Budget Committee Meeting Approved Minutes

November 5, 2026
7:00 PM

Open the Meeting and Roll Call
Ray Martin opened the Budget Committee meeting at 7:05 PM.
Budget Committee Members Present: Ray Martin, Fred Hill, James Sherman, Kristine Blanchette and James Gaffney. Kelly Lombardi joined the meeting via Zoom at 7:07 PM

Select Board Members Present: Alfred Hanson and Rick Bixby
Alfred Hanson made a motion seconded by Rick Bixby to open the Select Board meeting. Roll Call Vote Hanson YES Bixby YES

Alfred Hanson suggested the Budget Committee select a vice chair while Ray Martin serves as Chair.
James Gaffney nominated James Sherman seconded by Ray Martin
Kristine Blanchette nominated Fred Hill seconded by Alfred Hanson

Roll Call Vote for Vice Chair Nominations:

Gaffney voted for James Sherman	Blanchette voted for Fred Hill
Sherman voted for James Sherman	Martin voted for Fred Hill
Lombardi voted for James Sherman	Hill voted for Fred Hill
	Hanson voted for Fred Hill

Fred Hill accepted the nomination of Vice Chair while Ray Martin serves as Chairman.

Approval of Minutes: October 22, 2026 Tabled

Presentation of 2027 Proposed Budgets:
Highway Department presented by Herm Blanchette.
Hydrant maintenance $4,000 per hydrant
Outside professional services is used for underground testing, radio maintenance, surveying
Paving: Increased by $50,000
Outside contract snow removal: $1,750 for Henniker to plow Cross Road at Henniker Road and Warner plows Quimby Road for Salisbury.
Outside Rental for various equipment pieces and oxygen tanks
Bridge maintenance: $2,000 for cleaning and minor repairs.
Line striping $7,400
Gravel: for approximately 30 miles of dirt roads, made on site
Outside repairs: is used for the repair of equipment that is not done in house
Silver Lake Dam Permit: for minor repairs
Equipment Long Term lease: road grader and backhoe $82,000
Supplies: bolts, nuts, lubricants, cutting edges for the grader, plows
Building Maintenance: reduced by $3,500 because the building is currently being reconstructed
Gas/Diesel: $65,000 ($4.65 per gallon)
Parts: filters, belts, hoses etc…
Tires: prices range between $500-$2,400 per tire

Guard rails: $16,000
Calcium Chloride: dust control in summer $4.99 per gallon
Culverts: 15 inch at $280 for 20 feet
New Equipment: $8,000 for small engines (chain saws and shop tools)
Signs: 300 different types of signs in town at $125 per sign not including posts
Meetings / Travel: $50 per person
Safety Programs: random drug testing for anyone with a CDL license, steal toed shoes
Winter Sand: need to replenish supply
Winter Salt: $80/ton
Ray Martin clarified that wage amounts have not been determined. Herm Blanchette explained that the largest increase to the Highway Department budget is an additional $50,000 for paving and $30,000 for Outside Professional services to hire outside personnel to meet the plowing needs. Herm Blanchette noted that by doing this wages, overtime and part-time have all decreased.

Alfred Hanson asked for clarification on the full time wages line item that increased the labor by $40,000. Herm Blanchette will look into the change. James Gaffney questioned the cost of mechanic. Herm Blanchette explained that the mechanic wages are in the full time wages. Alfred Hanson asked for an update on the trucks that where in for repair. Herm Blanchette expects the return of one truck next week and the other truck is expected around Thanksgiving. Alfred Hanson inquired if that does not happen would Primex reimburse the town for a truck. Herm Blanchette confirmed. Fred Hill asked about the increase for outside professional services and the contracting out for snow removal at $30,000. Alfred Hanson explained that strategy is much less expensive than buying another truck. Alfred Hanson suggested removing it from the outside professional services and adding to the outside contract snow removal line item. Ray Martin clarified that outside professional services will be $12,000 and outside contract snow removal will be $31,750. There was a brief discussion regarding the best budgeting category between rental or contract service. Herm Blanchette explained that in the past when he has hired an outside contractor the contractor sends an invoice for the hours worked. Alfred Hanson suggested contacting the State of New Hampshire Highway Department to see how they do it.

Kristine Blanchette stated that the overall budget increased by 3.95%. Alfred Hanson questioned the $5,000 increase to Computer Hardware. Herm Blanchette stated that what he submitted had a $1 place holder. Alfred Hanson agreed. Ray Martin will check with the Finance Department because that could be a typo.
Ray Martin asked about the gas and diesel. Herm Blanchette stated he is comfortable with proposed amount.
Total proposed Highway Budget is $1,185,000.

Herm Blanchette stated that there is $120,000 in the Highway Block Grant (4 payments per year) that will be reflected in the revenue projections.

Transfer Station presented by Varick Proper
Varick Proper explained that he views the transfer station budget in 3 categories: Compensation 45%, Disposal Costs 45% and Facility Upkeep 10%. He acknowledged that it varies from year to year

Wages: $119,310 for two full time, the foreman, and attendant two on-call positions. Varick Proper stated that he is concerned how this line item is paid out.

Disposal cost: $11,000 James Sherman stated that disposal cost for this year is $12,000, he questioned the proposed $11,000 for next year. Varick Proper explained that the transfer station does not accelerate until July of the following year. Kristine Blanchette suggested increasing the line item to $15,000. Varick Proper agreed to increase to $12-13,000. Alfred Hanson pointed out that in the two previous years the amount was $7,400 and $6,900. He questioned the reason for the increase. Varick Proper explained that transportation cost and electronic disposal have increased. Ray Martin explained that he will get a statement of account for the Budget Committee and the Select Board.
Electricity: $5,200
Heat: maintenance of the waste oil furnace, fuel and maintenance for the secondary furnace. Maintenance costs have increased.
Building maintenance: reduced to $4,000 from $5,000. Varick Proper noted that $2,860 was spent on lighting upgrade. He is comfortable with the $4,000.
Fire Alarm system: $500
Uniforms: reduced to $300
Office / shop supplies: increased to $3,000
Equipment Maintenance: $10,000
Fuel: Alfred Hanson asked if all equipment at the transfer station runs on diesel. Varick Proper confirmed. James Gaffney cautioned that the price of fuel per gallon is increasing. Ray Martin stated that this is a line item that might need to be adjusted.
Ground Maintenance: reduced from $3,000 to $2,000
Meetings / Seminars: recertification
Safety equipment/programs: Varick Proper explained that he purchased a dock plate for $2,954 (required by the Department of Labor). $600
Transportation: $98,700 tipping fee (at $105/ton estimated 940 tons)
Solid Waste surcharge: $3.50 per ton $2,745 year to date Varick estimates $3,400 at years end.
Demo Tipping fees: $120/ton increase of $1,000, year to date 100 tons
Resource Recovery also known as New Hampshire Recycles: $1,600
Hazardous Waste Disposal: $8,000 Varick Proper recommended this be done on an annual basis instead of every other year. He stated that it would reduce the amount of abandoned hazardous materials and peaks in the budget. $13,300 was the most recent invoice for a two year period.
Grants: placeholder

Meeting Schedule:
November 12, 2026: General Government, Town Hall, Community Center, Building Inspector and Health and Welfare.
November 19, 2026: Finance, Town Clerk, Election, Tax Collector, Assessing, Parks and Rec, Library and the Conservation Commission
December 3, 2026: Review of operating budget
December 10, 2026: Capital Budget, anticipated revenue.
December 17, 2026: Analysis of the 2027 budget

Ray Martin reminded the Budget Committee that they are required to review any petition warrant articles that are submitted if there is a financial component them.

Kristine Blanchette outlined the following deadlines;
February 2, 2027 for petition warrant articles.
February 8, 2027 is the continuation of the public hearing.

February 9, 2027 final vote on the proposed operating budget.
March 10, 2027 is Town Meeting.

Alfred Hanson explained that the submission of the Select Board's proposed budget will be in by the first week of January. James Gaffney questioned why it cannot be sooner. Alfred Hanson explained that the Select Board is still work on and gathering information. Ray Martin noted that the Select Board budget is coming in after the Budget Committee has reviewed the budget. Alfred Hanson explained that the Select Board will not receive the final numbers on insurance and other items until sometime around January 1st. Kristine Blanchette suggested pushing all meeting back one week and eliminate the December 3rd meeting.

Ray Martin suggested the following meeting schedule:
December 3, 2026 eliminated
December 10, 2026 review and recommend changes to operating budget and review of capital budget
December 17, 2026 eliminated or TBD
Alfred Hanson cautioned that the December 10th meeting will be tough. He advised the Budget Committee that the Select Board will be deciding on the health insurance on December 2nd. He stated that the Select Board is reviewing wages. He informed the Budget Committee that the Select Board will also make a decision on any cost of living increases.

Adjournment

Kristine Blanchette 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 8:56 PM
Respectfully submitted by Tracy Doherty