Budget Committee Meeting
Approved Minutes
October 22, 2026 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), Ray Martin, Fred Hill, James Gaffney, Kristine Blanchette. James Sherman via telephone.

Kristine Blanchette acknowledge the large audience and she asked that everyone in attendance tonight treat everyone with respect when they are speaking. She asked that no one interrupt others.

Alfred Hanson called the Select Board meeting to order.
Select Board Members Present: Alfred Hanson and Rick Bixby

Approval of Minutes: October 8, 2026
Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Kristine Blanchette to approve the October 8, 2026 Budget Committee meeting minutes as presented. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Presentation of 2027 Budgets:
Police Department Proposed Budget presented by Police Chief Bill Chandler
Department Head wages: $69,108 Police Chief Bill Chandler informed the Budget Committee that Secretary wages: $65,879
Custodial wages: $1 placeholder, Chief Chandler explained that the department is taking care of custodial needs.
Total Department wages: $255,128
Part-time wages: $1 placeholder
Overtime $12,027
Telephone: Chief Chandler stated that he has reduced this line item to $2,100.
Computer Hardware: $1 placeholder
Computer Software: $1 placeholder
Managed IT: $1 placeholder
Contract services: $19,936
(included in contract services are: dispatch services that decreased to $6,781, county attorney $2,277, alarm monitoring: $500, copy machine maintenance $685, Criminal Software increased to $5,141, RSA updates $110, kennel services $500 and the SOU contract $3,500)
Electricity: no change
Heat/Propane: increased to $3,000
There was a brief discussion regarding the fluctuation in propane cost. Clyde Carson explained that the lock in price for propane can change day to day. James Gaffney questioned how the Town would receive a quoted price higher than a residential home if the price is based on usage. Fred Hill stated that the Town goes out to bid and takes the lowest quote. Alfred Hanson stated the town requested three bids but only two companies would bid.

Water/Sewer: $1,000
Uniforms: $2,500 Chief Chandler stated that next year this amount will increase.
Office Supplies: $2,000
Equipment maintenance & purchases: $2,450 Chief Chandler is reducing this to $1,450

Vehicle fuel: $6,000
Cruiser expenses: $3,000
Safety equipment: $1,240 increase to $5,340 Chief Chandler informed the Board that the bullet resistant vests are due for replacement in August 2027. He explained that he anticipates that the department will be awarded a reimbursement grant.
Mileage: $1 placeholder to be eliminated for 2028
Training and seminars: $2,500 FBI courses/training and other specialty training
Special Details: $10,500 will be offset by revenue
Building maintenance: $3,500 Chief Chandler is reducing this to $2,780.
Total Police Department proposed budget is$467,755 an increase of $3,331 (0.71%)

Fire Department: Presented by Fire Chief John France
Ambulance: Mike Cutting asked for an update on the Ambulance Service contract. He stated that the 2027 budget amount is $265,000. Clyde Carson informed the budget committee that an invoice for 2026 has been received in the amount of $296,000 which is higher than what was expected. He explained that Warner is still waiting for a contract from the Town of Hopkinton for 2027.

AED: $3,200
There was a conversation regarding a grant for replacing the fire department's three ADE units and the Police Department would receive the older models. The Town did not receive the grant. Alfred Hanson explained that it is important to replace the three current units and that the Police Department to receive AEDs.
Stipend: $21,030

James Gaffney informed the Chair that James Sherman is on speaker phone due to technical difficulties with the Zoom connection.

Wages: $90,640
Telephone: $1,500
Computer Hardware: $1 placeholder
Computer Software: $2,250 slight increase
Managed IT: $1 placeholder
Electricity: $12,000
Heat: $1 place holder
Water / Sewer: $500
Equipment Maintenance: $7,800 increase from $1,300 last year
Medical Supplies: $3,000
General Supplies: $700
Vehicle fuel: $2,000 decreased from $2,400. The Budget Committee agreed to restore the $2,400.
Truck Maintenance: $10,000
New/Replaced Equipment: $21,456
In House Training: $17,000
Propane: $3,200
Mileage: $250
Fire expenses: $100
Hydrants: $1 placeholder
Fire Prevention: $200
Training: $3,000
Dispatch Services: $ 37,330 increased to $37,413
Radio Maintenance: $1,000

Building Maintenance: $5,000
Total Fire Department proposed budget is $241,161 an increase of $3,800 from last year (1.58%)

Emergency Management: Presented by Ed Mical
Ed Mical explained that the Emergency Management budget has decreased by $6,725 from last year.
Director's Stipend: $4,100
Deputy Director's Stipend: $800
Outside Professional Services: $500
Grants: $500 in case something arises
Telephone: $800
Computer hardware: $1 placeholder
Computer software: $200
Managed IT: $1 placeholder
Supplies: $1,800
Equipment Maintenance: $250
Mileage: $550
Exercises/Drills: $500
LEPC Administration: Ed Mical explained that the OEM needs a separate Zoom account.
Meetings and Seminars: $200
Total Emergency Management proposed budget is $10,402 a decrease of $6,745 (64.65%)

Warner Public Library Discussion with Mike Brown:
Mike Cutting explained that he would prefer that the conversation stay focused on what effects the budget. Ray Martin explained that the Budget Committee can only address the one item that impacts the budget which is the formula of 1/15 of 1%. James Gaffney stated that he is looking for assurances that the services that the Town is providing through the budget is being reimbursed. He stated that it is his understanding that the Finance Department is handling the Library's payroll. James Gaffney inquired if the Library handles their own building insurance or is that a part of the Town's insurance. James Gaffney explained that the 1890 meeting minutes and the warrant articles that were passed states that the 1/15 of 1% was for the maintenance of the building and the operation of the library. He explained that his concerns are regarding services that are being provided to the Library and paid for by the Town. He stated that there needs to be some accounting and reimbursement of those services.

A member of the audience not identified stated that is not part of the law. James Gaffney referenced the warrant article as approved by the voters. Mike Cutting explained that the Town pays 1/15 of 1% and that is not going to change. James Gaffney stressed that if the Town is paying for the Library's insurance that needs to be depicted in the Town's Budget. Mike Cutting asked if the Library pays for their own insurance. Mike Brown stated that the library's insurance is included in the town's coverage through Primex. Mike Brown explained that there has been a long standing partnership between the Library and the Town. He acknowledged that there are many things that the town has been gracious enough to help the library with. He noted that on the flip side the Library has also participated in the work of the town. He stressed that it is a two way street, it is a partnership. Mike Brown stated that he is hearing from James Gaffney the desire to tear up the partnership and require the Library to pay. Mike Brown explained that the Library does everything it can to fund raise and bring in money to cover the overall expense. He asserted that he does not agree with the nitpicking way that some people are going after what they believe to be unnecessary or an outrageous expense based on the 136 year formula that has been in place. Mike Brown stated that they will defend the formula, practice of the town and the way it has been interpreted. He stated that after the last meeting he and James Gaffney had a

conversation but he does not know what else he can say at this point. Mike Cutting assured him that they are not ending the agreement. James Gaffney explained that he is trying clarify, where the money is this coming from. He asked if it coming from the general fund. He reiterated that he is asking if the Town is reimbursed for handling the Library's payroll and property insurance. Audience member not identified spoke while Mike Cutting asked Clyde Carson to weigh in. Mike Cutting asked Clyde Carson if the town is reimbursed for the expense of handling the Library's payroll. Clyde Carson explained that the Finance Department issues an invoice and the Town does receives payment from the Library for the payroll services.

Martha Bodnarik explained that a long time ago when the Library expansion happened the committee at that time dealt with the questions of whose money is being spent and where. She stated that many people in the town did not realize that the Library is a town building and it should be insured by the Town. Martha Bodnarik explained that the money was kept separate from the Town because it was noticed back then that some selectmen where looking for more money from the library and ways to nickel and dime the library. She stressed that the question of where does the insurance come from is ridiculous. Ray Martin suggested that James Gaffney submit his questions to the Select Board and the Chair of the Select Board can have those questions answered. James Gaffney explained that when he began asking questions no one had the answers. He believes they are legitimate questions. He expressed that in his opinion his questions should have been answered but instead it metastasized into something that it should not have. Mike Cutting asked James Gaffney to put together a short list of questions for the Library and the Select Board to answer.

Mike Cutting explained that the Library is a function of the town that is run by the Library Trustees. He stated that the Select Board manages the town departments. Mike Cutting reiterated that the Budget Committee's only interest is that the Library receives 1/15 of 1% of the assessed value of the Town ($429,362). Mike Cuttings stressed that is not going to change.

Meeting Schedule:

The next Budget Committee meeting is November 5, 2026 at 7:00 PM to review the Transfer Station and Highway Department proposed budgets.

Adjournment

Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Fred Hill to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting. Motion passed.

Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted by Tracy Doherty