

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

JANUARY 21, 2025

Good Evening Dennis,

DEADLINES AND IMPORTANT INFO. – 2025 ELECTIONS AND TOWN MEETINGS

Date – Year 2025	Event
March 18, 2025	Last day to submit a Citizens Petitions for the Annual Town Meeting: 4:00 pm
April 11, 2025	Last day to Register to Vote at the Annual Water District Meeting: 4:30 pm
April 22, 2025	Annual Water District Meeting
April 25, 2025	Last day to Register to Vote in both the Annual Town Meeting & Annual Town Election: 5:00 pm
May 6, 2025	Last day to apply for a mail-in ballot (absentee or early) for the Annual Town Election: 5:00 pm
May 6, 2025	Annual Town Meeting: DYIMS, 286 Station Ave., S. Yarmouth: 7:00 pm
May 12, 2025	Last day and hour to apply for an in-person absentee ballot: 12 noon
May 13, 2025	Annual Town Election, polls open from 7:00 am – 8:00 pm

Town Meeting Information

Annual Town Meeting - May 6, 2025 - 7 pm

Deadline to Register to Vote: Friday, April 25, 2025

Last Day to Submit Citizens Petitions: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 4:00 pm

Location: D-Y Intermediate/Middle School: 286 Station Ave. South Yarmouth, MA, 02664

Voter Registration

The Town Clerk's office will be open until 5:00 pm 10 days before an Annual Town Meeting or Special Town Meeting to register voters. As the Town has accepted G.L. c. 41, §110A, if the voter registration deadline falls on a Saturday, it will then be moved to 11 days prior, Friday, until 5:00pm.

Town Meeting Information

The Town of Dennis has an Open Town Meeting which means that all registered voters may speak and vote at the meeting. The Annual Town Meeting convenes on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in May. Special Town Meetings are anytime when necessary to conduct Town business.

The responsibilities of the Town Meeting are to:

- Appropriate funds for operating and capital budgets for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1 to June 30)
- Approve all General and Zoning By-Laws (contained in the Code of Dennis); and
- Accept certain "local option" statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Process & Procedures

The Town Clerk reports on the actions of each Town Meeting session and is the keeper of the official minutes.

All matters of Town Meeting business are included in the Warrant. Each item of business is called a Warrant article. The Select Board determines the content and order of articles in the Warrant and sets the deadline for closing the warrant.

The Town Moderator, presides over the business and conduct of the Town Meeting. Operating procedures and rules are dictated by statute, by-laws, or tradition; in their absence Roberts' Rules of Parliamentary Practice governs. Citizens may address the Town Meeting, and when recognized by the moderator, may make motions and may participate in votes taken.

To hold an Annual Town Meeting there needs to be a quorum of 150 legally registered voters. For Special Town Meetings, a quorum of 75 legally registered voters needs to be present for the meeting to take place.

Related Documents

1. [Blank Petition Form \(PDF\)](#)
2. [Citizens Petition to Town Meeting Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

TRANSITION TO OPENGOV

In an effort to make online permitting more streamlined and accessible, the Town of Dennis has adopted the **OpenGov** platform.

Many surrounding towns on the Cape have implemented this software, making the registration and application process more simplified for residents, contractors and businesses operating in multiple towns, as only one account will be required.

While the number of different applications was able to be reduced with the new system, further streamlining it, applications from departments that weren't included in the previous platform are now available. The **OpenGov** online permitting portal can be found at www.town.dennis.ma.us/permitting by clicking on **Online Permitting** in the **Services** section of the Town website.

REMINDER ON BARNSTABLE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES



BARNSTABLE DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES



Helping veterans get
the benefits they have earned

What is Chapter 115?

Under Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. chapter 115) the Commonwealth provides a uniform program of financial and medical assistance for veterans and their dependents. Qualifying veterans and their dependents receive necessary financial assistance for food, shelter, clothing, fuel and medical care in accordance with a formula that takes into account the number of dependents and income from all sources.

Current Income Limit	Current Asset Limit*
Single - \$2,510	Single - \$8,400.00
Married - \$3,407	Married - \$16,600.00

How do I find out if I'm eligible?

By contacting us at 508-778-8740 or visiting our web site www.capevets.org and asking to apply for Chapter 115 benefits. Eligible veterans and/or family members must meet certain income criteria and their military experience must meet the Commonwealth's definition of a Massachusetts Veteran. You can also visit our web site and click on the "Mass Vet Benefit Calculator" to see if you might qualify.

Barnstable District Office 66 Falmouth Rd Hyannis MA 02601 508-778-8740

We also have 7 other appointment locations from Wareham to Provincetown.

THE MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS GRANT PROGRAM (MVP)

The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program (MVP) provides support for cities and towns in Massachusetts to begin the process of planning for climate change resiliency and implementing priority projects. The state awards communities with funding to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented resiliency plans. Communities who complete the MVP program become certified as an MVP community and are eligible for MVP Action Grant funding and other opportunities.

The MVP Action Grant program is no longer accepting Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the **FY26 Action Grant round**. This process serves as a resource for project idea feedback prior to the submission of a formal FY26 MVP Action Grant application (to be released in Spring of 2025). EOIs are highly encouraged but not required to submit a formal MVP Action Grant application.

The MVP Action Grant offers financial resources to communities that are seeking to advance priority climate adaptation actions to address climate change impacts resulting from extreme weather, sea level rise, inland and coastal flooding, severe heat, and other climate impacts.

Action Grants are open to municipalities who have completed the Community Resilience Building (CRB) process through MVP Planning 1.0 (or another process deemed comparable by EEA) and received "MVP

Community” designation from EEA. Applications from regional partnerships of multiple municipalities are eligible provided that the lead municipal applicant is MVP-designated.

The Town has currently submitted two Expressions of Interest for two different projects in Dennis:

Sesuit Harbor – construction of site improvements, building project

Seaview Park – construction of stormwater improvements

Expression of Interest for MVP FY26 Action Grant were submitted late October as strongly recommended by Regional Coastal Zone Management Coordinator

The State will announce actual grant application in late Spring.

The Select Board will review and consider if you would like to endorse both projects for grant applications at a future meeting date.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS IN NEED OF HEATING ASSISTANCE

Dennis Fuel Assistance Program

If you have been approved for fuel assistance and live in the Town of Dennis, you may qualify for extra help from the Town of Dennis.

To qualify you need:

1. Approval from Fuel Assistance (South Shore Community Action Council, Inc.
2. There is an income guideline you can confirm through your application.
3. A recent document showing proof of residence in the Town of Dennis (an electric bill, or lease).
4. Call Julie Benoit at 508-694-2004 for an appointment.
5. This program is open to all ages.

If you have not applied for Fuel Assistance, and feel you need fuel assistance, please call Julie Benoit at 508-694-2004 to schedule an appointment.

Massachusetts Home Energy Assistance Program

Helps eligible households pay for a portion of winter heating bills

Heating System Repair and Replacement Program

The Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP) provides heating system repair and replacement services to low-income households.

Weatherization Assistance Program

Helps with insulation and other measures to help use fuel efficiently.

Mass Save's Income Eligible Programs

Provides assistance through programs to make homes more energy efficient. Residents may qualify for "No-Cost Upgrades", including replacement of a heating system, as well as installing additional insulation, water-saving devices, and more.

RETIREMENTS

Human Resource Director Deborah Heemsoth - Sharing some bittersweet news with the Community. Deb Heemsoth of the Administration Department, has announced her formal intent to retire. The Board was updated previously in August on this. Deb has provided leadership for Human Resources and has continuously gone above and beyond. Her HR career spans over 22 years, and our municipality has benefited greatly by Debs years of public service and dedication to the Town of Dennis in her various roles. Deb defines a true public servant who puts service before self and always has the best interest of the employee in mind. As HR Director, Deb has been an instrumental part of the senior leadership team serving Dennis and her presence will be missed.

Deb came to the Town of Dennis in 2007, as the Human Resources Administrator. In this role, she helped develop and maintain a Human Resources system to help meet management needs, helped formulate personnel policies and procedures to the Town Administrator, ensured town-wide compliance with current laws and regulations while staying current on new legislation studies, while also administering employee benefits. She very quickly took on the role of Procurement Administrator as well, where she was responsible for the managing and purchasing of goods and services for the Town while staying in compliance with state laws. Deb also volunteered to be the Minute Taker for the Dennis Select Board, where she credits a lot of her municipal knowledge to attending these meetings. Deb received her Human Resources Certified Professional Certification (IMPDA-SCP) in 2012, a certification earned by senior-level Public Sector Human Resource Professionals and in 2013, she received her Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official Program (MCPPO) for procurement.

In 2015, under then TA Richard White; Deb was promoted to the Human Resources Director, where she was the first person to hold this position in the Town of Dennis. In this role, she has actively participated in the bargaining process, assisting with the development of bargaining concepts and strategies, administering collective bargaining agreements, reviewing job classifications and salary structures, maintaining up to date job descriptions for all positions, while managing recruitment efforts, assisting Department Heads with the interview and selection process. Deb has received extensive experience in Human Resources Compliance, employee relations, training and development, Benefits Administration, Compensation, Project Management, Employee Development and Performance Management. Deb has dedicated over 17 years of service to the Town of Dennis where she will be deeply missed.

Prior to Dennis Deb worked for in HR for the Christmas Tree Shop Corporate office, and before that Deb served in Administration with the New York State Police.

Debs last day will be January 24, 2025 however she will continue to support Administration in a consulting capacity until the recruitment and transition process has been complete. Deb has been a steady constant for the Town of Dennis for nearly two decades, she will always have the great legacy of being the first HR Director for the Town. I could not be more proud of her stellar public service career. We will all miss Deb but, know that she deserves time with family and travel and so much more.

Thank you to Deb Heemsoth for all her years of service and public servant career! You will be missed greatly.

Knowing the Town is experiencing a high rate of employees that are able to retire, the HR Director position were was taken into account during your budget planning for FY 25. In my Budget Message, I recommended setting aside funding to ensure we are able to properly plan ahead for the transition period. In your deliberations the budget supported and adopted by the Select Board, Finance Committee and approved by Town Meeting including funding for a transition period.

Recruitment is underway and more information on the process will be forthcoming.

BE PREPARED FOR WINTER WEATHER!

We're in for another cold stretch of weather this weekend with some possible snow, too. Make sure you, your home and pets are prepared and safe with cold temperatures.

Some helpful reminders:

- Limit your time outside
- Keep pets indoors
- When using alternate heating sources, make sure your Carbon Monoxide detectors are working properly
- Check on neighbors who are elderly or who need extra assistance
- Keep emergency kits and extra warm clothing items in your car

More Winter Weather Preparedness Tips

[Winter Weather | Ready.gov](#)

NEXT MEETING DATES OF THE DENNIS SELECT BOARD

The Dennis Select Board will meet on February 4, 2025 for regularly scheduled business. Upcoming meeting dates of the Select Board can be found on the [Town of Dennis website here](#).

All are welcome to attend and participate in our open and public meetings. The agenda for each meeting is posted 48 business hours prior to the scheduled meeting time and can be accessed through the Select Board's webpage or the Town calendar webpage.

Attend in-person at the Town Hall, Stone Meeting Room. Or for alternative public access join the meeting online via zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8780036813> or participate by phone by dialing 1-646-558-8656 and entering Conference ID: 878-003-6813

JOIN THE TEAM! THE TOWN OF DENNIS IS HIRING

Are you or someone you know looking for work? The Town of Dennis is hiring! Several full and part-time positions available. Apply and view current job openings [here](#).

Thank you and be well, everyone!

Elizabeth C. Sullivan, Town Administrator