

Jamaica Select Board Minutes - DRAFT

Attendance

Date	January 28 th , 2026
Board Members Present	Jessica Pollack (Chair), Kate Ullman (Vice Chair), Greg Meulemans, Robert Brooks, Christina Robinson (remote)
Public Attendees	Paul Fraser, Karen Ameden, Chris Healy, Bob Stomski

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Additions

The Chair called for any late additions to the agenda.

Approval to Town Warning meeting was added

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes of January 12 Regular Meeting: Motion by Jessica and Kate 2nd; vote was unanimous.
- January 7 Special Meeting and Budget Meetings: Motion by Jessica with a correction to the closing time; Kate seconded; unanimous approval.
- January 7 Budget Meeting: Motion by Jessica and Kate 2nd; unanimous vote.
- January 21, 2026 Budget Meeting: Motion by Jessica and Kate 2nd; unanimous vote.

Discussion: Transfer Station Revenue System

The Board discussed transitioning from the current pay-as-you-throw bag system for transfer station revenue collection to a reusable token system. The proposal involves three types of tokens: pink (made from gum), green (from fishing net), and another color for a different size. Each token would be marked with "Town of Jamaica" and the bag size or weight it represents. The one-time expense for the tokens would be \$845, replacing the recurring \$25,000 cost of bags.

Instead of selling 13, 33, or 55-gallon bags, residents would use tokens based on the weight of their trash. All tokens are made from post-consumer materials and are washable. Ernie and other stakeholders are supportive of the change, and construction tokens are available as needed. The cost per token will be comparable to the cost per bag, and the transition is expected to significantly decrease costs as tokens can be reused.

A grace period will be in place during the transition. The Board considered other systems, such as punch cards, but found them problematic. Tokens will be sold at the same locations as bags. Jessica motioned to approve the change, Kate seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

GMP Review and Planning Grant

Tom said he is working with GMP on putting a pole on Depot street. They put a stake on the land thinking it was town property but it was not. Tom had informed GMP.

Other review and planning was tabled.

Review and Approval of Planning Grant

Review and planning was tabled.

Bridge 32 Agreement and Finance

The Board reviewed the agreement and financing for Bridge 32. The state and federal governments are partially funding the project, with a total cost of \$9.6 million and the Town's share at \$118,000, which has already been budgeted. The Town must agree to maintain the bridge, allowing further engineering and design to proceed. Meetings regarding aesthetic decisions will be properly warned.

Greg made a motion to approve and Jessica 2nded. Approved unanimously.

Chris asked as she thought that the original intention was to keep the historic bridge, but several changes occurred over two years. After the Army Corps of Engineers became involved in 2023, maintaining the existing bridge was no longer cost effective. The Board decided to select materials that would be less expensive over time. The 2023 flood shifted the project's timeline. Karen asked about the schedule; the current estimate is that construction will begin in summer 2028, with project completion in 2029 or possibly 2030.

Town Garage Vehicle Equipment Purchases

The Board discussed purchasing a new one-ton pickup for the Town Garage as part of the budget. Further updates on other acquisitions, possibly including a dump truck, will be provided at a future meeting. Paul inquired whether the new truck would have a plow; and the answer is no as it will be a pickup truck.

Greg responded that this decision depended on the Town's evolving needs and would be paid for from the equipment fund. This purchase is somewhat out of the regular replacement cycle.

WRUED Board Meeting Update

The Jamaica representatives on the WRUED board held an informational meeting at JVS on 1/27, focusing on budgeting, the school building, and education directions. The meeting, led by Drew Hazelton and Dana West, lasted over two hours and included a wide-ranging discussion. One theme was the possibility of closing the Jamaica school due to challenging budget conditions. The board is not currently requesting that the Town call a vote, but is working on a budget that anticipates closure and would prefer guidance from the Select Board. Concerns were raised at the recent Select Board meeting about impacts on PreK programs; however, PreK was not on the list of potential cuts, and 24 spots for PreK would remain available at Townshend. If the school closes, there are no guarantees for Jamaica students, and placement could be

determined by lottery or available spots in private programs, which are currently full. The impact on Jamaica's children is still being assessed.

The WRED website contains detailed information and budgets. Drew and Dana were thanked for their efforts, though many unknowns remain. The Select Board may be asked at a future meeting whether to call a town vote on the school's future.

Chris expressed concern about the ongoing loss of community resources, especially as more young families move into town. Drew was frank that the likelihood of the building ever again housing a school is essentially none, though future uses are still to be determined.

Karen questioned the PreK numbers in reports, noting they seemed low, and also asked about maintenance costs, which do not currently include plowing, mowing, or cleaning.

Robert reached out to the board and confirmed there are no plans to ask for a vote at this time.

Paul and Greg both acknowledged the complexity of the situation and thanked Drew and Dana for their work. Greg noted that closing the school is only a small part of the wider financial picture.

Town Meeting Warning

The Board reviewed and approved the warning for the upcoming Town Meeting.

Jessica made a motion to approve and Greg 2nded. The board voted unanimously in favor.

Tom mentioned that the Warning was boiler plate with no controversial articles.

Approval of Town Business

- Time sheets for the Town Office, lists, highway, and transfer station were reviewed. Jessica made a motion and Katre 2nded. Approved unanimously.
- Pay orders were reviewed. Jessica made a motion and Katre 2nded. Approved unanimously.

Public Concerns

- The Board remembered Judy Flower, recognizing her as a wonderful and active member of the community who will be missed.
- There was a request for a minute taker at Town Meeting.
- Karen inquired about the library budget, confirming that the Select Board had approved the budget as submitted.
- Town Meeting candidates night will be held a couple of days before Town Meeting.

Community Announcements

- Jamaica Walk and Run Club meets every Wednesday.
- Sunday Yoga sessions are being held.
- "Blind Date with a Book" event is ongoing.

- Sam Chapin - Saturday at River and Rye
- Bingo is held at the Masonic Hall 6pm Fridays.
- Monday Fitness classes are at 5:30 at Town Hall
- Jamaica HF is preparing for Jamaica Day and is seeking volunteers.
- Paul (past EMD) noted that the warming center was opened, but did not specify at the Masonic Hall. Upon review this was not correct.

Executive Session (If Needed)

No executive session was held.

Adjournment

Greg made motion to adjourn. Kate 2nded. The meeting was adjourned on a unanimous vote.

Meeting Adjourned 8:12pm