

**MINUTES OF JANUARY 31, 2026
“PRE-TOWN MEETING”**

SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Members Present: Doug Bailey, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Ralph Ethier, Jeff Haylon. Absent: Brian Coolidge.

Others Present: Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Mike Frankiewicz, Barry Varian, Billy Bullock, Linda Gebhardt, George Fjeld, David Fontaine, Brent Buehler, Judy Bunde, Tricia Welch, Shirley Markland, Sandy Mayo, and one person who did not provide her name on the sign-in sheet. By Zoom: No one; but Seth Hopkins signed onto Zoom by phone to ensure the connection was working.

- 1 Chair Doug Bailey called the meeting to order at 11AM. Four selectboard members were seated. Motion by Reniche-Smith/Haylon to adopt the posted agenda. Voted 4-0.
- 2 Bailey thanked all for attending and stated that since the crowd was small (at that point, 11), people should feel free to interact with the board informally today.
- 3 Bailey led the bulk of the presentation of the selectboard’s proposed FY27 operating budget. The slides are posted on the selectboard page of the website where the meeting packet normally would appear. They are also posted on the 2026 Town Meeting page of the website. Reniche-Smith presented the discussion of appropriations. The selectboard’s presentation took about 25 minutes.
- 4 Public comment was requested:
 - a Brent Buehler thanked the board for the modest increase and inquired whether there would be a candidate forum. As all races are uncontested this year, it was thought not.
 - b Judy Bunde thanked the board for limiting the increase and asked whether there were things the board had to push out to future years. All four board members present, plus the town manager, spoke. Essentially Brandon’s capital funding stream is robust, and as the fund balance grows, the board has expressed willingness to spend from that for one-off improvements that are not a good fit for the operating budget’s recurring expenses. Local option tax was a focus of this discussion.
 - c David Fontaine identified himself as an indoor air quality advocate and highlighted a TedX talk he gave recently. He suggested that to make a difference in peoples’ lives in Brandon it would be necessary to increase the zoning/rental/health position from one 3/5 time person to two full-time.
 - d Shirley Markland inquired about Union Street sidewalk progress; Bill Moore updated on the right-of-way acquisition process and assistance from the state in that, and then projected the implementation/construction funding phase.
 - e George Fjeld asked whether there was a breakdown of sources of the 1% tax revenue. Seth Hopkins advised about 20% meals & rooms tax and about 80% sales tax, which is the extent of the detail furnished by the state and tracked by town treasurer Sue Gage.

No further comment forthcoming, Doug Bailey reminded all that Town Meeting will be 7PM on Monday, March 2nd, and there will be two floor votes. Zoom observation of the meeting will be facilitated, but only voters present will be able to vote on the floor articles.

- 5 Motion by Haylon/Reniche-Smith to adjourn. Not debatable. Voted 4-0. 11:59AM

Respectfully submitted,
