

**TOWN OF NEW HAMPTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET HEARING MEETING MINUTES**

New Hampton Public Safety Building, Fire Dept. Training Room
Tuesday, January 7, 2025

**MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Mr. Drake, Mr. Harvey were present and Mr. Shaw (by phone).

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Drake called the meeting of the Board to order and opened the Public Hearing for the 2025 proposed budget at 7:00 p.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2025 BUDGET
HEARING**

Present: Town Administrator Mr. Davenport and Finance Officer Mrs. Capone
Town department heads present: Police Chief Tyrrell, Fire Chief Cathy, Acting Public Works Director Mr. Cote, and Town Clerk/Tax Collector Ms. Schofield.

Others present: Residents: Residents Dana Torsey, Deb Corr, Ralph Perron, Matt Blais Patrick Cremin, Richard Morse, and others.

Everyone present had copies of the proposed 2025 budget and Department Heads reviewed their budgets. Highlights below:

**TOWN
OPERATING
BUDGET**

Executive:

- Around 10% increase overall for Executive budget with a majority of the increase due to full-time wages including 5% COLA increase; part-time wage increased to hire part-time employee to perform code enforcement; health insurance, SSI and Medicare increases.

Town Clerk:

- Increase due to full-time wages including 5% COLA increase; health insurance, SSI and Medicare increases; increases in supply costs and equipment.

Elections, Registrations, Vitals:

- Wages increases similar to Executive; Election line decreased due to there being less elections in 2025 with increase for “one for all” state requirement.

Financial Administration:

- Contract Services increases every other year for audit requirement for GASB, with 2025 seeing no increase.

Tax Collector:

- Similar wage increases; Contract Services due to new software for taxes.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey asked if NASD was being held accountable for their delay in the tax billing and Mr. Drake said the Town had to obtain a TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) and will be sending the district an invoice for the associated costs with obtaining the TAN so they are aware of the affect this delay had. Mr. Torsey said the delay was with the Transportation figures, which is a simple calculation.

Deputy Town Treasurer:

- Wage increase - in average with other municipalities.

Data Processing:

- Increase in IT: improve cybersecurity and additional software updates.

Revaluation of Property:

- Mr. Davenport advised these assessment costs are a set cost for constant updates, while other updates (hourly) fluctuate due to building permits, subdivisions, surveys, etc.

General Government Buildings:

- Increase in electricity due to adding dehumidifiers at Town House to reduce floor warping to expand its life. Mini-splits for Town Office are nearing end of life, needing more repairs.
 - ❖ Deb Corr advised she saw public hearing notices for 3 bonds being proposed, with one being for the Town House, but did not see Warrant Article information in the budget packet posted online. Mr. Davenport said this will be provided tonight as a draft, as the language is still being developed.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey asked about liability if an employee takes a Town vehicle home and Mr. Davenport said this only happens with Fire and Police to some degree and are not used for any personal business. Chief Tyrrell pointed out that if an officer takes a cruiser home it is to respond to a call, from home, when not on a shift and is covered by Town insurance.

Police Dept:

- Estimate 7.2% budget increase – mostly due to overtime line being a one-time increase due to new hire being at Police Academy; dues & subscriptions line to hire contract company to rewrite policies to meet accreditations. There will be an offset as Training line is reduced as several personnel can serve as trainers and there is online training available. Wage line includes changes to create a wage scale for the dept.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey asked how much money the Public Prosecutor (used by the Town PD) is making total, between all the towns he serves and Chief Tyrrell said he did not have this information. Mr. Torsey asked how much New Hampton pays for the position and Chief Tyrrell advised it was \$55,620, as the prosecutor is in court almost daily for the Town, with about 250 arrests in 2024, and if an officer performed this job, it would be much more costly and would include benefits.
 - ❖ Mr. Morse advised of financial benefits, including grant opportunities, to a police department becoming accredited that would save taxpayers money.

Fire Dept:

- Increases due to addition of 2 full-time firefighters, for which 6 months of that was paid for by the warrant article approved in 2024, and is now moving to the operating budget. 96% of the increases are related to these employees and related benefits. Contract Fees increased due to LRMFA rate increases and the department will be using a different computer reporting software as the current software is expiring.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey asked what the savings was for 2 full-time people vs the part-time (per diem) people needed years ago. Chief Cathy said current per diem employees are paid out the EMS budget so with 2 full-timers this budget line will be reduced as less per diems will be needed for responses. Mr. Drake said it's been increasingly difficult to get per diems for shifts.

EMS & Emergency Management:

- Increase in EMS training line due to EMS being the majority of the calls. This also shows reduction in the use of per diems, replaced by 2 full-time personnel, for which only one of the two positions is currently filled. Overall EMS budget decreased around 25%. Emergency Management budget unchanged.

Highways & Streets:

- Fuel, Oil, Grease – increased by \$10,000. Other line items had small increases while others had small decreases.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey asked if any roads were paved in 2024. Mr. Drake said the department added a final pavement coat and chip seal to extend its life, in Winona Heights subdivision.

Sanitation:

- Solid Waste fees increased based on costs of vendors to dispose of waste.

Culture & Recreation:

- \$1,600 increase for Old Home Day to rent a large tent.

Debt Service:

- TAN interest was increased in the event the tax rate is delayed again.
- Some lease purchases have expired so this has a reduction.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey said it appears the overall budget is a 9% increase and Mr. Drake said about ½ of that is administrative costs, with the other ½ being wages, and increases associated with that. He said the Selectmen decided to offer a higher deductible medical insurance to employees to cut costs. Mr. Shaw said if the Board had not done this the medical insurance would have increased by 17%.

Default Budget:

- Proposed 2025 budget is \$3,837,019 with the default being \$3,459,425, a difference of \$377,594.

**PROPOSED
WARRANT
ARTICLES**

Mr. Drake reviewed the proposed 2025 warrant articles (not including Election of Officers, or Zoning amendments).

1. \$200,000 from Town Capital Equipment expendable trust fund as a down payment for a new Fire Engine, financing the remainder of \$650,000 from the Special Revenue Fund.
 - ❖ Deb Corr pointed out that there is a posted public hearing to discuss a bond @ \$650,000 to purchase the fire engine. Mr. Davenport said this could be financed by a 10-yr bond and Mr. Torsey added that the bond payments would come from the Special Revenue Fund.
2. International truck needs replacing due to ongoing costly repairs; Mr. Cote recommended a new Ford F550 flatbed, with sander, wing, and no dump body @ \$146,000. If the department had a larger truck the issue would be with getting licensed drivers.
 - ❖ Mr. Perron confirmed with Mr. Cote that the other small trucks in the fleet are F550s. Mr. Drake said this would be paid for by a 5-yr bond.
3. \$350,000 (based on one quote) for Town House repair/upgrades paid for by a 10-yr bond. Payments would begin in 2026 and would go into the operating budget. Heritage Commission is working on this and had engaged NH Dept of Historical Resources to assess the building, who detailed the needs and recommendations. A portion of what is needed is for exterior work (ie. tree removal, electrical wiring put underground) at \$20,000-30,000. Work is needed to divert water and moisture issues with the foundation and floor. The Commission has applied for several grants; some have not been successful, and others are for smaller amounts. Currently dehumidifiers and a commercial fan are used during warmer months.
 - ❖ Matt Blais asked if it makes better sense to jack up the building and put

in a foundation for longevity. Mr. Harvey said the foundation is granite and generally good, and drainage is the bigger problem, but doesn't think it could be raised given its historic nature. Mr. Blais asked if any of the trees that need removal could be repurposed for the building and Mr. Harvey said that has been considered.

- ❖ Mr. Torsey asked what time frame the bidder provided and Mr. Harvey said they did not provide that. Mr. Drake advised that if the structure isn't repaired soon, it may prohibit the building's use.
- ❖ Mr. Cote said the Highway Dept could make some temporary changes to the terrain around the building to help with drainage.
- ❖ Mr. Perron recommended the warrant article have some language that it would not expire for 5 years and Mr. Drake confirmed it would be non-lapsing. Mr. Drake reminded everyone of the bond hearings on 1/16/25.

Mr. Drake said the tax rate would not be impacted by these bonds until 2026.

4. Cardiac Monitor and CPR Devices – the article is to obtain authorization to apply for an AFG Grant to replace existing equipment; \$135,850 in grant money with a required match of \$7,150 from Special Revenue Fund.
5. \$25,000 for Public Safety Building partial payment; only a few years remain.
6. Police Cruiser @ \$84,000; \$10,000 from the PD Special Detail Revolving Fund to help offset the cost; the cruiser it is replacing will be used by the Town to offset paying employee's mileage to perform duties or attend trainings, conventions, etc. Chief Tyrrell advised that the Town was awarded a grant in 2024 for a new cruiser, which is currently being outfitted. He said the Town operates on a 5-yr replacement cycle being a new cruiser every year for 4 years, then a skip year. This will add a 5th cruiser and will change the current replacement cycle to a 10-yr cycle and will increase the number of skip years, saving the Town money. If this new cruiser is purchased in 2025 the Town will have 3 skip years in a row.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey asked if it was okay to take money from the fund discussed and Chief Tyrrell said the fund makes money when officers perform details and it can be used for maintenance or vehicle purchase.

Mr. Drake said if this article passes it would add \$.13 to the tax rate.

7. \$250,000 Town Road Maintenance – same amount as prior years. This money combines with Highway Block Grant monies for road/culvert improvements/repairs.
8. \$200,000 to be added to Town Capital Equipment & Vehicle expendable trust fund. As \$200,000 will be coming out for the Fire Truck if that article passes, this will replace it and is an increase to the tax rate of \$.34.
9. \$50,000 to be added to the Town Building Maintenance expendable trust fund – to be used for work needed on the Town Office building or any overruns on repairs/improvements to the Town House.
 - ❖ Patrick Cremin asked what is currently in the fund, which was stated as being \$50,301.52. Mr. Drake advised that the Public Safety Building will also need a roof replacement. This increases the tax rate by \$.08.
10. Seek approval to sell a 45-acre parcel on Old Bristol Road, Tax Map R13, Lot 9.
 - ❖ Mr. Torsey said that the Conservation Commission had been interested in keeping that land as it accesses the Pemigewasset River. Mr. Drake said they ask for the commission's input but it the choice of the Selectmen if they want to sell it.

11. Transferring Town land to the Conservation Commission, being Tax Map R8, Lot 1U, Winona Heights Drive at 1.3 acres, which abuts Town conservation

land, Tax Map R8, Lot 1, at 134.42 acres. If approved, the Conservation Commission would pay the unpaid taxes on the parcel.

12. Article to allow the Conservation Commission to continue to hold the 134.42 parcel (Bald Ledge) for conservation purposes and to place a conservation easement on the property. The prior approval to allow for this - expired, prior to putting an easement on it, and this article will make it non-lapsing.

**ESTIMATED
REVENUES**

Mr. Drake reviewed the 2024 proposed and actual revenues and the 2025 estimated revenues, which are conservative.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:41, there was no further discussion, Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Mr. Harvey to adjourn the meeting. Vote was unanimous. Mr. Morse said he has been present during Selectmens meetings over past months and witnessed the discussion and decisions on the budget and warrant articles, thanking the Board for their work.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Vose