

Otis Historical Commission

February 11, 2026 Minutes

ATTENDANCE: Gail Gelburd, Joel Meyers, Hal Kobrin, Geoff Pigman, Tricia Smith, Cathy Bezozos, Peter Cameron, Celeste Watman

The meeting was called to order at 4:32.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of December 3, 2025 were approved.

BUDGET: Gail's request for a new printer was approved.

PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES:

Otis Cultural Center at Historic St. Paul's: There was a discussion about bringing the chattels, currently in Springfield, back to Otis. Sometime in March was mentioned as a time to obtain the chattels.

There was a conversation about the return and moving of the organ back to Otis. Hal mentioned a company that can dismantle the organ, pack the parts into crates, and transport the crates to Otis. Furthermore, this company has extensive documentation about this historic organ. Then, it was stated that the crates require a storage space of approximately 8' x 8' or 10' x 10'. The possibility of renting a commercial storage space was considered. There are no specific costs to accomplish the aforementioned actions.

Gail spoke to a reporter from the Berkshire Edge about the importance of the organ, and that it may cost \$10,000 to crate, move, and store the organ. She also mentioned that OPT needs donations to accomplish this task.

Lastly, there as a conversation about the location of the organ in the Otis Cultural Center at Historic St. Paul's. No decision was made.

East Otis School House: Gail submitted a request to the town for \$20,000 to paint the school house.

Knox Trail Events: At a celebration to celebrate the country's 250th anniversary, and the Knox Trail, plaques were given to several neighboring towns, and Otis. Tom Ragusa accepted the plaque on behalf of Otis. Also, a book about the 250th history of the United States was published by the Committee.

Otis Historic Homes: Signs were ordered to designate historic homes in Otis.

Website link and signage: A discussion occurred about creating a link from the town website to the OPT website, and adding the Knox Trail video to the OPT website.

Historic District Signage: Hal is working on this project.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

Archives and Museum: Celeste continues to add papers to the collection.

Notice Otis Events:

David Cohen and Goose Pond talk was attended by Gail, and she enjoyed this informative lecture.

A presentation about trolleys on the Berkshires will be held on April 2.

FUNDING ACTIVITIES:

OPT has \$2,000 in the bank account, and \$15,000 in the Wells Fargo account.

We are waiting to learn about 2 grants that were applied for during previous months.

NEW BUSINESS NOT PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED:

Gail sent the Annual Report to the Town Administrator. This meeting ended at 5:25, and the next meeting is on April 1, at 4:30.

