

TOWN OF WALPOLE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
INFORMATION MEETING
NEW POLICE STATION BOND
AUGUST 15, 2026

SELECTBOARD PRESENT: Carolyn Vose, Chair; Cheryl Mayberry and Steven Dalessio

STAFF PRESENT: Sue Bauer, Recording Secretary

PUBLIC PRESENT: Sign in Sheet Attached to Official Minutes in Selectboard Office

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Vose called the Information Meeting to order at 10:04 AM in the Walpole Town Hall. This is a discussion in preparation for the Special Town Meeting Monday evening, August 17th at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall.

Why do we need a new police station? For the protection of our officers, to provide an adequate work environment, and for efficiency. The discussion bounced around a lot, so rather than chronological minutes, the questions are grouped by topic.

The Building: The Police Station Building Committee has worked on the design of the building for three years. When first presented to the voters, it was larger and would have cost \$7,000,000 to build. The Town felt that there was too much space and too expensive, so it was back to the drawing board and the frills were removed.

- The Charlestown Police Station, built in 2010, has a much smaller footprint. What does it not include that we need? They have two stories, but they have less holding space and fewer Sallie ports. When both stories are considered, the Walpole plan is just slightly bigger.
- Will the juvenile holding space be separate from adults? Yes, there are three one-person cells, one of which can be totally separate from the others, including solid walls and a pull-down shade which is similar to what schools have for classroom security.
- How are we going to prevent vehicles from driving into the building? Although not shown in the rendering, there will be granite boulders between the parking and the building.
- What is the maximum size of the force that the building is designed for? It is designed to accommodate up to ten officers. The Walpole Police Department currently has six officers. It is expected that the building will be adequate for fifty years. There is also space to the north to enlarge the building if needed.

The Police Department: The department consists of Police Chief Justin Sanctuary and five other officers.

- How many arrests are there? Walpole PD has about 100 – 180 arrests per year. However, there are about 400 calls per month. Because currently the only way to detain someone is to handcuff them to the wall, the three holding cells will provide better options for the officers. They will not have to do as much on the side of the road. The holding cells are a much better option.
- How do we get to see the monthly Police Department statistics? The Police Department prepares the statistics monthly and they are sent to the Walpolean and Clarion, but that doesn't mean they are published. Moving forward, statistics will be published on the Police

Department page on the Town website (WalpoleNH.us). That way the Town can ensure this information is published.

- Why is the Walpole Police Department so much larger than surrounding towns?
 - If the population is greater than 3,000, a municipality is required to have a Police Department. Walpole is the only town in the area that has managed to be fully staffed for the last two years. Alstead is now down to one officer. Other towns such as Westmoreland and Chesterfield depend on the State Troopers for policing. The State Troopers are also overloaded, and they need to prioritize which calls to respond to, often when the situation has escalated to an emergency.
 - Because of our location, the Town is easily accessible from Interstate 91 via the two bridges in Walpole, and there is a lot of traffic between Claremont and Keene. All of this means more police calls and more patrols.
 - The police officers handle personal disputes. People don't talk to each other and work things out, so the Police handle the resolution. This is better than not having issues resolved as in other towns.
- Why does Walpole respond to calls in other NH towns and in Bellows Falls? Walpole is a member of Mutual Aid for both Walpole Fire and EMS, and the Police Department. When there is an emergency, Walpole will respond if requested. The towns with no Police Department cannot return the favor. However, mutual aid works very well with Bellows Falls. Walpole is there about 6 times a week and they help us about 6 times a week, especially when there is no one on duty in Walpole. We do not have enough officers to cover 24 hours a day. Bellows Falls helps Walpole while officers travel to the emergency location from their homes.
- Why do the officers take their cars home, especially when they live outside Walpole? That is a big expense. The Town does not have full-time coverage, so when there is an emergency, the officers respond directly from home to the scene. That saves a lot of time over driving their own cars to the police station to get their cruisers to go to the scene.
- Statistics say that when there are more cops, there is more crime. Actually, the crime is there either way, but it is not being addressed or reported unless there are police officers.

Funding the Construction of a New Police Station: There seems to be a consensus that the current Police Station is not adequate, but there is concern about how a new station will be paid for, and how much it will cost taxpayers.

- How much will the new Police Station cost and how will it be paid for? The estimate is that the Station will cost about \$5,200,000. The previous estimate is 18 months old. An additional professional estimate is being prepared. At the same time value engineering is starting so the Committee will know which items add the least value. For example, granite curbs all the way around might be replaced by concrete.
- Walpole has already been approved for a \$2,058,000 Federal grant. On Monday night there will be a vote to approve a 20-year \$3,000,000 bond to build the Police Station. If the bond is accepted, a Police Station will be built on Upper Walpole Road. In addition, checks are arriving almost daily in response to the fundraising request.
- If the bond is approved, how much will it cost taxpayers? The interest rate on the bond will be released in January. It is likely it will be 3-4% as the current rate is 3.84%. It will be a fixed rate bond, which means the annual expense will decline as it is paid off. If our rate is 3.84%, the impact on taxes would be \$0.35 per \$1,000 assessed (about \$88 on a \$250,000 assessed home) in the first year and decline for the remaining years.

- Someone could build a house that size for \$1,000,000, so why is it so much more expensive to build a police station? There are special codes for public buildings, and a police station has additional costs like a separate HVAC system for the area where drugs are processed, walls must be bullet proof, and it will have ballistic glass.
- Are there special requirements for the grant? The Federal government requires that competitive wages be paid and that the Town “Buy America – Build America” such as use American made products which increases the cost.
- How can construction costs be controlled? There will be an escalation clause in the contract, and there will be a competitive bid process to build the Police Station.

The Process to Get a New Police Station: The next step is the Special Town Meeting on Monday, 8/17/2026 at 7:00 PM at Town Hall.

- What is next? The next step is to attend and vote on Monday.
- How does the Special Town Meeting work? Just like the annual March Town Meeting.
- Can we vote on paper ballots? Typically, the Moderator would call for a voice vote. If there is any question what the outcome is, the Moderator will call for paper Yes/No ballots. Also, if the Moderator is presented with a request signed by five (5) registered voters before the vote, there will be no voice vote, and it would move directly to paper ballots.
- What if the vote is to approve the bond? The Committee will continue its work finalizing the design details and put the Police Station out for bid. The Selectboard will obtain the Bond.
- What if the vote fails on Monday? The vote will be back on the ballot in March. However, the cost of construction is expected to be higher due to inflation and other factors.

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Vose declared the meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Bauer, Recording Secretary


Carolyn Vose, Chair


Cheryl Mayberry


Steven Dalessio

(Note: These are unapproved Minutes. Corrections will be found in the Minutes of the August 20, 2026 Selectboard meeting.)