



**Manager's Memorandum
Selectboard Meeting
March 3, 2026**

To: Selectboard
From: Tony Ward, Town Manager
Date: 02-27-2026
Re: Selectboard meeting 02-17-2026

Below are notes for agenda items for March 3, 2026, meeting

5. Managers' Update

- A. As previously mentioned, weight restriction postings were implemented on all Town roads effective February 26.
- B. The Town has received significant interest in the mowing RFP and has already received several bids. All bids must be submitted by March 5. I anticipate presenting the bids to the Selectboard on March 24 for review and award of the contract to the successful bidder.
- C. The recent storms created operational challenges for our Public Works crew. One of the trucks experienced transmission issues and was sent to a Ford dealership for warranty repairs, which were completed within 10 days. During that period, the Town experienced two additional storms, further impacting operations.

New Business

- 6. The Selectboard will hear from Superintendent Al Smith about the proposed M.S.A.D. # 61 budget.**

MSAD #61 Superintendent **Al Smith** will address the Selectboard and present his proposed budget for the upcoming school year, outlining the financial challenges facing the district and the resulting increase in revenue required from local property taxpayers. Smith will explain that rising operational costs, including transportation, utilities, contractual salary obligations, and student support services, significantly impact the overall budget. A substantial additional influence is the level of state funding allocated to local schools. Fluctuations in state aid, combined with funding formulas that do not always keep pace with district expenses, directly affect how much revenue must be raised locally to meet educational obligations. He emphasizes that the proposal was developed carefully to

maintain educational quality and meet state requirements while balancing fiscal responsibility. The superintendent details how the increased tax burden is shared among the district's three member towns — Casco, Naples, and Bridgton — noting that each community sees varying impacts. Mr. Smith encourages collaboration and open dialogue as town officials review the proposal, underscoring the district's commitment to transparency and student success., underscoring the district's commitment to transparency and student success.

7. The Selectboard will receive an update on Planning Board activities from Chairperson Marc Rocque.

Planning Board Chairperson Marc Rocque will provide the Select Board with an update on recent Planning Board activities and the ordinance work currently under development. This update will include ongoing projects, proposed ordinance amendments, and anticipated timelines for review and consideration.

8. The Selectboard will discuss Community Choice Aggregation.

Halsey Snow will request support for the Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program. The Maine Community Power Alliance (MCPA) promotes CCA programs for towns and communities across Maine as an alternative method of obtaining electricity supply outside of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Standard Offer or through Competitive Energy Providers (CEPs). Under a CCA model, a municipality procures electricity directly from wholesale suppliers on behalf of its residents and businesses, while allowing each customer the option to “opt out” if they choose not to participate.

According to MCPA, a CCA program could provide benefits to residents similar to those available through Maine Power Options for public-serving and nonprofit organizations. Potential advantages include the ability for residents and businesses to select the sources and characteristics of their electricity supply; competitive, and often lower, electricity rates; expanded access to clean, renewable, and local energy sources; retention of profits and Renewable Energy Credits for local benefit; and full transparency in governance, rate setting, reserve use, and public decision-making under nonprofit oversight by locally elected boards.

According to MCPA, CCA programs have operated successfully in multiple states for more than a decade. In New Hampshire, the model is organized through Community Power New Hampshire, which launched in April 2023 and saw more than 70 communities join within its first 20 months. Importantly, CCA programs do not replace existing utilities; utilities continue to deliver electricity and serve as billing agents for suppliers. Although Maine law authorized electric industry restructuring in 1999, supporters are advocating updates through LD 2112, *An Act to Authorize Municipalities to Form Community Choice Aggregation Programs to Procure Electricity*, which would formally establish the “opt out” provision and address other key implementation measures.

9. The Selectboard will consider delegates for GPCOG's annual meeting.

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) General Assembly & Annual Summit will be held in person on Thursday, May 28, 2026, at Saint Joseph's College of Maine in Standish. The Town of Casco is permitted to appoint two delegates and one alternate to the General Assembly. GPCOG has requested that we provide the names of Casco's two delegates and one alternate for 2026. In 2025, Eugene Connelly and Mary Fernandes served as delegates, with no alternate designated. For 2026, Mary Fernandes must be appointed as one of the delegates due to her role on the GPCOG Executive Committee. During the May 28 meeting, the General Assembly will elect members of the Executive Committee and its officers from among its delegates, and anyone interested in serving on the Executive Committee must be an appointed delegate.

10. The Selectboard will discuss the preliminary budget being presented by the Town Manager.

I am pleased to present a synopsis of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget. This proposal reflects the ongoing efforts of Town staff to balance operational needs with fiscal responsibility during a period of increasing demands and evolving challenges.

As we have developed this budget, we carefully considered several key factors: increasing operational capacity to meet service expectations; maintaining a safe, effective, and supportive work environment for our employees; continuing the upkeep and long-term sustainability of Town infrastructure; and understanding the implications that budget growth may have for our taxpayers.

Our goal throughout this process has been to ensure that the Town continues to deliver essential services efficiently while remaining mindful of the monetary impact on the community.

The complete, detailed budget books will be available to the Selectboard and the Finance Committee for thorough review. In addition, the full proposed budget will be posted on the Town website for public access. Each workshop will also include detailed departmental requests and year-to-date financial data as supporting documentation to assist in informed discussion and decision-making.

11. The Selectboard will discuss the willingness in naming the Roosevelt Trail bridge over Crooked River for veterans.

The Town has received an email from Calista Cross requesting that we consider collaborating with the Town of Naples to rename the Route 302 bridge over the Crooked River in honor of a veteran.

Mrs. Cross has indicated that she has contacted the Naples Town Manager regarding this proposal; however, I have not yet communicated with him about the request. She has suggested the following potential names:

- Town of Naples – Crockett Veterans Memorial Bridge
- Naples–Casco Veterans Memorial Bridge

Mrs. Cross has also stated that she would be willing to coordinate with State Senators to advocate for the proposed name change. She noted that she has successfully assisted with similar bridge-naming efforts in the past.

At this time, I am seeking directions from the Board as to whether you would like staff to initiate discussions with Naples regarding potential collaboration and to further explore the process required for a bridge naming designation.

12. The Selectboard will discuss the priority in conducting policy reviews.

Staff and I are requesting the Board’s preference regarding the review of existing Town policies and the process of making recommended modifications.

Below is a prioritized table of current Town policies, sorted approximately by age:

Policy Name	Last Updated / Adopted
Abatement Appeal Policy	Over 20 years old
Meeting Cancellation Policy	Over 20 years old
Unassigned Fund Balance Policy	Over 20 years old
Community Center Facility Use Policy	December 2009
Managing Public Participation in Select Board Meetings Policy	July 2010
Tax Acquired Property Policy	February 2013
Collection of Emergency Medical Service Fees	October 2019
Select Board Meeting Policy	October 2019
Purchasing Policy	July 2021
Capitalization Policy	August 2021
Conflict of Interest Policy	September 2021
Credit/Debit Card Use Policy	2021
Remote Meeting Policy	January 2022
Rules of Public Hearing Policy	May 2022
Personnel Policy	February 2023

Policy Name	Last Updated / Adopted
Freedom of Access Policy	May 2023
Board and Committee Members Use of Social Media Policy & Guidelines	July 2023
Employee Technology and Social Media Policy	July 2023
Septic System Grant Program Policy	September 2023
Select Board Rules of Order and Procedures	September 3, 2024
Complete Streets Policy	January 2025
Board Committee Policy	January 2026
Electronic Systems Policy	November 2021

Staff seek guidance from the Board on the following:

- Whether you would prefer a phased review (e.g., starting with the oldest policies first)
- Or whether staff should present recommended revisions individually as they are completed

This prioritized table is intended to assist the Board in determining where to focus review efforts.

13. The Selectboard will discuss a community engagement opportunity for all Board & Committees on May 2nd.

This plan is presented to the Select Board for approval, after which communications and outreach for the event will begin to ensure community participation and awareness.

The event will be hosted by the Select Board and Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee promoting transparency, communication, and volunteerism in Casco. To support this, all boards, committees, ad hoc committees, and commissions are invited to participate in an Open House on Saturday, May 2, from 1–3 PM at Crooked River Elementary School (gymnasium), coinciding with the Casco Safe Streets Bike Rodeo.

Each group is asked to send at least one representative to staff a table, share information about their mission, responsibilities, members, and ways for community involvement (volunteering, attending meetings, following updates). Representatives should highlight recent accomplishments and town impact, and bring handouts or engaging items