



Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2025, 7:00 PM

Open the Meeting and Roll Call

Chair Cutting opened the Budget Committee meeting at 7:00 PM.

Budget Committee Members Present: Michael Cutting (Chair), Rick Bixby and Bill Hanson.

Zoom participation: Kelly Lombardi and Robert Blake

Select Board: Alfred Hanson and Town Administrator Kathy Frenette

Approval of Minutes • February 4, 2025 and February 6, 2025

Rick Bixby made a motion seconded by Bill Hanson to accept the Budget Committee meeting minutes of April 4, 2025. Roll Call Vote Rick Bixby YES, Bill Hanson YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Mike Cutting YES, Robert Blake YES. Kelly Lombardi abstained.

Rick Bixby made a motion seconded by Bill Hanson to accept the Budget Committee meeting minutes of April 6, 2025. Roll Call Vote Rick Bixby YES, Bill Hanson YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Mike Cutting YES, Robert Blake YES. Kelly Lombardi abstained.

Mike Cutting welcomed Kelly Lombardi to the Budget Committee. Kelly Lombardi explained that she was born and raised in Tampa Bay Florida, went to Boston University where she met her husband and then moved to New Hampshire. She has two children. Kelly Lombardi stated that she is working for RSM in the Boston Area. She and her family enjoy many outdoor activities. She stated that she is hoping to use her accounting skills to give back to the community.

Organizational Meeting Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Bill Hanson made a motion seconded by Alfred Hanson to nominate Mike Cutting as Chairman. Roll Call Vote Rick Bixby YES, Bill Hanson YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Robert Blake YES and Kelly Lombardi YES

Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to nominate Bill Hanson as Vice Chair. Roll Call Vote Rick Bixby YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Robert Blake YES, Kelly Lombardi YES and Mike Cutting YES

Review of Proposed 2025/2026 Schedule

Alfred Hanson spoke about the collaboration between the Select Board and Budget Committee that he hopes that will continue this year. He advised the Budget Committee that the Select Board discussed streamlining the process by moving up the deadlines for CIP submissions and budget reviews. The Select Board would like to receive the CIP by August 19th and department budgets by September 16th. Alfred Hanson explained that the Select Board would like to combine the Select Board and Budget Committee review of the CIP to reduce the number of meetings and speed up the process. Mike Cutting asked for clarification on when the department heads would answer questions. Kathy Frenette explained that this change will reduce the number of times hourly employees would need to attend evening meetings. Kelly Lombardi asked if the budget committee has ever considered holding meetings during business hours. Mike Cutting stated that some members of the Budget Committee work during the day and the public would be limited. Alfred Hanson reiterated that the proposed changes are an attempt to streamline the process.

1 **Bill Hanson made a motion seconded by Alfred Hanson to table the approval of the budget committee**
2 **schedule for further consideration of the Select Board's proposed changes to CIP and operating**
3 **budget deadlines. Roll Call Vote Rick Bixby YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Bill Hanson YES, Robert**
4 **Blake YES, Kelly Lombardi YES and Mike Cutting YES**

5 *Discussion on the motion*

6 Mike Cutting recapped that the propose change is to hold joint meetings of the Select Board and the
7 Budget Committee to review the CIP in August. Alfred Hanson stated this will reduce the amount of
8 time the Budget Committee is waiting for answers to questions. Kathy Frenette advised the Budget
9 Committee that she will not be able to provide a final number for benefit costs until October. Bill
10 Hanson appreciates the proposed change.

11
12 Alfred Hanson advised the Budget Committee that the Select Board is asking that Department Heads
13 develop their operating budgets not to exceed a 2% increase. Robert Blake questioned how the Highway
14 Department would be able to adhere to the 2% considering there will be \$90,000 in lease payments and the
15 need to restore some of the paving line item that was reduced by \$190,000. Alfred Hanson recognized the
16 challenge that will impose on the Highway Department. Robert Blake appreciates the proposed plan to
17 start the process earlier. Kelly Lombardi appreciates the Select Board setting the tone and expectations.

18
19 Mike Cutting stated that they are starting with a shortfall of well over \$300,000 as a result of the \$90,000
20 lease payments for two pieces of equipment, and approximately \$200,000 reduction in paving. Mike
21 Cutting explained that after the town reval the library funding will be substantially higher than in years
22 past, he estimated upwards of \$300,000. Mike Cutting stated that the Town is losing revenue (estimating
23 \$50,000 to \$75,000) from the college because it has been acquired by the Catholic diocese. Alfred Hanson
24 spoke about the importance of prioritizing needs versus wants. There was continued discussion regarding
25 the budgetary challenges that will impact the Highway Department. Mike Cutting commended the 2% but
26 would prefer a flat line budget. He stressed the need for the budget committee to bring forward a flat
27 budget to avoid a drastic cut on the floor at town meeting. Kathy Frenette would like residents to
28 communicate what they are willing to go without. John Leavitt said that is the job of the Select Board and
29 Town Administrator. He stated the Highway Department was approved this year for 4 vehicles and this
30 year the Highway department should take the biggest hit in the operating budget. He recognized that will
31 not be easy to do but it can be done.

32
33 Robert Blake stressed the need to look closely at compensation and benefit costs. He spoke about the need
34 to stamp out any increase in staffing. Kelly Lombardi asked if the Select Board would need to approve a
35 redesign of benefits. Kathy Frenette explained that she has formed a committee that is looking at insurance
36 benefits for the employees. Bill Hanson explained the Budget Committee spent a lot of time thinking
37 outside of the box for ways to curb spending. Kelly Lombardi would like to updates from the Insurance
38 Benefits committee. Kathy Frenette advised the Budget Committee that SB297 will have a significant
39 impact on towns if it passes but right now it is unknown. Ed Mical cautioned there is the possibility that
40 SB297 could eliminate the pooled risk management programs.

41
42 Mike Cutting believes it is critical for the Select Board to manage department expenses. He stated that
43 would result in an under budget expenditure which will translate to a lower tax rate. Rick Bixby agreed.
44 John Leavitt spoke of the importance of reviewing the purchasing journal. Mike Cutting addressed three
45 areas that the audit report noted are in need of improvement: general journal monthly review, reconciling of
46 accounts every month and timely deposits (7 days). Kathy Frenette stated that she has made attempts to
47 address those issues. Mike Cutting stressed that the Select Board needs to make sure things are being done
48 appropriately. There was a discussion regarding the expectations of the new auditing firm.

49

1 James Sherman stated that he would like to see a committee formed to evaluate the Finance Department.
2 He has concerns. Mike Cutting explained that is the Select Board's responsibility.
3

4 Discuss Vacant Position/Filing

5 Mike Cutting stated that James Sherman has expressed interest in joining the Budget Committee. Robert
6 Blake stated James Sherman would be an outstanding resource with his level of experience. Robert Blake
7 endorsed James Sherman.

8 **Rick Bixby made a motion seconded by Bill Hanson to nominate James Sherman. Roll Call Vote**
9 **Rick Bixby YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Bill Hanson, Robert Blake YES, Kelly Lombardi YES and**
10 **Mike Cutting YES**
11

12 Next Meeting Schedule

13 The May 8, 2025 meeting is canceled. The next meeting is May 15th: site visit at the Police Department.
14

15 Adjournment

16 **Rick Bixby made a motion seconded by Bill Hanson to adjourn the meeting. Roll Call Vote Rick**
17 **Bixby YES, Alfred Hanson YES, Bill Hanson, Robert Blake YES, Kelly Lombardi YES and Mike**
18 **Cutting YES**
19

20 The meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM

21
22 Respectfully submitted on 4/22/25 at 6:30 PM by Tracy Doherty