

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 28, 2026
Preston Town Hall - Lower-level Conference Room**

Call to Order - Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier

Jerry Grabarek

Ken Zachem - *excused*

Also Present

Kimberly Lang - Recording Secretary

Public - 2

Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2026 - Regular Meeting

Jerry Grabarek motioned to approve the January 14, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Correspondence - None

Reports - None

Appointments and/or Resignations

- 1. Reappointment of Roberta Charpentier as an alternate member to the Preston Youth Services Advisory Board, Seat 1 a new term to expire on December 31, 2026.**

It was noted that the Youth Services Advisory Board is recommending Roberta's reappointment and that she has been an active member over many years. Ms. Charpentier was thanked for her continued service to the Town in this capacity.

Jerry Grabarek motioned to approve the reappointment of Roberta Charpentier on the Preston Youth Advisory Board, Seat 1, as an Alternate Member with a term ending December 31, 2026. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Business

- 1. PRA recommendation to the BoS for the reappointment of Merrill Gerber to the Preston Redevelopment Agency (PRA), with a new term ending October 26, 2030, subject to Special Town Meeting approval.**

It was shared that Merrill Gerber has been an active member of the Town's Hospital grounds group since 1995. Jerry Grabarek shared a brief history of Merrill's dedication to the Town and the Riverwalk Project. It was shared that he calls in to every meeting and actively participates in the business of PRA.

Jerry Grabarek motioned to approve the reappointment of Merrill Gerber to the Preston Redevelopment Agency (PRA), with a term ending October 26, 2030, subject to Special Town Meeting approval. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Jerry Grabarek motioned to approve a Call to a Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. in the Lower-level Conference Room of the Town Hall to act on the reappointment of Merrill Gerber to the PRA. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

2. Special Meetings - Budget Workshops

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier reviewed the proposed February calendar for the Board of Selectmen meetings. The Board will have the following February meetings:

- February 11 - cancelled
- February 18 - Special Meeting (First Budget Workshop & Other Business) 5:00 PM
- February 25 - Special Meeting (Second Budget Workshop) followed by the 6:00 PM Regular BoS Meeting
- March 11 - Regular BoS Meeting 6:00 PM at which the budget will hopefully be finalized.

Ms. Allyn-Gauthier stated she would encourage people to get involved early in the budget process so they're better informed.

3. Grant Funding Updates

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier share the following updates:

- A Community Investment Fund grant was submitted in early December and the Town should know by March 10th if Preston has been awarded the grant
- A Recreation Trail Grant has also been submitted with the results to be known sometime in March
- An Eastern Regional Tourism Grant has been applied for in conjunction with Voluntown. The results should be known by Feb. 14th. If approved this will be the second time the Town has been awarded this particular grant, therefore moving forward the matching funds needed for this grant will be placed in the budget in anticipation of future awards. Businesses that are participating will be encouraged to give discounts between April and June to help promote the area's economic base.

- The Town has successfully acquired through state legislators and the Bond Commission \$400,000 for the pump station upgrades, including a study to determine further upgrades needed for safe maximized future use.

Tax Refunds

Public Comment and Questions

Claire Stadtmueller, 79 Cooktown Road, stated that she feels the Board of Selectmen should place Historic Farms, Home Rule, and Local Authority on their agenda. And while the Planning and Zoning Commission is looking into it she feels it also needs to be a topic for the selectmen to discuss. She stated that it needs to be more clear who the transients are, who will be renting the apartments, and there are no homeless in Preston so why does Preston have to provide for homeless that are not here.

Jill S. Keith, 26 Tanglewood Dr., shared 4 points with the Board of Selectmen:

1. Agreed that it is important to get people involved with the budget process as early as possible.
2. Is happy that the Town still continues to apply for grants.
3. Stated she felt that it would be more cost effective to consolidate Preston's two schools.
4. And finally, Ms. Keith would like to have more information regarding a complaint about her that had been brought before the Ethics Commission.

Adjournment

Jerry Grabarek motioned to adjourn at 6:21 P.M. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary

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PRESTON, CT.

2026 JAN 29 A 11:30

Cindy Palmer
PRESTON TOWN CLERK

Asst.