growth has not kept pace with the Town's population growth; for example, Fire Department staffing remains too low, and many municipal buildings are aging.
- The Town continues to face stormwater challenges and is working on developing dedicated stormwater funding.
- Health insurance costs continue to pressure the municipal budget.
- The Department of Public Works building still needs replacement; a new design is being promoted.
- Approximately 20% of Acton's population are senior citizens.
- While he supports the schools, it is important to maintain balance so that municipal services are not disproportionately affected.

Mr. Martin added that it is early in Acton's budget cycle and expressed interest in hearing from Boxborough.

Ms. Nicol clarified that:

- The impact of health insurance costs on Acton's municipal budget is still uncertain.
- She prefers framing the conversation in terms of needs versus expectations rather than wants, as everyone defines "need" differently.

## **B. Boxborough Select Board**

Representatives from Boxborough reported that:

- Their budget is lean with a limited tax base and little room for cuts.
- They plan to request funding for a fire station design in January.
- The Town faces challenges similar to Acton's but on a smaller scale.
- There is concern about the growing tax burden on seniors.
- Boxborough's commercial base is limited to small businesses.
- Proposition 2½ restricts flexibility, making it difficult to adequately fund schools.

## **C. Regional School Committee**

Committee members shared that:

- School restructuring is unpopular.
- Taxes fund both local and neighboring community needs.
- 41% of third graders are not meeting reading standards.
- The Committee seeks to define what a "balanced" budget truly means.
- The total school budget should be reviewed, not just individual town assessments.
- Financial challenges are widespread across the Commonwealth.
- Input from constituents is important.
- Massachusetts provides less local aid than many other states.

## **D. Acton Finance Committee**

The Acton Finance Committee reported:

- Its role is to inform the public at Town Meeting.
- Health care costs remain a concern; better long-term forecasting is needed.
- Additional details are requested regarding the \$17 million renovation cost for Conant School.
- Proposition 2½ does not keep pace with increasing costs, which rise faster than revenues.
- Acton has historically deferred capital spending, creating long-term challenges.
- Recent ballot results indicate taxpayers are near their financial limits.
- Determining what services are "essential" (e.g., education vs. senior programs) is increasingly difficult.
- The Committee needs more detailed budget information from the School District.

## **E. Boxborough Finance Committee**

The Boxborough Finance Committee provided the following updates:

- Expenses have increased by approximately 5.6% in recent years, while revenues have risen by about 4.3%.
- The Town is close to its levy limit.
- Although debt service is currently low, new projects will increase obligations.
- Operating overrides should be viewed as a normal, periodic necessity.
- The Town seeks more stable budgets from year to year.

- There is ongoing discussion about whether Town and School budget increases should align annually.
- The Committee is requesting two budget scenarios — “A” (with override) and “B” (without override) — noting the “no override” version would be extremely difficult.
- Greater transparency is needed regarding projected school budget increases and the effects of restructuring.
- Boxborough has not passed an override in 20 years, primarily due to voter opposition.

#### **4. Adjournment**

**Ms. Nicol** moved to adjourn the meeting. **Ms. Arsenault** seconded. The motion passed **unanimously**.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.**

#### **Documents Used:**

- October 22, 2025 Agenda