



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Members Present: Chair John Burrows, Vice Chair Dina Favreau, Secretary Michael Rosa, Member Kimberly Conway (Remote) and Member Michael Riley (Remote)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Town Manager Clancy Main, DPW Director Fred Russell, Town Engineer Kelley Conway, Water Superintendent Todd Melanson, Sewer Superintendent Nick Evans and Recording Secretary Dawn McDowell

Call to Order 6:00 PM

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Burrows called the meeting to order and stated that the meeting is hybrid via Zoom and with members remote, all votes will be roll call.

Roll call attendance: Secretary Rosa was Present, Member Conway was Present, Member Riley was Present, Vice Chair Favreau was Present and Chair Burrows was Present.

1. Open Microphone

Justin Damon of 439B Middlesex Turnpike – Mr. Damon stated that he wants to discuss language on page 12 referring to new of COA. Why did discussions on this stop? This should have been a done deal at Town Meeting until an amendment was made to move it to Cider Mill. This Board should do the right thing with either keeping the COA on the existing site or 250 Boston Road and staying away from Cider Mill.

Kelley Sardina of 95 Gray Street – Ms. Sardina stated that she just wanted to say that Mr. Main did a great job with the plan.

New Business

2. Capital Improvement Plan Discussion and Potential Vote

Mr. Main presented the FY2026-2030 Capital Plan. This plan addresses a 5-Year Plan and a 10 Year Plan. Tonight, he would like to focus on the 5 Year Plan which are the items that need to be addressed now, which are DPW functions: roadways, culverts, water and sewer. Member Conway asked when the 10-year plan will be discussed. Mr. Main replied in the next couple of weeks. Member Conway stated that she doesn't think it is fair to discuss only a portion of the plan because in a few months, there will be a new member of the Board. Mr. Main stated that in the next five years we need to focus on infrastructure.

Roadways

Mr. Russell provided a forecast model. On the roads, we need direction. Should we add an extra 1 or 2 million in the next few years, which would increase the amount of roads being repaved from 69 miles to 75 miles? Each year we spend about \$1 million on adding sidewalks. Ms. Conway stated that we reinspected our roads in 2024 and the overall rating of 69.

Secretary Rosa asked when Chapter 90 was last updated with the State to include all the new accepted roads. Ms. Conway stated that they update the mileage of roads to the State annually. Secretary Rosa stated that we add an extra \$2 million from the operating expenses to the improvements of road and if we add more, it will increase the taxes. Can we use free cash and other sources? Secretary Rosa asked if we could look at restoration and not completely redo the roads to extend the money. Mr. Russell replied yes, we started doing pavement restoration and it takes roads 3-4 years old to try to maintain them. Secretary Rosa stated looking at the plan, we could do less on the sidewalks (i.e., no granite curb, smaller width) and use free cash to extend the amount of roadways.



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Member Riley asked if we are looking to increase it by \$1 or \$2 million. Mr. Main replied that it is the Board decision. Mr. Russell stated that they are requesting \$5 million for the first two years, then \$3M for the next three. Member Riley agreed with Secretary Rosa. We need a plan like last year and we should use the stabilization fund. He would like to be aggressive but would like to see the end costs to residents.

Member Conway asked if this will be an online survey or would we just pick the top 3 items. Are you looking for a formal sense of the Board because she would need costs. She also asked why we aren't on the green curve now. Mr. Russell stated that we spend \$2 million on streets and \$1 million on sidewalks now, so we are just maintaining the roads. Member Conway stated that when safe streets for schools is complete, how would we intend to pay for that. Mr. Main stated that they would apply for different grants but it has to come out of Chapter 90 or the road improvement budget. Member Conway stated that we have to make some hard decisions. Mr. Main stated that the average cost to residents is for every \$1 million spent it will cost the taxpayer \$42 a year.

Vice Chair Favreau asked how many miles of accepted road do we have and out of that, how many miles need repairs. Mr. Russell replied 192 miles of accepted road. It's tough to determine how much need work. We also do preventive maintenance on roads that are 4-5 years old to try to extend the life of the road. Ms. Conway stated that 80 miles of roads that need either minor/major repair at a cost of about \$27 million. Vice Chair Favreau asked of the 22 miles in need of major road work, does that include water/sewer work. Mr. Russell replied yes. Vice Chair Favreau stated that we need to look at Wilson Street. There is also talk about increasing Chapter 90 funds from the State and if that happens, how much would Billerica get.

Chair Burrows stated that we need to trust the professionals. The safe streets for all and safe streets for school are different. Mr. Main stated that all schools have applied for safe schools.

Secretary Rosa stated that everything in this report is important. It's easier to navigate when dollars and cents and debt service are included. Mr. Main stated that it's difficult to give all options and we need to narrow down the variables.

Chair Burrows stated that the three biggest complaints he gets are brown water, sewer and streets. They tie in together. He gets asked on a new school but there are bigger issues before we get another new school.

Vice Chair Favreau stated that her priorities are water, roads and sidewalks. These are needed for the health and safety of our residents. She would support what is being asked for.

Member Conway stated that she couldn't disagree more with the Chair about the schools. She believes that we need clean water but we need to weigh the need for streets versus a new school. It would be a great idea for a survey and we should listen to the residents.

Chair Burrows stated that the school is on a spending spree. We were promised community access to the High School and nothing happened. There is responsible spending vs. irresponsible spending. They have an issue.

MOTION - Secretary Rosa made a motion that the Select Board instruct the Town Manager to provide cost estimates for incremental increases in roadway pavement management program and report back to us. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Rosa voted Aye, Member Conway voted Aye, Member Riley voted Aye, Vice Chair Favreau voted Aye and Chair Burrows voted Aye.

Culverts

Mr. Main stated that there are 250 town owned culverts.

Mr. Russell stated that Tighe and Bond did an assessment. It would cost about \$1 million a year to maintain these culverts. We did get an MVP grant for \$129,000 and this will address the 3 highest critical ones. Ms. Conway added that we do the annual inspection and maintenance in house. Mr. Main stated that if something happens with a culvert then we act. This plan will allow us to do upkeep and maintenance. Once the survey is updated, these priorities may change. We are looking at \$1 million a year to get these culverts cleaned and updated.



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Secretary Rosa stated that we should be proactive and asked if this includes cleaning of the culverts. Mr. Russell replied no, cleaning is taken care of in the operating budget. Secretary Rosa stated that not looking at private culverts is a mistake. The entire system is only as strong as the weakest link. We need to address culverts as a system. We should clean the private culverts that are part of our drainage system. Mr. Main stated that we don't have the staff to manage private culverts. Mr. Russell stated that we would have to hire outside contractors to clean private culverts that residents can't do. Secretary Rosa asked how many private culverts there are and where they are. Ms. Conway stated that we have to get those numbers.

Member Riley stated that he agrees with Secretary Rosa. We need to look at private culverts and if we have to expand the department or sub out the work then we should.

Member Conway stated that we have to see if that is affordable. We cannot afford to maintain private culverts. We can help residents and provide them education. We don't service private grinder pumps. This would not be on the top of her priority list. We need to clean and maintain ours and provide education to the residents.

Vice Chair Favreau asked who critical customers are. Ms. Conway replied schools, hospitals, and sewer pump stations. Vice Chair Favreau stated that we know that 40 culverts are in need of repair and does that open us up to liability. Mr. Russell stated that it is an ongoing study and that will change some of the priority culverts.

Chair Burrows stated that the mall is dumping snow in the culvert and that pushes the problem down the line. We need to fine them. We need to keep our culverts clean and provide education. If you fix one, then you need to id them.

Mr. Main asked if we should look at addressing private culverts. Chair Burrows doesn't believe so because that could open us to liability but we should provide education to all the residents. Secretary Rosa stated that we need to at least identify where they are and provide education to the homeowners.

Mr. Russell stated that if there is an emergency situation, they will try to help out residents as best as possible.

MOTION - Secretary Rosa made a motion that the Select Board instruct the Town Manager to identify all private culverts and cost out a capital plan to fix all the municipal culverts. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Rosa voted Aye, Member Conway voted Aye, Member Riley voted Aye, Vice Chair Favreau voted Aye and Chair Burrows voted Aye.

Water

Mr. Russell thanked Mr. Melanson and his crew. They have done a great job with flushing and in the plant. They just received a report from CIP. They are going to look at replacing all 2" water mains for water quality and fire protection. The Select Board gave them a \$1 million so we will be staring in March to replace 4,500 feet of 2" mains. We had a search done on all the pipes that were installed prior to 1955. There are 55 miles of pipe that pre-date 1955. The pricing from CIP is high, they charge \$600/ft vs. \$300/ft that was done in house for 8" pipe replacement.

Mr. Main asked how long it was to replace all the mains in Woburn. Mr. Russell replied it was a 16-year plan but they may have extended it out.

Mr. Melanson stated that he has a great staff and they are fully certified. The replacement of the 2" mains need to be a priority for clean water and fire protection. We need to loop our dead ends. We also need to clean the tanks. There have been instances where the pipes have broken after the road is paved, that is typically because of the pipe being on the ledge.

Mr. Russell stated that we need to start looking at a second water source.

Mr. Main stated that it is going to significantly raise the water rates or taxes. \$1 million is about \$50,000 is debt service. We can bond and a 3-year contract will get us better prices but it is going to come at a significant cost either taxes or water rates.



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Vice Chair Favreau stated that this is the top priority. This is unhealthy for every resident. She sent grants to the DPW. Mr. Russell stated that we applied for one but did not get it. Vice Chair Favreau asked if the bond is the SRF program. Mr. Main replied yes, but this is not a priority for the State. Mr. Melanson stated that SRF is not approving multi-year program through the Treasurer's office. Mr. Main stated that the cost of this program would be \$100 million so grants will help but not fund this. Vice Chair Favreau stated that no hydrants in Pinehurst is another issue.

Secretary Rosa stated that he agrees with Vice Chair Favreau as this being the top priority. The 2" lines need to be addressed and asked if we should hit the water rates or taxes. Mr. Main stated if we go with CIP, it would be \$11 million a year. The Board needs to decide how to fund it. If we spread it over 30 years, it would be \$7-\$8 million a year. Secretary Rosa stated that years 1 and 2 are replacing the 2" pipes and that is a priority. He also stated that this would improve our fire insurance rating, savings residents on their home owner's insurance. Secretary Rosa asked if we could do #1 and #2 together. Mr. Russell stated that it is a big ask to do 4 miles of water mains in one year.

Member Conway stated that she also agrees this is a priority. But we need to do it in a timely and affordable way.

Member Riley stated that he also agrees and asked if the survey will help with the study. Mr. Melanson replied yes, it will show the lines in Pinehurst and show the dead ends.

Secretary Rosa stated that we need to look at the ZBA agreements on the water tanks. There was a condition of the ZBA permit that the cell providers were responsible for the maintenance of the tank. Mr. Main stated that he can look at that.

Vice Chair Favreau asked if you would close the loop on the dead-end lines. Mr. Melanson replied not necessarily but they will try. Mr. Russell stated that we are trying to fix the dead ends.

Mr. Main stated that this is the top priority and he will look at the plan for the next 1-3 years and look at the effect on taxes and water rates.

MOTION - Secretary Rosa made a motion that the Select Board set the water improvements as a top priority and cost out the program out for the next 3 years and also cost out a 16-year plan and 20-year plan. The motion was seconded by Member Riley and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Rosa voted Aye, Member Conway voted Aye, Member Riley voted Aye, Vice Chair Favreau voted Aye and Chair Burrows voted Aye.

2nd Water Source

Mr. Russell stated that the Concord River is very undesirable for a second source. We do have emergency connections with several other towns for short term use. We have looked at wells and the Shawsheen River and there is not enough flow. The two viable options are the MWRA and the Merrimack River. The MWRA is waving their initiation fee but the cost would be about \$120 million and the connection to the Merrimack River would be about \$60 million and would take about 1-2 years in permitting and 3 years of construction. This is not going to happen within the next few years but it needs to be thought out.

Mr. Main stated that it is very important issue for the safety of residents. Mr. Melanson stated that either the MWRA or the Merrimack River connection would make the plant last longer because they would need less chemicals. Mr. Main stated that these two options would be a complete redundancy.

Member Conway asked how many surrounding towns have a second water source. Mr. Melanson stated that he knows definitely that Chelmsford, Tewksbury, Lowell and most surrounding towns do have a second source or a reservoir. We are a minority with only having a sole source. Member Conway stated that this would not be in her top three priorities.

Member Riley asked if we could have an emergency connection with only a partial source. Mr. Melanson replied that the MWRA does not offer partial connections.



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Vice Chair Favreau asked if we can create our own reservoir. Mr. Melanson stated that there are several issues with that. We have about 8.5 million gallons in our two water tanks which gives about 18-hour capacity and at a peak time 10-12 hours of capacity. The cost would be similar to the cost to connect to the Merrimack River. Vice Chair Favreau asked if we could have an open reservoir. Mr. Melanson stated that it would need about 20-30 acres to protect the area.

Secretary Rosa asked if we could have a second source on the Concord River upstream from the where our connection is now. It would be more cost effective than going to the Merrimack River or having a reservoir. If the Concord River does not have enough water, then we will have bigger problems. Also, Bedford has a pump station on the Shawsheen River near Shawsheen Tech. Mr. Melanson stated that we can look at the second connection on Concord Road but the further you go from the plant, the more pipe you have to run and the cost goes up. The Shawsheen River is very unreliable and Burlington has their rights granted in perpetuity.

MOTION - Secretary Rosa made a motion that the Select Board instruct the Town Manager to do a cost analysis of a 2nd water connection including redundancy on the Concord River and a reservoir. The motion was seconded by Member Riley and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Rosa voted Aye, Member Conway voted Aye, Member Riley voted Aye, Vice Chair Favreau voted Aye and Chair Burrows voted Aye.

Sewer

Mr. Russell stated that Mr. Evans is doing a great job. The question is do we need to fix what we have or continue to expand the sewer. The biggest issue is there is a lot of I&I in the system, leaking pipes and there is clean water that is going into the plant that we treat.

Mr. Evans stated that in 2023-2024 there was a lot of rain. In 12 days, there was 14.2 million gallons going through the plant when 2.9 million gallons is the average. There have been 164 days in 2 years that have been over 5.5 million gallons, which is over the design for the plant. There were 20 days over 9 million which is mayday. You are just trying to save the plant. Infiltration has gotten worse. The average of 4.6 million is 80% over capacity in the last two years. He also is concerned with the status of the system. The sewer program started over 58 years ago. We are at a critical age of 25% of our pipes and we have a force main that has ruptured three times.

Mr. Main asked what do you recommend as your priorities. Mr. Evans replied that we need to complete the meter rehab program that was started in 2008. The new meter project starts in March. We need to move forward with CCTV to find where the I&I is coming from and we need to move forward with the repair projects and update the sewer model to find out our true capacity.

Mr. Russell stated that we have to invest in our existing sewer infrastructure and put on hold the new sewer but if the Board wants new sewer then it could run simultaneously.

Secretary Rosa stated that I&I is the priority because it costs money in extra chemicals and we are subject to fines. Can we relined the sewer pipes? Mr. Russell stated that it would be less evasive to do manhole to manhole. Secretary Rosa asked what the cost would be. Mr. Russell stated that we need to do the survey and CIP to complete the study. Mr. Main stated that it will cost \$125 million to complete the remaining sewer. Secretary Rosa stated that it will cost \$125 million to do the last 1,500 properties so we need to realize that certain parcels will never get sewer. We should work with them and look at what is left. We need to prioritize our existing infrastructure. Secretary Rosa stated that he has a septic system and is very happy with it. There have been studies that show septic systems are better for recharge of the aquifers. Mr. Main asked how much the I&I cost us in chemicals. Mr. Evans replied about \$100,000 - \$150,000 and the cost of equipment failures with wear and tear. Secretary Rosa stated that it could also cost us a lot in fines.

Mr. Main stated that Contract #37 is authorized for \$22 million and asked if the design was completed and was it part of the \$22 million. Ms. Conway stated that there were two previous warrant articles but the design is not complete. We need to talk about a reprioritization.



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Mr. Russell stated that in the last three sewer projects, people are not connecting and we should re-prioritize and look at where there are higher failure rates.

Secretary Rosa stated that we should poll the people who don't have sewer and see if they want sewer. The residents of Dudley Road didn't want it and it saved the Town a million dollars.

Vice Chair Favreau stated that there are residents on Adams Street who want to connect to sewer. What is the threshold for dumping raw sewage into the river. Mr. Evans stated that we can handle 14 million gallons and there were 12 times but we have not surcharged into the Concord River since 2011. Vice Chair Favreau stated that this is a top 3 priority.

Member Conway stated that we need to be fair and equitable. For the 1,500 residents we need to offer sewer or replace their septic system if it fails. It's not fair. She would agree with surveying the 1,500 residents if they want it.

Member Riley stated that the connection fee is a big issue. Could we offer a stipend if they opted out of sewer. We need to invest in our infrastructure.

Chair Burrows stated that without good infrastructure we can't hook up more people. We need to send the study out.

Mr. Main stated that Sewer 37 is around \$40 million. We could ask for more money to finish the design or we go reorder the sewer phases and try to complete cheaper ones. They will send the survey out.

Vice Chair Favreau asked if we already have money for this. Mr. Main stated that we tabled discussion on the expansion of Contract 37. If we decide to continue the sewer expansion, Contract 37 would not be the top priority. Mr. Russell stated that we could put the design on the shelf for Contract 37, we would not lose the design.

Secretary Rosa stated that the cost of Contract 37 is \$41 million that is about \$193,000/parcel. The I&I is taxing our system that is already overwhelmed. If you expand the sewer you are putting more gallons in so I&I needs to be addressed but we could look into reprioritizing the remaining sewer in a parallel track.

Member Riley asked how much has been spent on Contract 37. Ms. Conway replied about \$1.5 million on design.

Member Conway stated that the question was do we want to re-prioritize Contract 37. Her answer is yes, it should be and the survey should be done.

Chair Burrows stated that we would have to go back to Town Meeting for more money for Contract 37. We need to focus on our existing infrastructure first but we should send out the survey.

MOTION - Secretary Rosa made a motion that the Select Board instruct the Town Manager to send out a survey to the 1,500 parcels without sewer to see if they are interested in hooking up to sewer, reprioritizing the sewer list to come back in the future, and continue with the I&I removal. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and unanimously voted 5-0-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Rosa voted Aye, Member Conway voted Aye, Member Riley voted Aye, Vice Chair Favreau voted Aye and Chair Burrows voted Aye.

MOTION - Secretary Rosa made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting of February 11, 2025 at 9:19 PM. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Favreau and voted 4-1-0. On a roll call vote: Secretary Rosa voted Aye, Vice Chair Favreau voted Aye, Member Riley voted Aye, Member Conway voted Aye and Chair Burrows voted No.

*Respectfully Submitted by Dawn McDowell,
Recording Secretary*



**TOWN OF BILLERICA
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Exhibits for the Select Board Meeting – February 11, 2025

Call to order 6:00 PM

1. **Open Microphone** – No Exhibits

Public Hearings

2. **Capital Improvement Plan Discussion and Possible Vote** – FY2026-2030 Capital Plan undated

Approved On: April 28, 2025