



Town Manager's Report

To: Select Board
From: Kimberly Newman, Town Manager
Date: March 17, 2026
CC: Department Heads

TOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE **ADMINISTRATION**

- The Fire Rescue Building Committee met on March 2nd for a discussion with TGAS (architect) regarding the design direction of the new station. The conversation focused on whether a two story or three-story design would move ahead. After careful review of the information presented along with cost estimates of the two options, the committee unanimously decided to give direction to move forward with the two-story design path. Some of the main factors in this decision were that all apparatus would be located on one floor, which allowed for ease of access as well as ensuring exhaust systems would work more efficiently to provide for the health of staff. Additionally, the two options had significant differences in cost, with the three-story option being approximately \$14 million more. This was an important direction needed to move this process along and stay on track with the schedule. The Committee will be meeting again on March 23rd for further updates.
- The Annual Town Meeting Warrant closed on March 2nd. There are 38 articles on the warrant list. At this point, article language is being reviewed by counsel, and there are anticipated votes for placement and support of articles at the next three Select Board meetings on March 18th, March 25th and April 1st. The warrant booklet will be sent to print on April 10th.
- The Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, recertified Orleans' free cash on March 12, 2026. The updated certified free cash total is \$4,124,634, which is \$140,366 below the prior projection of \$4,265,000. Even with that modest reduction, the Town remains in a strong position to fund the same planned capital expenditures and still retain capacity for additional warrant articles before reaching the recommended 3% reserve threshold.
- The Town's FY27 budget process is moving forward with a focus on structural balance, conservative revenue forecasting, and protecting Orleans' long-term financial stability. The proposed FY27 operating budget is \$59 million, which reflects ongoing pressure from education, public safety, employee benefits, insurance, and other core municipal services, while the Town continues to avoid using one-time revenues for recurring operating costs. At the same time, the Town is advancing a significant capital program tied to public safety, infrastructure, facilities, wastewater, and other long-term priorities, with careful attention to debt affordability, reserve levels, and preservation of the Town's AAA credit profile.

- As part of this public budget process, the Town held its joint public hearing on the capital budget on March 4th and will hold its joint public hearing on the operating budget on March 18th. Hearings are an important opportunity for the Select Board, Finance Committee, staff, and the public to review budget assumptions, discuss fiscal priorities, and ensure the Town's financial plan remains transparent, sustainable, and aligned with community needs.
- Upcoming Select Board Meeting Dates: March 18th, March 25th and April 1st.

COMMUNICATIONS/PUBLIC INFORMATION

- [February Town Talk Newsletter](#)
- Throughout the recent winter storm, the Town worked to keep residents informed with timely and accurate updates as conditions changed. Regular briefings and updates were shared across the Town's communication channels to provide the latest information on weather conditions, power restoration, road safety, shelter availability, warming centers, and town service changes. These updates were coordinated with local public safety departments, DPW, Barnstable County emergency officials, and utility providers to ensure residents had reliable information during a rapidly evolving situation. In addition to public updates, the Town responded to questions from residents, shared regional resources, and helped connect people to transportation, shelter, and warming services when needed. The goal throughout the storm was to help residents stay safe, make informed decisions, and understand what services and support were available during the recovery.
- Provided the [Select Board](#) with an overview of the Town's updated visual branding system and Brand Standards Guide, including its purpose, design framework, and guidance for the use of the Town Seal and logo.
- Produced two episodes of the [Orleans: Behind the Scenes](#) podcast focused on a 2025 year in review and the Town Manager's office.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The latest Business Newsletter can be found [here](#). A [special edition](#) was also sent to share a MEMA survey regarding storm disaster assistance.
- Coordinated with the Provincetown Commons, on their technical assistance for small businesses. We are supporting Orleans-based businesses who participate in the series, including coordinating outreach and providing additional one-on-one technical assistance for participants following select workshops.
- Introduced a proposed Economic Development budget within the Town's FY27 budget, building on the program foundation and supporting continued implementation of the Economic Development Plan.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Attended the Cape Cod Municipal Health Group meeting, where members reviewed and voted on health insurance rates for FY27. The meeting focused on setting rates to ensure the continued sustainability and affordability of the Group's health plans for participating municipalities.

- Met with Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) to discuss opportunities for savings on our voluntary benefit offerings for employees, including options such as life insurance, AD&D, and AFLAC. Also attended a demo for modernizing the enrollment process for these voluntary benefits to make participation easier and potentially provide cost savings to employees.
- Attended a training on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) reasonable accommodation to strengthen the Town's compliance and best practices in supporting employees with disabilities. The training covered current legal guidance and interactive accommodation processes.

CLIMATE, ENERGY, & ENVIRONMENT

- Underground infrastructure work has been completed at Depot Square for the Level 3 DC fast chargers
- Storm recovery efforts have stalled the pole placements for the level two charging projects.
- We are working on contracting with Kim Lundgren Associates for the development of the Climate Action Roadmap. The total cost of this project will be under \$50,000. Which retains \$50,000 in the special article for action related funds to be used to implement the action roadmap.
- The on-street EV charging feasibility study has been completed. This was funded by a grant and will be presented to the ECAC at an upcoming meeting.
- A comprehensive environmental policy draft has been prepared and will be discussed at an upcoming Select Board meeting.

FINANCE

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- The Finance Director conducted budget development and deliberation with the SB and FINCOM throughout the month of February in preparation for the Capital Budget and CIP hearing on March 4th and the overall budget on March 18th.
- Worked with OpenGov to resolve account string connectivity between MUNIS and Open.gov and developing the official Town Budget Book to be published in March.

TREASURER/COLLECTOR

- Received and began processing the Mass Clean Water Trust (MCWT) Loan Application for financing of Phase III of the sewer project.
- Conducted discussion with Finance Committee members regarding debt load/debt service as it relates to the CIP and FY27 budget.
- Successfully processed payroll during the storm closure week. Payroll was able to process the payroll remotely, and Treasurer was able to come to Town Hall mid-week to utilize Town Hall internet for the necessary money transfers and additional payroll processes required. Folks were paid on time as per the usual schedule.
- Finalized new check printing process - updated to security printing via MUNIS roles, with dedicated, clean printer on crisp new check forms.

- Issued 2026 Motor Vehicle commitment #1 on 2/20 with due date 3/24 consisting of 8,355 bills in the amount of \$1,308,463.41.

ACCOUNTING

- Capital Project Reimbursements and Free Cash Preparation Received and processed reimbursements from the Town of Eastham and the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust for two capital project deficits. These transactions were recorded and reconciled in preparation for the Town’s Free Cash certification process.
- Financial forecasting training – DOR Division of Local Services completed with both the Town Accountant and Assistant Town Accountant attended the DOR Division of Local Services 5-Year Financial Forecast Modeling Workshop hosted by the Town of Barnstable to strengthen long-term financial planning and forecasting capabilities.
- Monthly financial reporting and reconciliation completed monthly reconciliations and financial reporting for February, including review of revenues and expenditures.

ASSESSING

- Mailings for FY27 recertification completed for business income & expense returns, business and second home person property return.
- Data entry for FY27 new growth continues. Current estimated tally is \$150k. 100 permits remain to be inspected before the end of March.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

TOWN CLERK

- Vote by mail postcards will be sent to all voters at the end of this month for the Town Election and will include an option to sign up for vote by mail for the upcoming State Primary and State Election as well. The state will send out vote by mail applications as well, however, not in time for our local election.
- Friday, March 27th is the deadline to request Nomination Papers for the Annual Town Election from the Town Clerk’s office
- Tuesday, March 31st is the deadline to submit the Nomination Papers to the Town Clerk’s office.

SNOW LIBRARY

- Snow Library is excited and honored to be working with the health department to implement a community refrigerator program. Assistant Health Agent Heather Holbrook and I met on February 19th to discuss this, including reviewing possible locations at the library and various protocols. Although we just started, we feel incredibly positive that this will become something greatly beneficial to the community.

RECREATION, CULTURE, COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Eldredge Park Renovation – We have awarded the Landscape Architecture and Civil Engineering Services for the Design, Permitting, and Construction bid to Weston &

Sampson. A contract has been signed, and we hope to start discussions by the end of the month.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Health is working with the Town Manager's office to investigate and potentially procure a preferred vendor to establish curbside food waste compost pick up.

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING

- A Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for the Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank Orleans Branch at 97 Rt. 6A. They plan on reopening in the coming weeks.
- We are pleased to announce the appointment of a new member to the Orleans Architectural Review Committee.
- The Building Department welcomed a new part-time Plumbing and Gas Inspector, a licensed MA Plumber and Gas Fitter with extensive experience as a long-time municipal inspector.

CONSERVATION

- Assessing tree damage and down trees in Conservation areas after 2026 Blizzard. Will begin to program cleanup when DPW resources are available. No structural damage (other than some fencing) to report.
- Procured materials (timber and aggregate) for the last 3 dug-in stair replacements at Kents Point. Work should begin again on the final stair (south coast) when the ground thaws.
- Orleans Conservation Dept and Orleans Conservation Trust teamed up and submitted a grant application to DCR for feasibility and design of an elevated boardwalk in the white cedar swamp at the Christian property in S Orleans.

PLANNING

- Participated in a community meeting on the Beach Road Multi-use Path Feasibility Study. Many public opinions were received, and the Transportation & Bikeways Advisory Committee will consider them as the study moves to conclusion.
- The Mill Pond evaluation of short-term alternatives to improve water quality is nearing completion. Recommended alternatives will include aquaculture, a permeable reactive barrier, and restrictions on the use of lawn fertilizers. There is also a recommendation that the Town work with Eastham to initiate efforts to update the 2012 Mass Estuaries Project report on Nauset Harbor, which will lead to the setting of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the waterbody.
- The draft comprehensive plan, Orleans 2050, has been posted on the Town website at: [Orleans Comprehensive Plan | Orleans, MA](#). The plan is expected to go to the Annual Town Meeting for adoption.
- The Planning Department assisted the Marine & Fresh Water Quality Committee in developing a funding request to improve water quality in several locations. Projects that

need funding include an alum treatment of Baker's Pond, developing next steps for Cedar Pond, and required monitoring for regulatory compliance.

HOUSING

- Town was awarded \$175,000 in Seasonal Communities Grant Funding for Year-Round Housing Initiatives, including creation of a Year-Round Housing Trust and support for the creation of 4 units of year-round housing by the Affordable Housing Trust at 22 Old Tote Road.
- POAH, Housing Assistance, and Habitat for Humanity of Cape Cod have been issued Project Eligibility Letters for the redevelopment of the Governor Prentice Inn site and are coordinating with staff on submission of a Comprehensive Permit application to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

ZONING

- The Attorney General approved the Downtown Housing Overlay District and extended the review of the recodification of Chapter 164 for 45 days.

PUBLIC WORKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Pilgrim Lake Fishway Improvement design underway. Flow Data compiled and ongoing. Hopeful for design alternatives by the end of March.
- Goose Hummock Bulkhead presently under construction with completion by April 15.
- Rock Harbor Wharf Improvement Project is on schedule for substantial completion by mid-May. Young's Fish Market discussion is still evolving.
- Nauset Beach Administration/Bathrooms Relocation Feasibility RFQ underway.

HIGHWAY

- The team responded to historic storm Hernando on February 24th. Crews worked around the clock in extreme weather to stabilize road conditions and ensure emergency services would not be interrupted.
- They have since been working to clear the debris from the right of ways on Town roads.
- Maintenance of snow and ice equipment has been ongoing to maintain uninterrupted response to snow and ice events.
- Block storage bins built for street sweeping and catch basin material handling in anticipation of Spring work activities

PARKS

- The Parks staff has been busy assisting with snow and ice operations as well as post storm clean up.
- A clean up of Hopkins Garden was performed before the storm. Storm clean-up in conservation areas is being assessed and will be performed once roadways are complete.
- Maintenance of saws, chippers, and machines was performed to continue storm clean-up.

TRANSFER STATION

- The transfer station staff assisted in storm response with plowing and clearing trees from roadways. They have since received and processed over 100 tons of brush and debris at the facility.
- The team has been busy renovating the scale house. New steps, siding, trim, and door have been installed.
- Repairs to the flare for the capped landfill are ongoing.

WATER/SEWER

- Storm damage in the watershed was extensive taking down multiple poles/wires/transformers. Cost for repairs estimated at \$54,624.27 and submitted to MEMA.
- Three transformers broke about 50 ft from well #6 spilling transformer fluid. MADEP was contacted, and Clean Harbors was sent to the site for clean-up. We are working with MADEP and Tigh and Bond Engineers to be sure the well will remain free of any contamination.
- The Water Department has been accepted into a Lead in Schools pilot program working with MADEP and UMass Dartmouth. Initial emails have been sent to Orleans schools and childcare programs to see if they will participate.
- The Water Department has received a grant to complete a water audit with Tighe & Bond Engineers. The Department, under our Water Management Act permit, is required to complete a water audit due to our exceedance of the 10% max for unaccounted water.
- Meeting House Pond Phase 2 is expected to reach substantial completion by the March 18th Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners meeting.

FACILITIES

- Town Hall – Bids were received for replacement of the rubber tile flooring. Evaluation of Contractor credentials is in progress.
- Town Hall – Interior contract painting continues during off-hours.
- Town Hall – Working with staff to improve the public areas' ambiance is in progress with the procurement of exterior benches and artwork.
- Town Hall – Repairs were completed to the EV charging station. With five vehicles being serviced, it's a well-used feature.
- Facilities wide - Replacement of exterior doors at Pilgrim Lake, Bandshell, Skaket and the Transfer station are about 75% complete.
- Facilities wide – Proactive measures have been highly successful to mitigate domestic water freeze-ups in some of our older buildings.
- Elementary School – K-2 Wing boilers and window trim repairs were the focus during the last month.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Department staff responded to 200+ calls during/immediately after the blizzard. The Fire-Rescue Department worked closely with Police, DPW, Town Administration as well as Eversource and other agencies to coordinate and respond to the storm.
- Through Emergency Management collated, coordinated, and submitted \$276,114 in storm related expenses to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency as part of determining storm costs and potential Federal reimbursement.
- Chief Deering attended a 3-day immersive Human-Centered Fireground Command and Control course in Maryland from February 16-19.