



# Town of Great Barrington

## Town Manager's Office



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*Liz Hartsgrove*  
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## Report to the Selectboard

To: *Great Barrington Selectboard*  
From: *Liz Hartsgrove, Town Manager*  
Date: *February 9, 2026*

Below is the Town Manager's report for February 9, 2026.

### **1. INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS**

- a) As a result of a regional regulatory change approved at the federal level, the Town's current aggregation rate through Colonial Power Group will increase by \$0.0125 per kilowatt-hour, effective with March 2026 meter reads. This adjusts the rate from \$0.13750 to \$0.15000 per kilowatt-hour and will remain in effect through the end of the current contract term in November 2028.

This change is tied to a new market structure implemented by ISO New England, which significantly increased ancillary service costs beyond original projections. These costs are being passed through to all electricity suppliers across Massachusetts, including National Grid, meaning all ratepayers are impacted regardless of supplier.

For the average household using about 600 kilowatt-hours per month, the increase equates to approximately \$7.50 per month. Despite this adjustment, the Town's aggregation rate remains competitive with current Basic Service rates, and the program continues to provide long-term value, since its launch in 2017.

Residents seeking additional information about the rate adjustment, program details, or their options are encouraged to visit the supplier's website at [colonialpowergroup.com/great-barrington](http://colonialpowergroup.com/great-barrington) or contact Colonial Power Group directly. Customers may opt in or opt out of the aggregation program at any time without penalty.

### **2. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- a) Just a quick reminder that 2026 dog licenses are now available. All dogs six months of age and older are required to be licensed each year. Licenses can be renewed online, by mail, or in person at Town Hall, and proof of a current rabies vaccination is required at the time of renewal.

The deadline to renew is March 31, 2026. Residents are encouraged to renew early to avoid late fees or penalties. Additional information is available on the Town’s website or through the Town Clerk’s Office.

- b) The Town has received confirmation from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that labor costs associated with the installation of eligible water filtration systems are allowable and eligible for reimbursement under the Housatonic Water Reimbursement Program.

This clarification provides important guidance as the Town continues to administer the reimbursement process and ensures that eligible expenses are treated consistently and in accordance with DEP requirements.

Over the past 10 weeks, the Town has distributed \$72,017.93 in reimbursements, reflecting an accelerated pace of processing and increased participation by eligible households. As of February 9, reimbursements in FY26 total \$84,832.06, supporting 115 households under the program.

Residents with questions about eligibility, required documentation, or the reimbursement process are encouraged to visit the Town’s website for the most up-to-date information or contact the Town Manager’s Office directly for assistance.

	<b>FY2024</b>	<b>FY2025</b>	<b>FY2026</b>	
Total Cost Eligible	\$300	\$600	\$1,500	
# of households	89	106	115	
<b>Total \$ Reimbursed</b>	<b>\$26,039.89</b>	<b>\$42,552.48</b>	<b>\$84,832.06</b>	As of 2/9
			-\$12,814.13	As of 12/1
<i>Total distribute in last 10 weeks</i>			<b>\$72,017.93</b>	

### **3. HOUSING**

- a) To support continuing discussion regarding Residential Tax Exemptions, staff has developed public materials explaining how the Residential Tax Exemption works, including the January 26<sup>th</sup> presentation slides and background information, which are available on the Town’s website within the Assessors’ page.

In addition, I have reached out to and distributed a peer input survey to all 21 Massachusetts communities that currently have a Residential Tax Exemption in place, including those with split-tax rate. The goal of this outreach is to understand why those communities adopted the exemption, how it has worked in practice, what challenges they have encountered, and what lessons they would share with a community considering it today.

Responses received will be analyzed and then shared with the Selectboard and public at the next regularly scheduled meeting on this topic.

**4. SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

No Update this week.

**5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

No Update this week.

**6. MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

- a) The development of the FY27 budget is proceeding in accordance with the adopted Budget Action Calendar. On Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, I presented a public overview of the FY26 budget and a FY27 financial forecast to provide context and set the stage for upcoming budget discussions. This presentation was intended to support transparency and early understanding ahead of the publication of the FY27 Budget Books, which will be made available online on Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>. All related materials, including the presentation slides, are available on the Town Manager's webpage for public access.

*Thank you.*

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