

BUDGET COMMITTEE - Meeting Minutes for 5/7/26

Present: Neil Berry, Phyllis Brannon, Donna Church, Marc Derr,
Jill Gastonguay, Alan Purinton, Milt Simon, Jeff Wakeman

Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m. inside the Durham Eureka Community Center

Committee members discussed the Selectboard Chair's response to the Budget Committee's request for clarification regarding whether or not a warrant amount could be increased or decreased by a town resident during the town meeting. The Selectboard Chair confirmed that budget warrants can be amended down, but not up. He also stated that if neither the Selectboard's nor the Budget Committee's recommended amount is approved, assuming article 4 is approved, then the number would revert to last year's budgeted amount.

Voting took place regarding the following Articles expected to be included in this year's Town Warrant:

Motion made by A. Purinton, 2nd by J. Wakeman ... to see if the town will raise & appropriate **\$763,309** for **General Government**. Motion passed 7-1.

Motion made by J. Gastonguay, 2nd by M. Derr ... to see if the town will raise & appropriate **\$745,485** for **Public Safety**. Motion passed 7-0-1.

Motion made by N. Berry, 2nd by A. Purinton ... to see if the town will raise & appropriate **\$1,922,727** for **Public Works**. Motion passed 8-0.

Motion made by J. Wakeman, 2nd by J. Gastonguay ... to authorize Selectboard to appropriate **\$350,000** from the **General Fund's existing fund balance** to reduce the amounts authorized to be raised in taxes. Motion passed 7-1.

No further Budget Committee meetings have been scheduled prior to the June 13, 2026 Town Meeting.

Motion made at 8:20 p.m. to adjourn meeting. Motion passed 8-0.

Recommended Budget reductions per Department for FY 2027

General Government

- Implement wage tier over 2 year period; FT wages would now increase by 7.5% in 2027
- Decreased TM raise to 6%. We understand the contract was already created, but unless the money was already in the FY2026 budget, this agreement should have been contingent of budget approval at town meeting
- Remove unemployment amount, as General Government already has contingency funds in the miscellaneous line
- FY2026 HR was budgeted for 20k due to the many projects planned, but is now only needed for employee HR issues beyond TM's ability (which should be far and few between). With this in mind, Business Services was decreased by \$10k ... which is 50% of last year's HR amount.
-
- Text Messaging was deleted to save money. There have only been an average of 3 messages/month since 9/13/24 (59 messages in 19 months)
- Hardware Decreased. \$2500 removed for desired purchase of 5 tablets for Selectboard members. Although it would make FOAA requests easier, we believe attempts for grants should be made first. Waiting another year or two won't change FOAA from the past 30 years
- CEO/Public Works Assistant decreased to part-time. Specific funding would be 20k from this heading and 20k from PW, per the Town's Accountant's calculations. We understand this person may have already been hired but, again, it should have been pending budget approval unless funds were already in the current budget amount to create a new position
- Dues/Subscriptions decreased to align with past expenditures since we were told nothing had changed in this category

Public Safety

- Department head decreased to 6% raise which is still above COLA. The department head has been getting raises annually, above COLA raises, after being hired at a competitive wage

- FT 7.5% increase - wage tier over 2 years, which keeps the raise percent the same across departments

Public Works

- Department head decreased to 6% raise as he has been getting at least average COLA or higher raises each year but will now get an additional 5.3% for his added CEO responsibilities (5.3% appears to be what SB recommended when looking at the raise difference between FD and PW department heads)
- We didn't change FT raises as this is the only department that we have been told is truly having a hard time keeping employees due to wages
- Road Painting and Striping kept at maintenance amount

General Fund

- 350,000 to align closer with town accountant's recommendation of \$300,000 but which still gives the taxpayers a decrease in total mil rate change

Fire Dept. Capital Reserve

- Reduction of \$100,000 in consideration that there are no expenditures scheduled until 2029

Municipal Buildings Capital Reserve

- Reduction of \$5,000 in consideration there's already ample funds available for the next 5-year schedule of expenditures