



HUDSON, NEW HAMPSHIRE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the October 21, 2025 Budget Review Meeting

7:00 PM

Board of Selectmen Meeting Room, Town Hall

***Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, (a) & (b) beginning at 6:00 p.m.**

Regular meeting will begin immediately after Non-Public Session

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – by Chairman Dumont the meeting of October 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen Meeting Room at Town Hall.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Selectman Vurgaropulos.

3. **ATTENDANCE**

Board of Selectmen: Dillon Dumont, Dave Morin, Bob Guessferd, Xen Vurgaropulos and Heidi Jakoby.

Staff/Others: Town Administrator – Roy Sorenson; Development Services Director – Elvis Dhima; Finance Director – Laurie May; Senior Finance Accountant – Dan Thibeault; Tax Collector – Christine Strout-Lizotte; Town Clerk – Michelle Brewster; IT Director – Doug Bosteels; IT Technician – Amanda Bowen; Executive Assistant – Lorrie Weissgarber.

4. **BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

Chairman Dumont: And I will recognize the Town Administrator, Mr. Sorensen. We'll start with the Trustees of the Trust Fund, thank you.

Trustees of Trust Fund: 5020

Roy Sorenson: All right. To get started, Mr. Chair, So, we'll start tonight, Trustees of the Trust Fund. I can, we can either walk through this like we did the other night, or we can, I can point you to the lines that might have some changes. It's really up to the Board's discretion.

Chairman Dumont: Any comments from the Board? Preferences? I'd say we keep going the same way we did.

Selectman Morin: Oh, I got one real quick.

Chairman Dumont: Yep. Selectman Morin.

Selectman Morin: Just the big increase on the part-time salary, is that just the one, the minute taker, is that what that is?

Roy Sorenson: No, So, we have, we have two positions. We actually have the, the, actually the Trustee of the Trust Fund is Paul DeAngelis, and then we also, have the elected bookkeeper as well. So, there's two there. There is a slight increase. It's based off of hours, So, I don't know if we'll hit that number. It's just that we want to get closer to what we expect, I think, in the coming year.

Selectman Morin: Thank you.

Cemetery Trustees: 5025

Chairman Dumont: Questions? This one seemed pretty straightforward myself, but...

Board: All right.

Chairman Dumont: All good. Proceed.

Roy Sorenson: Cemetery Trustees, no changes, same as last year. I did speak to Dan Barthelemy and Christina Madden, and they're, they're okay with pushing this budget forward, same as last year.

Chairman Dumont: All right.

Selectman Jakoby: No issues. So, just...

Chairman Dumont: Selectman Jakoby, go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: Just a question. So, the actuals for 2025 were \$3,927?

Roy Sorenson: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Versus the \$5,000?

Roy Sorenson: Correct.

Selectman Jakoby: Is there an expectation in the difference?

Roy Sorenson: Yep. So, I think with, now that Mr. Barthelemy's on board as well, they're going to be doing some more grave stone restoration.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, okay.

Roy Sorenson: They've actually come in most of their money for 2026 at this point to do that. I did ask them, because they are making some good progress. They played catch up a little bit in 2025.

Selectman Jakoby: Yep. As he came on later.

Roy Sorenson: One of the things they're looking at is to do more.

Selectman Jakoby: Excellent.

Roy Sorenson: So, I asked them, did you want to increase this budget? They said, not yet. Let's just get through this round, and we'll go from there.

Selectman Jakoby: Excellent. Thank you So, much.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions or comments? Nice and easy. All right.

Tax Collector: 5030

Chairman Dumont: All right. Up next is the Tax Collector. We'll recognize Christine Strout-Lizotte.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Good evening. I'm here to present the FY27 Tax Collector budget. We were given a directive to try to come in not more than 2.5% of an increase, which equates to \$1,216. And my budget did come in at 2.5% for the increase. And I'm willing to take any questions that you might have about the budget that was presented.

Chairman Dumont: If you could just give a brief overview of the 2.5% increase. If you could just touch on it a little bit.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Yep. So, the increase is primarily with printing and postage. So, it is expected next fiscal year. They're expecting a postal increase July 1 of 2026 and January 1 of 2027.

Selectman Guessferd: And you're expecting 5%?

Christine Strout-Lizotte: That's what I read.

Roy Sorenson: I think you heard that the first night, too. You'll continue to hear postage in multiple departments' budgets increasing.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. Even looking at that, it does seem like that's closer to your actuals for 2025, if I'm reading that correctly.

Roy Sorenson: Yep.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. Any other questions or comments?

Selectman Guessferd: I know it's small dollars, but just So, we've got equipment rental. I'll just go through four. I've got the three here that, you know, if you could just briefly explain the equipment rental, mileage reimbursement. It looks like it's all associated with maybe travel and then maybe a new piece of equipment. That's all. Equipment.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: The equipment rental, our actual for FY25 was \$832, So, I just plugged that in. That's a number that's given to me. I'm not – I mean, it's the copy machine for sure.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, yeah.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: I don't know if it's anything else in addition to that.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, I saw it was the actuals for last year. I wasn't sure if you were expecting it to keep it. But, again, it's not a lot of dollars.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Right.

Selectman Guessferd: I just like to usually highlight the big ones, the percentages, just So, we can know what they are. That's all. And then mileage reimbursement and lodging, I'm assuming that's conferences.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Conferences. And so, for Town Clerk and Tax Collector, there is a professional development. It's a three-year program, and it's a week in Concord, the second week of August. So, it's mileage mostly for traveling back and forth to that and then the conferences.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, OK.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. All right. Selectman Vurgaropoulos, did you have a question?

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: He had my question.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Any other questions or comments?

Selectman Guessferd: This is one of the budgets where in 301 the paper budget didn't increase, but it was 100%. Is that 100%? Yeah. So, yeah, that's just a typo. Well, not a typo, but a formula issue. Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. All right. And then it does look like you had some out-of-budget requests as well. Do you want to speak to those?

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Yeah. So, it's to raise \$10,737 for the postage increase that's expected for July 1 of 2026 and January 1 of 2027, and \$7,000 for printing costs. So, my actual, like I'm keeping in line with what the actuals were for FY25. We spent \$9,200 in printing for last fiscal year.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: And that's printing of the tax bills, the motor vehicle renewal notices.

Chairman Dumont: Oh, yeah.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Envelopes. I mean, we mail out over 45,000 pieces of mail between the property tax notices and the motor vehicle registrations. So, we have a third party that we use that we print them here in-house, but we send them out to get folded, inserted, mailed, and that's part of that cost.

Selectman Morin: I appreciate you coming with an out-of-budget, but why wouldn't we just do this? We have to do this. This is mandatory. So, why wouldn't it just be in the budget? Just to make it easier, I think it should be just in the budget. We have no choice.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Right. I agree.

Selectman Guessferd: Well, I think it's because it's the 2.5%.

Selectman Morin: No, I understand that. But even if it is, this is something we got no choice.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Right. It's the price of doing business. I mean, we have to do this.

Selectman Morin: And you've got three elections next year, too, which is separate.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Right.

Selectman Morin: But I understand that's going to be a lot. I would just like to move that right into her budget if the Board agrees.

Selectman Guessferd: Absolutely.

Selectman Jakoby: So, both the postage and the printing?

Selectman Morin: I'm sorry?

Selectman Jakoby: Both the postage and the printing?

Selectman Morin: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Yes. I agree.

Chairman Dumont: So, I did just have one question just So, that way if anybody is paying attention at home. So, the actuals in 2024 were closer to what was figured for budget for printing. So, \$3,382. Obviously, what was figured in 2026 was \$3,000. Big increase in 2025, a little bit more similar in 2023. The fluctuation, can you speak to that at all?

Christine Strout-Lizotte: I don't have the FY24 numbers, but I'm guessing that the printing and the professional services, things were charged to one or the other.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: So, it was the way it was coded. But the money was spent between the two cost centers.

Chairman Dumont: And the only reason why I bring that up, and it does make sense with your explanation, is just because the postage obviously kind of maintained right where you're asking for this year. It just seems like it was a little bit low for 2026. So, I understand that increase. Printing was just up and down, \$7,000, \$3,000, \$9,000, and then back to \$3,000. Okay. I'm good. Any other questions or comments?

Selectman Guessferd: Just, again, for clarification, though. So, the 5% that was in there for postage that was in the actual budget is actually just to go back to what you were spending, what you spent the last year. And then this is on top of that for the actual increase itself.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Right.

Selectman Guessferd: So, again, this should probably just be in the budget if that's what it's going to cost us.

Selectman Morin: Yeah.

Selectman Guessferd: So, yeah, I just wanted to make sure I understood the two different components. One of them was to meet your actuals.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: Right.

Selectman Guessferd: And the other one was to get the \$10,000 for the tentatively scheduled rates. Okay. All right. Thanks.

Chairman Dumont: All right, no other questions? I think that's everything you've got, unless I'm missing something.

Christine Strout-Lizotte: That's it.

Chairman Dumont: All right, thank you very much.

Selectman Guessferd: Thank you. Thank you, Chris.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: Unless you want to stay to the end.

Selectman Guessferd: You can support your partner in print.

Chairman Dumont: Next. Go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: So, with those plugged in, So, we're going to get a real number So, we can update that?

Chairman Dumont: Yes.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah. You can put those into those lines.

Selectman Jakoby: I just want to circle around and put that there, because then it'll be curious what that percentage increase looks like as it goes out to the Budget Committee.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Would you like to look at that now?

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, it doesn't have to. I just wanted to update my book.

Chairman Dumont: No, definitely. Yeah. So, what I'm hoping, just I guess for clarity, and I apologize for not saying before, we should be able to get through a good amount of this tonight. And I was hoping to revisit what we're going to be plugging in, items like this, and also, hoping that we can revisit what we reviewed last week as well as hopefully tonight to stay on track with our other schedule.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, okay. All right. No problem.

Town Clerk: 5031

Chairman Dumont: All right. Next up will be Town Clerk, Michelle Brewster.

Michelle Brewster: All righty. Good evening, everyone. This is really my first year with a full year under my belt putting a budget together, So, I'm feeling a lot more prepared going into this budget season than previously. There was still some overlap last fiscal year between the Tax Collector and the Town Clerk, So, my goal for this coming fiscal year was to really focus on making sure that separation was complete and we have some good numbers to move forward with. We are heading into FY27 with a three-election season, which is much bigger than FY26. So, the numbers that you see for my FY27 are going to be more So, based on the FY25 budget just because we have that increase. I don't have many large increases. The biggest one is going to be the office supplies, but definitely open up to any questions or concerns any of the Board members have.

Chairman Dumont: So, the other one, and I'm sure it's probably very similar, you said that they're more similar to the actuals for FY25. Printing, \$241 in 2025 was \$329. Is that just because the department was split?

Michelle Brewster: So, that's because coming into the position, there was already a lot of material available, So, I really didn't have to purchase much in that first fiscal year. Now that I've been here and we've used everything, we'll have to purchase a lot more.

Chairman Dumont: So, a decrease from what was figured in 2026, So, I appreciate that.

Michelle Brewster: Yeah, yeah, a little bit. I tried to be as spot on as possible, but I can't steal from the Tax Collector anymore, So, I really have to try to make it as accurate as possible.

Chairman Dumont: Do we have any other questions or comments? Everybody good? All right.

Michelle Brewster: Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you very much.

Roy Sorenson: Hey, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Dumont: Go right ahead.

Roy Sorenson: You'll see in your book next up will be Moderator. That's not going to be until Thursday night, So, we'll get through those pages, move through that.

Supervisors of the Checklist: 5042

Chairman Dumont: I'm going to start off with the Supervisors of the Checklist for the next round, and Mr. Sorenson, you have the floor.

Roy Sorenson: Yep. So, page 24, you'll see the cover sheet, which kind of gives you a breakdown of the respective departments and what we call Town Officers. That's going to be the Supervisors of the Checklist, Town Treasurer, Sustainability Advisory Committee, Benson Park Advisory Committee, Budget Committee, and Ethics Committee. We can get into Supervisors of the Checklist. And let me just pull that sheet up for the public to give an idea. So, we are going to go to page 25 in your book, and I'm willing to take any questions. It's just minimal. I think if you look at it again, an adjustment made to postage minor, \$88, and that's the only change within Supervisors of the Checklist. Questions on that? Not seeing any.

Chairman Dumont: Keep on rolling.

Treasurer: 5050

Roy Sorenson: Town Treasurer, pretty much the same thing. We don't have an immense amount of changes. We do have, I'm sorry, I'm on the wrong page, just other than salary and benefits, and that's just holding with the typical increase. You met Barbara Bouley earlier this year. She does a great job with what she's doing with the town's money and or investing that money and getting back the best return we can. 4% increase for her salary. Again, it's probably a little bit under \$400 difference.

Chairman Dumont: That's what I was going to point out. While the percentage may seem large to some people, it's a very small dollar amount. She's been very helpful.

Sustainability Advisory Committee: 5055

Roy Sorenson: I agree. Keep on moving. Sustainability Advisory Committee. We don't have anyone here tonight. Selectman Jakoby, I don't know if you want to speak to this a little bit.

Selectman Jakoby: I do. So, what I did was I had asked them for some input, and they were looking at their next meeting to do a deeper dive into the budget. So, what you have there is a draft of what they were looking at. So, they are looking at decreasing this. So, I wanted to let you know that. They are looking to decrease that. They had the head of DPW was at the last meeting or the meeting before and was talking about some of his hopes as far as more outdoor cleanups. And so, they need to consider that and the cost associated with those because that's generally for the lunches for that event. But for the most part, I could give you some new numbers now, or we could just let them submit it. Some of the items, the biggest concerns that they have are they had a great response to the Christmas tree light donations. And the first year they did it, they did it at all three Lowe's and they shipped them. And then the second year, they had like 600 pounds of lights and had no place they had to find someone to ship it, and they found a donor to ship it. So, the question is for this board is do we put it, you know, as an expectation of a donation and they find a place for it? Or do we, you know, support it and put a placeholder of it costs, I think, \$650 to ship all of those on a pallet. So, those are just some of the questions that they raised. I don't think there's an expectation here. It was more an opportunity to give the Board an understanding of the limitations within the Sustainability Committee and what's happening there. And this is Karl Huber, who's the Chair of the Sustainability Committee. So, you know, they're looking to do more, but with more costs more, unless they go out for donations. So, just trying to balance that and just give you an idea of what the costs look like.

Selectman Morin: Do you have a final budget to present to us tonight?

Karl Huber: No, we do not.

Selectman Morin: I'd make a motion to defer it until we get it. Why talk about some numbers if they don't have a firm budget?

Selectman Jakoby: That's okay.

Karl Huber: That's what we were planning to do on next week's meeting, when we're finally all together. I took a stab at this just to try to put some of the information that we presently have in place. But we want to look at it and then be able to approve it, vote on it, and then present it to you in detail.

Chairman Dumont: So, I'm going to ask the hard question, which would be, why hasn't it already been done?

Selectman Jakoby: So, I'll be happy to answer that.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Jakoby: So, I assume that there was some communication happening earlier, and I was incorrect. So, when I raised it to them, we didn't have a clear deadline for that happening. So, there was definitely a miscommunication in deadlines for them to address it. And from both the Benson Park Advisory Committee and the Sustainability Advisory Committee, they haven't previously been asked to be involved in the budget process, whereas I made an assumption that they were. So, there was a miscommunication. I've created them an opportunity to voice their budget needs, which they haven't been asked previously.

Karl Huber: Plus, we also, when we finally got the form from Roy's office, we wanted to make sure that we could understand the GL numbers and everything else, and then take what preliminarily we put together on the projects that we've had, the community roadside cleanup, any of the advertising, any of the messages that had to be sent out. Now we get an understanding of where those appropriate line items should be and how do we put the numbers to it. So, I apologize that we didn't collectively get all of our ducks in line before this meeting.

Chairman Dumont: When was that form sent out, Mr. Sorenson?

Roy Sorenson: I don't have the exact dates. I sent out the sheet, which was the general sheet, which is the Excel sheet, as well as the actuals to date, what was expended. And then I don't know when their last meeting was, but it was built off of that. I did receive from them. It's in your, actually, you have it open now. It's in the back up on page 2 on the Town Officers, their spreadsheet, at which point I took that and I sent that back to them and asked them if those were the numbers that we were presenting, which I assumed at that point we were, So, that's why they're in the book.

Karl Huber: And that spreadsheet that you're referring to, that was just reviewed or looked at, not with any kind of vote or anything like that during the September meeting. That's why we were caught off guard and now we know. And plus, I think this is a great practice for us to begin to do. This way, at least, it's a clear roadmap of what this committee is doing and it keeps our communication open with this Board, with Town Admin, and all the other parties that we get involved with.

Chairman Dumont: So, I guess all in mind was saying we're on a very tight schedule to begin with. The Board of Selectmen is the ones that creates this budget. I would say that this is, if anything, a learning experience. Typically, what we've done in the past is we've gone through, we've decided what goes where, we've taken feedback. I think that we have their feedback. I understand that that might change. I would hope that it would go down, but I think we know what the asks are. I'm going to maintain that I would feel best to go through the items that we have here tonight, depending on the time that we start to go through and review those items, whether they be cuts or plug-ins.

Karl Huber: We also, made some modifications. So, for instance, one of the key line items that we're keeping top of mind is when J.T. was at our last Sustainability meeting, we were talking about community roadside cleanups, and DPW was projecting that maybe we can do three to four per year. But it takes a lot of money. It takes a lot of management and maintenance and pre- and post-event. So, right now we're saying, all right, maybe if we look at \$100 per community roadside cleanup, that would be an additional \$300, \$400. But the other thing that we had on here, we thought that we were going to have food at the Pumpkin Smash. The Pumpkin Smash event is only 90 minutes. We don't need to provide food or anything like that. So, the line items like that we want to adjust more legitimately and truly represent what the Committee is doing.

Selectman Morin: If we're going to talk about this a little bit, is that what you're saying?

Chairman Dumont: I would prefer, I'll leave it up to the Board, but I would prefer that we maintain the same process that we did at the last meeting. My goal here tonight was to go through, hear what they had to say, and then revisit these at the end of the meeting based on last week and this week. If the Board wants to dive into this one right now, it's their purview.

Selectman Jakoby: If that's the case, I just want you to know that Karl has changes that he can give us right now.

Selectman Morin: Well, that's what I asked.

Selectman Jakoby: So, Karl, he made some recommendations without the Board's vote. Do you want to go over that?

Karl Huber: I have handouts that show those changes. I just used the first page as a markup. The second page I really left as is. Right now, we're looking at maybe \$2,450 versus that \$4,200 number.

Selectman Jakoby: That's okay.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: So, this adjustment, this is one of the questions I was going to ask. You must be getting ready to do some fierce advertising, but it looks like you adjusted it back down to \$300?

Karl Huber: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: If you just want to go through it, So, \$214 is now \$300. I just find it hard to read sometimes.

Karl Huber: Right. What I tried to do is I tried to just X out through the existing numbers that are there. Advertising for Christmas Light, it's a TBD. We don't know. It was a good program that we got some good response from, and the residents are really looking forward to it. It's a way for them to properly recycle the lights. The dues fees really haven't changed. Dues fees, \$217 would still be at \$300. The \$230 item, we had, you know, the meals for the Pumpkin Smash. We do not need to provide meals. The only thing that's there is, like I said, community roadside cleanup. We did provide lunch, and we did provide some other drinks, et cetera. So, we're looking at, that's what we're getting, the \$100 per community roadside cleanup as an estimate.

Selectman Guessferd: How many roadside cleanups did you predict?

Karl Huber: We did two last year. But it was a good concerted effort because I met with Jay from DPW and met with PD, and we made sure that we covered all the bases. We have a very good mode of operation now when anyone applies for roadside cleanup. First thing that the committee will do with PD and DPW, make sure those roads are safe.

Selectman Guessferd: Not to cut you off or anything, just all I'm asking for is, what number is in your budget here, \$200? Is it \$200 based on two events? Well, that adds up to the \$2450.

Karl Huber: Yeah.

Selectman Guessferd: Two events.

Karl Huber: But I think I changed it on yours to just show the \$100 ...

Selectman Jakoby: Yes.

Selectman Guessferd: The \$100 total?

Karl Hubert: ... to be identified as per community roadside cleanup.

Chairman Dumont: The only thing, and to Selectman Guessferd's point, I appreciate it's \$100 per cleanup, but in that \$2450, we need a solid figure. So, is that two cleanups, four cleanups?

Karl Huber: See, that's So, hard to predict.

Selectman Jakoby: Well, you have to project.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, I have to figure out a number.

Karl Huber: Let's just do two.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, I wouldn't do more than that.

Selectman Guessferd: That's with the \$2450. When you add up all the numbers, it adds up to \$2450. That's what I'm asking. It's simple math.

Roy Sorenson: Let's go by the line and see what the numbers come up to and then come back to the \$2450.

Selectman Jakoby: So, do the \$200.

Selectman Morin: You're saying two now because I'm glad, because we had discussion with the Town Administrator having the prisoners come in, and that's going to save us total money other than lunch, correct, which would be cheaper than?

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, I think it's a concerted effort between Sustainability Advisory Committee, DPW, and then potentially whether it's the Sheriff's Office and or, you know, the state to bring some in.

Karl Huber: DPW didn't mention that pretty soon next month we're going to start having the conversations because we asked DPW about that program because we talked about it in one of our meetings, and it was, oh, let's find out more about it because to your point, Selectman Morin, it does help.

Selectman Jakoby: And I also, believe that given the success of the Benson Park Advisory Committee in getting lunches donated for their volunteers, the committee will be looking into that as well.

Chairman Dumont: I'm just trying to add some of this stuff up.

Selectman Jakoby: So, printing and publications is \$50?

Karl Hubert: Yeah, we put that at \$50.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay. And then the outside hire is at \$1350?

Karl Huber: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay.

Karl Huber: Now, the Pumpkin Smash, that's with Black Earth, So, they're ready as a line item. We're going to investigate other sponsorships. Old Dominion was who we used in the past Christmas light recycling, picking up all the bulk. We had 600 pounds of lights. So, we're going to investigate what other sponsorships we may have.

Selectman Morin: Due to the cost of that, I did some research on this myself. And Lowe's and Home Depot, they got two stores. The Home Depot's got two stores. Lowe's got one store. So, if you split it up between the three stores, it wouldn't even cost us anything.

Karl Huber: So, what we did last year is we were in touch with Lowe's Corporate. Lowe's Corporate said that they were going to help us. But what we found is two of the stores, one store was all in and helped us out. The other store said they're not participating. So, we're looking into that again, just to get some clarification. That's why I said we're going to investigate sponsorships. We're going to go back to Lowe's. We're going to go back to Home Depot. We were kind of surprised when it was up to the individual location to either participate or not.

Selectman Morin: But you've got to understand, this makes it difficult for us to decide what we're going to give you for funding because we don't have any answers from you.

Karl Huber: I know, I know. That's why when we were looking at the color spreadsheet, we didn't approve that as the final to be forwarded over, presented to the Board of Selectmen. That's why we said October 27th, we want to get the clarification on this and go forward.

Selectman Jakoby: Go ahead. What doesn't matter is this. These numbers, we won't know if Lowe's and Home Depot are doing it until December of 2027.

Selectman Morin: I looked online today.

Selectman Jakoby: That's for this year. That's for this year. So, the question here becomes, if they can get it covered, then this is money that comes back. And the question is, what I want to ask of them is, unless they can affirm donations for the shipping and for the lights, maybe we don't cover this at all, was my thinking.

Chairman Dumont: So, in the interest of saving time, I think what we're doing right now is we're debating the actual budget, which I would prefer to do at the end So, we can get through. We have staff here that's waiting. So, I believe, I think we have enough information to make those decisions later on. I think I understand. I really do appreciate this. This clarifies it quite a bit. If there's nothing else on his sheet that he passed around with the updated numbers, I would say that we would move on. All right. Thank you very much, Karl, I appreciate it.

Karl Huber: Thank you So, much for the time and the understanding. All right. Thank you.

Benson Park Advisory Committee: 5063

Chairman Dumont: Next up, Benson Park Committee.

Roy Sorenson: No changes there.

Selectman Jakoby: Can I?

Chairman Dumont: Go.

Selectman Jakoby: Yep. There's one change. Go ahead. So, for the Benson Park Committee, printing and signs are really their priority. And since the meals have been pretty much covered by donations, they would like to move \$300 from meals from \$230 to \$241.

Chairman Dumont: So, reducing \$230 to \$200, just to clarify, and increasing \$241 to \$800.

Selectman Jakoby: Yes. Just to be more accurate in their expectations.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: You said \$241 was going to be \$800?

Selectman Jakoby: Did I say \$200 or \$300?

Chairman Dumont: \$300.

Selectman Jakoby: I said \$300?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah.

Selectman Jakoby: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: So, it reduces the \$500 that they currently have in meals in town down to \$200.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: It increases printing and signage.

Chairman Dumont: Correct.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct. And they are seeking some volunteers and things for their signage. They have a plan.

Selectman Guessferd: An overall wash then.

Selectman Jakoby: Overall wash. Yes. Yes.

Chairman Dumont: Any other questions or comments? Next up we have the Budget Committee.

Budget Committee: 5070

Roy Sorenson: Same thing, no changes. Same as last year. Let's see. Their largest increase. Any other questions or comments from the Board?

Ethics Committee: 5080

Chairman Dumont: We are on to Ethics. This one should be pretty easy.

Roy Sorenson: Same thing. Same as last year.

Chairman Dumont: I don't know what you can get done with \$100 anymore, but, hey, hats off to them.

Selectman Guessferd: All right.

Chairman Dumont: Not seeing any questions. All right. You can take away a dollar from them, I guess, if you want.

Selectman Guessferd: No, no. It's all good.

Sewer Fund: 5561, 5562, 5564

Chairman Dumont: All right. Next up will be the Sewer Fund handled by Mr. Dhima.

Elvis Dhima: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, everyone. Just an overall picture about the sewer utility before we dive into the good stuff. If you're in the water, I mean, if you're in the sewer district and you're connected to the sewer, you're paying for this. If you're not, if you're in a septic, you're not paying for this. This is not subject to the 2.5%. This pays for itself. Basically, the way it works is we have a revenue, we have an expenditure, and we try to balance it out at the end of the day. That's it in a nutshell. Now, the fun fact is Town Hudson owns 12.58% of the capacity at the treatment facility in Nashua. What does that mean? We are required to pay 12.58% of all the capital improvements that happen at that facility. So, therefore, you have to carry that amount. Where does that number come from? That comes from Nashua. Every year, they tell us, Elvis, put aside half a million dollars, we're doing X, Y, and Z. In addition to that, we pay for the sewer. So, all the sewer in town gets processed within our network. Then it goes to a flume through the river, not through the river, under the river, I should say, and off it goes to Nashua side. It makes it to the treatment facility. I mean, it used to be back in the 70s before they built the flume. Fun fact, there's two crossings under the river. It's our flume, which consists of a 20-inch main and a 16-inch. Both of them got lined about 2019, 2018, right before COVID. What does that mean? We have basically a life expectancy now for an additional 50 years of what we already have in. It's much faster. It flows smoother. And we don't have to worry about any cracks or anything whatsoever within that pipe. There's another crossing under the river, BAE. Even though they're in Hudson, they have their own system that they take water from their side to the other side. It's PVC. It was built in the 70s, 80s, I believe. And basically, they're still part of the process with, I mean, the sewer district within Hudson, I guess. It's kind of like separated. Nevertheless, they have their own direct discharge line. They're responsible for that, while responsible for the main. That's it in a nutshell. So, what do we have within this? We have staff from the Public Works as well that's supported by the sewer. Why? Because we handle sewer in-house. You know, if there's a facility that needs care, like a pump station, things of that sort, Public Works handle those. If there's a sewer main break, if there's a sewer main repair required, that gets handled in the house. Except infiltration inflows, things like that, when we pull in a third party. That's it in a nutshell. Any questions before we dive into it?

Chairman Dumont: Yes. 252 Professional Services.

Elvis Dhima: You just jumped into it. I said before. I'm just kidding.

Chairman Dumont: I'm trying to skip ahead. I'm sorry. So, I was going to go. Which one is it? Under 5561?

Chairman Dumont: Page 4, 252. Yeah, 5561.

Elvis Dhima: 5561. Perfect. Okay. And which item is it?

Chairman Dumont: 252, last on the page.

Elvis Dhima: 252 Professional Services.

Chairman Dumont: Correct.

Elvis Dhima: Okay. So, that one is \$10,000, right? On-call services, mortgage, assessment, things of that sort. Basically, this is mostly if we're dealing with a legal situation while we're still in sewer abatement. Someone is trying to connect to it, but he owns something. This is us basically reaching out to a third party to do the research for us to see what we can and cannot do. That's what that is. It's mostly legal.

Chairman Dumont: All right. I guess I'll just ask the question. So, it looks like it's never exceeded \$2,000 before.

Elvis Dhima: Correct.

Chairman Dumont: Do you believe that you'll hit the \$10,000?

Elvis Dhima: We probably won't, but the way it works is, and we can play with this a little bit more, is we believe that our bottom line is still the same at the end of the day, and we can start redefining things as we go. We feel like that's kind of true, and every year could change a little bit. But sewer is kind of like you have some items that go over it, some are under. But at the end of the day, you kind of break even. So, you can take this down a little bit, but then if I have a water main, I mean a sewer main that I need to repair or something goes along, or if I find a leak and I have to do an I&I, at the end of the day it kind of balances out. So, even though I might go over some of the items, I might be under some other ones. But, yes, you're right. Would you see it? I don't know. It all

depends. You could have one case, and it'll burn 20 grand versus you don't have anything. But we try to stay out of trouble. We try to sort things out.

Selectman Jakoby: To that point, So, in fiscal year 2023, your actual was \$10,113, and then \$7,000. So, you had an incident?

Elvis Dhima: I guess. It must have been a nice one, too, right? It varies, right? But it's kind of related to that. So, we have a little bit of that here and there, depending on what situation we're in. We have a lot of things that we kind of carried over.

Selectman Jakoby: So, you're saying we were lucky in 2025?

Elvis Dhima: It depends. I was nice. We were nice. They were nice. That's kind of what happened. It's kind of hit and miss. It all depends. It's like legal fees, right? You might have one year when you don't spend a lot of money, and it's another year when you had a case, and, oh, my God.

Selectman Jakoby: So, you feel the \$10,000 is an important holding number?

Elvis Dhima: I feel like that's adequate. Correct. And then the nice thing about this is if you don't need it, you don't use it. So, it's not like you're losing it. You know what I mean? It just goes back into the funds that we have.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay.

Elvis Dhima: And if you look at the capital reserve funds that we have for certain things, we're doing very well. We just have certain ones we're struggling with, and that's why we went up on the rate last year 20%. That hasn't caught up yet. We're going to talk a little bit about it later. But while we're into this sewer and the building collection, I would say, obviously, the main thing that changed here is the postages, which is item 238. That is in line to what you've been hearing all along. We carried a little bit of a number for the auditing. So, you see audited annual expenses. That's kind of in line to basically paying for it. And everything else under 5561 remains the same. It's basically pretty much flat out except the salaries and benefits, which you have, contract obligations. But everything else remains the same with that. Again, unless we see something catastrophic coming in, you will not see any changes in it. Again, we're trying to basically balance the sheets out. We're not looking for an increase or anything like that because it impacts the sewer users at the end of the day. If you do not have any questions for this one, I will jump on the next one, which is operations. So, it's 5562. On this one, the first item that you're going to see an increase on is electricity. Again, we've talked about this. We see an increase coming there. So, you see a 33% increase there from a \$30,000 to \$40,000. Why? We have pump stations throughout town. And those things are running 24/7. So, obviously, if the electricity cost is going up, that's where you're going to see that increase in there. The next one, you're going to see a sewer treatment reduction from \$620,000 to \$580,000. Why? Well, I think it's because mostly drought. And again, I think it's one of the success stories that I think you can talk about with the improvements we have done. You're catching a lot of water that shouldn't be going into the treatment facility. So, I think that's where you're seeing that you're not paying as much as you should. Now some years, you're better than others. But we're seeing a success overall into the I&I project. Maybe a need for reducing that for the time being and just kind of re-evaluate into what we need to do. With that said, on the next page, again, 5562.

Chairman Dumont: One second.

Elvis Dhima: Go ahead.

Selectman Morin: This page that you're talking about, 310 and 313, we're expecting to do sewer work this year. One is for gravel, and the other one is for manhole structures.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah. So, the 310 and 313, what we did there is we killed some of the items, like 311 stone. You're going to see a reduction of 100%. What we did is we put the stone in the sand on the aggregate, and the total is basically from \$500 to \$1,600. That's just a very small amount to do something small. Like you saw them out there today that were resetting manholes. I don't know if you saw them driving around. Someone hit the cones. It was one of those things. I called Jay.

Chairman Dumont: Why are you bringing that up, Mr. Dhima? Because I've been asked probably four or five times, and if anybody's watching, they'll hopefully know the answer. Why do they do that every year?

Elvis Dhima: I don't know. No, I'm just kidding. So, I've asked that too, and I guess my take on it is they do that every year because things settle. And basically, they go back and reset those structures So, they're not moving, they're not getting hit. But that's basically what it is. That's why you see them out there doing kind of the main corridors mostly because that's where most of the traffic is. But it's my understanding that over time everything settles, and some manholes, they basically get settled more than others. They do them differently in different towns, concrete, this and that. We kind of keep doing the same thing we have. So, you see them out there doing the same thing. You're like, what are they doing? Why do we keep doing this? They're resetting them. They're basically gaining half an inch, whatever that is, three-quarter inch, to make sure that when you drive over them, it's nice and comfortable.

Chairman Dumont: And hopefully the plows don't grab them as they're driving by.

Elvis Dhima: That's exactly it. Because the last thing you need is to drive opposite of one of our six-wheelers and then have that sewer manhole cover coming at you at 100 miles an hour. That's not a fun one.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Then you're going to have to go up to that \$10,000 line.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah, and hit that for legal services. It won't be for postages. That's right. That's exactly it.

Chairman Dumont: Mr. Sorenson's got one now. What do you got?

Roy Sorenson: So, the N stands for new. Some of those lines came in. Public Works lines went down, and they pushed specific items to sewer regarding manhole, just as he talked about. So, that's why you see those lines now.

Elvis Dhima: Next year, you're going to see them removed. So, item 311, which is stone, and 312, sand, is going to be removed next year. We're probably going to do some of that on some of the other items as well, like into engineering and other departments as well. We don't need to figure out that you have \$50 for mileage. We can convert that under miscellaneous office or whatever. So, we're not here all night going out on my buy item. That was kind of the theme. Public Works already started doing that this year. But I didn't want to remove it because it would have been like, where is it? But now that it's zero next year, it's just going to be removed. So, now we have a little bit of a trend. With that said, the next one, sewer operations, again, you're going to see a reduction there on sewer chemicals. That's just basically based on the use we have right now. And then you're going to see an increase on the large operating equipment, mostly due to the camera maintenance truck. We spent about \$400,000 or \$500,000 for the new one. And we want to make sure we have money there to make sure that if something comes up, we can take care of it. Why \$36,000? That's about the cost of a camera head. So, these are high resolutions. These are cameras that go inside the lateral. So, not only in the main, but they get off the main, if you want to call it carrier, and they go right into the lateral, and we're trying to figure out what the issue is with the folks. So, they're not out there hiring people for \$10,000 to figure it out. We can go out there and utilize what we need when we can to see if the issues are not right.

Chairman Dumont: So, you gave them a roll of bubble wrap when they put that away, right?

Elvis Dhima: Oh, they do. They wash it. They clean it. They brush it. No, they take care of it.

Chairman Dumont: They do a good job.

Elvis Dhima: If you see driving around town, it's the real deal. We had a self-made piece of equipment here, and they were using PlayStation controllers to run this camera they had. It was out of a horror show. It was like Frankenstein put together. It was unbelievable. So, finally, I think one of them started crying when they saw the new equipment. It was too much. But anyway, it's been working out really good, and it's been very helpful. We have had to bring in a new cable, about 750-foot cable, because one of them, I think, either he had it defective or something happened. But that's basically it. Everything else has worked very well So, far. So, it's been a solid investment. It will have to be replaced at some point.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I just had a question for Mr. Sorenson. This is for contract?

Roy Sorenson: Correct. Yep.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you.

Elvis Dhima: So, with that said, that's about it as far as the sewer operation and maintenance goes. The next one is capital projects. We have capital reserve funds for this. And the main thing you see there is Nashua portion. It went from \$625,000 to \$500,000. So, you see a reduction there of 20%. Why? That number comes from Nashua. Why? Because that's the money they expect to invest next year to the facility. Some years are higher than others, but it's usually regulated by them. We get the number, we carry it, and that's the end of it. You see a sewer line replacement from \$280,000 to \$200,000. Again, as I said earlier, we've been having a lot of success with the liner. That might be reduced even further because we're waiting for one of our revenue numbers to come in. So, we might reduce it even further and take a pause maybe for a year as we balance things out. Why? Because that 20% increase we did last year didn't catch up in time. So, we just want to make sure we true up on what we have without having to go back to you and ask for another adjustment on the rates. So, you might see on the final version of that that number going back to what it needs to make sure the rates remain the same as we catch up. There's been a bit of overlap when a certain account went from a good size to nothing, and now we're in the negative. So, there's a little bit of catching up to do.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, So, just on that note, the audit is obviously finished up. We will get some final numbers from them. We'll know what our fund balance is. It's probably going to be negative, So, we will be in the red. We will probably pull back on that line, as Mr. Dhima mentioned, and take a year to kind of rebuild up. As far as the new rates, they really only went into effect until the last quarter of last year, So, we haven't seen any realization there. No guarantees on that, though. We'll have to run an analysis and see if those rates will be able to catch up over the next two or three years.

Chairman Dumont: Do you believe by pulling back on that line item that will absorb the cost?

Roy Sorenson: It will help build the fund balance back up, and then we'll have a true year of data on the actual new rates, and we'll see what we bring in for revenue. You know, one has to offset the other, and if we can get back close to even, he can look at it. Either way, we would have the reserve if he has a failure.

Elvis Dhima: Yes, we have other reserve funds for that, correct.

Chairman Dumont: We put Elvis down in the home, So, we'll have you take care of it.

Elvis Dhima: Put your work boots on. Pump it on the river, we all said, until we repair it. Nah, I'm kidding. We do have emergency reserve funds. This is just for regular operations.

Chairman Dumont: Everybody good?

Selectman Jakoby: Yes.

Water Fund: 5591 – 5594

Chairman Dumont: Next up.

Elvis Dhima: Perfect. The next one is water. Again, I just want to give you an overall picture of where we stand with the water. Again, if you're connected to the town water, you're paying for this. If you're not, if you're in a well, you're not paying for this. So, it does not impact you. It does not have a tax rate on it because obviously it's paid for the user. And as of now, we have one well that's operational in Litchfield. The other one is offline to the PFAS impact. And we buy the water from Pennichuck. We negotiated with them an eight-year contract. It's a two-year contract that basically overlaps. And as long as we're both happy, we continue to extend that. We've been able to save a lot of money there, but their rates keep going up. So, we're still charging less than Nashua does, Pennichuck does, for the Nashua customer. And the same thing goes for the sewer as well, earlier. So, some of the things we're working on right now is we're still working with St. Cobain, trying to figure out how we're going to get some of this capability from DAME. We're working with the state. We're working with Pennichuck on the crossing. You've been hearing about a crossing on Merrimack River, right, 30-inch line. It appears as of now that that's going to land in Hudson. So, we're going to be running that. That's going to be something that we'll probably have to talk about in public first, figure out the details. Right now, the state is working, trying to

figure out how this is going to play out. It's going to be a hybrid between Town of Hudson, Pennichuck, New Hampshire DES, and St. Cobain, trying to figure out how this is going to play out. Big project, probably just under \$10 million. It's going to be an absolute monster, excited and scared at the same time. I will say we've been having some interesting meetings, Mr. Sorenson and myself, with other parties I'm not going to get into. And it's been fun to see what it looks like to have someone else in the room trigger somebody else from the other party than me. So, it's been very fun for me, at least, to kind of take a sit back and see how Mr. Sorenson triggers everyone in the room there. But it's been good. It's been difficult, but I think the main thing is make sure that Hudson remains relevant as a key player on the water. And I think that's where we're heading. Not only are we going to secure water for the town of Hudson for the next 25 to 50 years, but we're going to make sure that we provide support to all the communities around us. And the main thing about that is, as the supply gets to be a non-issue for us versus going to be an issue for a lot of communities around, as the PFAS kick in, rules kick in, we're going to also, support the fire suppression and improve that. What that means is you're going to have better rates from the insurance companies, which means it's going to be a break on you as a resident, a taxpayer, or if you have a business in town. The better your fire suppression system is, the lower your insurance rate is. And that goes through the Fire Department, and that's basically part of them evaluating it. So, that's kind of it in a nutshell.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, the pump that you said was offline due to the PFAS? Is that permanently offline?

Elvis Dhima: For now, yes.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Like, what's the action plan to recover that?

Elvis Dhima: So, the actual plan for that is, there's two of them, really, that we've talked about, is either bring it back online through treatment, which is very expensive, or come up to an agreement with St. Cobain to say, you're going to provide the capability for us getting the water, but then also, come up with how you're going to pay for that water that we lost. Obviously, what we produce it at is much cheaper than what we buy from Pennichuck. But that's part of the negotiations right now. So, as of now, we still have a lot of land in Litchfield. It's still locked in. It's very hard to get 400 feet of a radius for a community well, So, we're probably never going to give those up.

Chairman Dumont: Right.

Elvis Dhima: But they're there, and they're in a very good location, and we'll see where it goes. But my take on it is, we're probably going to get off the business of treating water, and we're going to become basically a main distributor. So, basically, water comes to us, we get it to everybody else, and that's about it. That's where it's heading. Now, the Biden administration also, to piggyback on that question, they put in place a four parts per trillion on the PFAS. The Trump administration is holding on to that number. A lot of folks said he was going to just throw that out, and among other things, that was one of the things that has not been thrown out. So, that's going to be pushed out to 2028, but it's still in play. So, a lot of folks are changing now their mentality on how we're going to deal with the PFAS. At one point, it was like, we don't have to worry about it. The administration coming in is going to just kill it. We don't have to worry about it. It's not the case. We still have to deal with this. So, we have a plan in place. We're going to try to execute it before the new rules come in online, and basically continue to meet the requirements by the state and the feds. Right now, it's a state requirement. It's going to become a federal requirement.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: I've got a question for you. I know I've asked it before. Line 303, office supplies, water bills. We send out water bills to account holders as well as the property owner, correct?

Elvis Dhima: Yeah, the landlords. I don't know the details about that. It's downstairs. I've got to have the clerk person in. But yeah, let's just make sure. I guess the bottom line is we make sure everyone gets his bills if they have to pay the bill.

Chairman Dumont: I've got to be honest with you. 78,000 water bills a month. I'm curious as to how many of those are duplicates. I'm sure it's not half. I'm sure it's not a third. But any savings is a saving, whether it's a fee or a tax rate. It's our duty to take a look at it. I think it's redundant to send an account holder a bill and then also,

send the same one to the property owner. The sewer I get. The sewer you have the power to levy, to lien the property against the owner. Water you don't. So, I don't understand why we send two bills.

Elvis Dhima: I don't think it's 78,000. I think that's a typo. That's got to be for the year.

Roy Sorenson: Well, that's for the year.

Elvis Dhima: It's for the year.

Chairman Dumont: So, it's for a monthly bill.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: It's for the year.

Elvis Dhima: So, it's about 6,000. We have about 6,400, 6,600 customers. So, that's probably why he brings it up to 78,000 total for the year. But it's about 10,000. We have language in our ordinance that I think requires us to basically send a bill to a certain amount of people. So, I think if the Board feels like they want to change it, we can change the ordinance. But I think this requirement comes from language in our water ordinance to how we notify people.

Chairman Dumont: We didn't do that five years ago. That started or maybe it started about five years ago. Because I'll tell you, just from my own, I get everybody's sewer bill that we own and we maintain for rentals. But now I get two water bills. The tenant gets one and I get one. Well, I shred it. You guys waste a stamp every time.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: I mean, it's a stack that comes in the mail that we don't do anything with because we're not the account holder.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah. One thing I can think of is usually we do things because something happened and someone got burned.

Chairman Dumont: But you can't go after the property owner. I get what you're trying to do.

Elvis Dhima: I think we do. I think we go after the landlord, depending who's on the account. I think ultimately on our ordinance it says that the owner is ultimately responsible for the bill if the tenant doesn't pay.

Chairman Dumont: But what action do you, like I said, sewer, you have the authority through the state to lien it. It makes perfect sense. The landlord is going to make sure that one gets paid. Water, you don't have that authority. I don't know what action.

Elvis Dhima: Water, you can shut him off if you don't pay the bill. That's the key.

Chairman Dumont: That's by the account holder.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah. But I guess I don't know why we do it. I'm going to assume it's because if the person's not paying water as part of their rent or whatever and the water's shut off, at that point they know that due diligence was done to the owner and they just haven't paid the bill.

Chairman Dumont: If the tenant's paying through their rent, then the owner would be the account holder. He would get the bill anyways.

Elvis Dhima: Everyone sets them differently. Just because you have certain accounts for your property set up a certain way, we have seen it six ways. Typically, though, when you see a change in how we do things, it's because someone got burned, and then we basically have to now apply it to everyone because we had one bad actor. I will go back and ask again, but I am telling you it's probably a good reason why, because no one wants to. It's more work for us. Why wouldn't we create more work for ourselves So, there's an easier way?

Chairman Dumont: Right. I'm trying to make it easier on you, So, help yourself out.

Elvis Dhima: Well, I am, but I'm telling you, based on my experience downstairs with the clerk, and I have to ask because that's not something I handle, but it's usually something that happened and then an adjustment was made to make sure that everyone gets notified. I don't know if the tenant knew and the landlord. We sometimes

deal with like there's multiple units. The whole thing gets shut off because one of them didn't pay, but the other one did, So, we have a little bit of that. So, I don't know if it's like we're going to notify everyone So, no one can get blamed at the end of the day. There's nothing worse than going in and shutting down someone's water.

Chairman Dumont: Sure.

Elvis Dhima: We don't move forward to that. But I don't know. I will get the answer for you on the next one, trying to understand. But I'm telling you, based on what I recall, something has happened for us to change that. And I also, want to say there's language in our ordinance that has specific language to how we notify people and who is responsible. So, I'll get that for you, and I'll give it back on the next meeting.

Chairman Dumont: If you don't mind.

Selectman Jakoby: So, I have the privilege of helping someone pay their bills who actually has water and sewer, because I don't. And what's interesting to me and what I wonder for both sewer and water as we move forward, what's the requirement for billing monthly? Why monthly? I mean, some of these bills, I mean, the bills I'm writing are less than \$20 each.

Elvis Dhima: Sewer is quarterly. So, quarterly for sewer and monthly for water, because a lot of folks pushed back, and there was a lot of yelling and screaming, because the water bills were getting to be So, much higher, I think, especially during the summer months.

Selectman Jakoby: Well, I'm just saying for this Board, as the sewer authority and the water authority, it might be something for us to look at in the future.

Elvis Dhima: But I'm just saying from previous experience, the reason they did monthly, because the water bills can be much higher than the sewer bills, especially during the summer months, and there was a lot of screaming and yelling. So, they decided, and this was way before I got here, they learned their lesson the hard way, and folks got used to it, and that was the end of it. So, they went to monthly one. Could you go back and maybe educate people, because there will be help? Yes. But the winter months, when it comes to water, are completely different than the summer months. So, I just wanted to be aware. I want to get someone that's on fixed income, get a three-month bill, and it's \$200, \$300, and oh my God. And find out that it's every quarter instead of every month. It's a big shock, and it's going to generate a lot of questions down there. But it might be worth the discussion, if you're willing to entertain it. If someone yells at me, I'm going to say, talk to the Board of Selectmen. They're the ones that decide to change it. I'm staying out of this one.

Selectman Jakoby: I would say, I hear what you're saying, and that makes sense to a certain degree. Our water rates in town are phenomenal. I told someone what my water bill was the other day. They were like, you're lying to me. And I'm like, I'm not lying to you. Even in the summer, I think my highest water bill was like \$48.

Elvis Dhima: That's it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: And I'm like, So, there has to be a level of responsibility. If we decide to revisit this and go to maybe a quarterly, there has to be some level of responsibility on the consumer. They're signing up for a service. They should know what they're signing up for. So, it's not just on us.

Elvis Dhima: Correct. No, I agree 100%. If there's a way to reduce work on our end, I am telling you, the clerk would love it. I just don't want to be the person saying, absolutely, guys, let's do this, and then get all the calls and be like, oh, my God.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, we tell you yes, all the time.

Elvis Dhima: I know. I do get yelled all the time. I don't want them to get yelled. They're just with their way. They can come upstairs. But that was the reason why. So, to your point, can we revisit it? Absolutely. If you think it's worthwhile, we can have some public hearings about it. We can change it. Have at it. It's going to save us a little bit of money. And anything counts.

Roy Sorenson: You can do a split quarterly for residential, monthly for commercial.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Right. Yeah, that's not bad. That's what I was thinking.

Roy Sorenson: The other thing is, I think the problem is the water bills that were coming in in October or November were based off of summer usage.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: And people could never understand that. Right.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. Because they're typically in the rear.

Roy Sorenson: So, there's a lag there, yeah.

Chairman Dumont: No, that makes sense. But if you don't mind pulling the information together, I'd appreciate it. And we'll try to help you save a few trees, Elvis.

Elvis Dhima: That's all. I would love to save some trees.

Chairman Dumont: I'm sure you would.

Elvis Dhima: I think this came up last year, too. So, I was going to follow up on that one. No, I will do a follow-up on that one. You'll get an e-mail tomorrow.

Roy Sorenson: Not a problem. Well, how come you didn't do anything over the past year?

Elvis Dhima: Huh? What is that? What is that? What was that again?

Roy Sorenson: We'll move on.

Elvis Dhima: All right. So, water administration. So, that's basically it in a nutshell over there.

Chairman Dumont: I will say, overall, though, I do want to commend you. The budget is reduced, right? It's lower than 2026. It's a lot closer to the actuals of 2025. Yes. And to maintain any kind of business over those two years is not easy to do. So, I do want to commend you on that. Thank you. Even though I gave you a little bit of crap on that.

Elvis Dhima: Oh, yeah, yeah. It's good. I need that once in a while. It's a good one.

Chairman Dumont: Keep your humble.

Elvis Dhima: It's a job well done. And just I want to say how great of a job we're doing here. We get \$10,000 a year grant from the state to do about 100 miles of our water mains for leak detection. And I think they found two hydrants that were not shut off properly and basically two surface leaks. That's it. 100 out of 120 miles.

Selectman Jakoby: Nice.

Elvis Dhima: So, I said either the guy doesn't know what he's doing, which I'm hoping not, or we really have it under control. And our losses, unaccounted water losses for us, about 11%, 12% when standard they're looking for is 15%. So, we're below the threshold. So, just to give you an idea, when I started it was 23%. We were losing basically 23 gallons out of 100, which it was outrageous. And we got that down to basically 11%. Which is pretty good. So, it's as good as it gets.

Chairman Dumont: And operations the same way.

Elvis Dhima: Operations.

Chairman Dumont: You guys brought that down quite a bit.

Elvis Dhima: That's exactly it. So, the only thing you're going to see is electricity there. And, again, that's something I can't control. It has to do with that.

Laurie May: If I may. We received an email today from Val on the water shutoffs. There was 100 names on it. If we go to a quarterly, I'm not sure.

Elvis Dhima: So, that's going to be an issue as well. Now you're going to have 200, 300 people. It's going to be harder to. But I'll put in a good executive summary together to the pros and cons. You'll have that information, and then you can decide whichever way you want to go. But that's a logistical and a legit concern as well.

Chairman Dumont: That was a concern. We get the shutoffs that come across. Unfortunately, you have some people that just want to wait until they get to that point to pay their bill. But we don't want to create more of a hassle.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah, it's going to create a big queue in the office. Because they come in, they'll pay at the last minute. If you have 10, 15 people, it's a little bit more manageable. 100, that's going to be an issue. And if you have 300 or 400, that's another story. So, I guess it's like one of those you've got to stay on. And it's usually the same folks you see there. The lines are pretty much the same. You get them. You get the list. You know who they are. And it's going to create a little bit of a more work there.

Selectman Jakoby: So, as you look at it, the list might be the list, whether they pay monthly or quarterly. Okay. You know, you don't see a big shift.

Elvis Dhima: But it could be. You know, like I'm not saying times three. But I'm saying could it be like 10% or 15%? I don't know.

Selectman Jakoby: We can estimate things all the time. I think, you know, I'm going to go back to what Mr. Sorenson said, is we continuously look for opportunities to be more efficient, more effective, and less costly. So, thank you.

Elvis Dhima: Thank you. All right. So, the operations, as I said, electricity is the only thing. We get into the next page. You're going to see an increase on other professional services. What that is why water? So, our day-to-day operations get subbed out. **Basically**, people going in, turning water on and off, making sure everything is working. That's basically it in a nutshell. Everything else remains the same. And with that said, we get into the water supply. Same thing. Everything is level funded except the water from Pennichuck. Why? We're projecting that we might get a little bit more water. Why? We can be another drought next year. So, by contract, we're entitled to \$365 million gallons per year. We're carrying about 375. And that's it. Everything else remains the same.

Chairman Dumont: Can you just speak to 411, the computer equipment? It was obviously very high, then it came really low, and it slowly worked back up. Can you just explain that a little bit?

Elvis Dhima: So, one of the things we need to worry about is, you know, by the federal government, we have to make sure that we have more than one way of communicating with our assets. That's why, in case the Internet goes down, we need basically a radio system. That's been the worst for three years. It's taken a while. Why is it taking three years? Because I can't come here and tell you I need \$200,000. That's going to put a shock on the system. I don't want to create an increasing rate. So, slow and steady wins the race. We've been putting a little bit of money every year into this, and it's working out great. Also, the other main thing that you want to do is when you're converting to another system or have another backup system, you want to make sure that every piece works. So, we have seven assets they need to talk to, too. We have two stations that they need to talk to, the one in my office, the one at the SCADA system that's at Whitewater. So, that's what the SCADA wireless radio. Again, you need to have a core. Our core right now is Internet and wireless, you know, secure lines and all that. But I want to have the core system being radios and then have the Internet as a backup versus having Internet as a primary and radios as a backup. So, right now into the phasing, into the testing phase to see what are we doing and how it's working out. Right now, we're at Marsh Road. Why are we doing that? Well, you see attacks, cybersecurity attacks all the time. Right now, we have an air gap, but our secure lines are through Verizon. Verizon basically are as tight as they're going to get, but we're finding out that even the big companies are getting compromised. So, what happens if that is? I want to be able to switch my programming from Internet to radio and don't have to worry about, you know, total collapse out there on the electricity. We'll still be able to run our water system for maybe another week or so, until obviously the end of the world comes and then it's the end of it. No, I'm just kidding. But you never know. I mean, that's it. You could say Hudson still got water, and we're still flushing over here. How are you guys doing in Nashua? Like not good? We're on the Internet. But anyway, that's it in a nutshell. So, we're staying ahead, we're staying proactive, and we're making sure we're getting ready for the worst-case scenario. That's what the feds expect us to do, and I think that's what we need to do. And off to the good stuff right now, which is the water debt service. What is this? So, the town bought the system in 1998. You have heard Mr. Malizia have the speech a hundred times, and now it's my turn. Back in the old days when

we started. So, anyway, long story short, great news. We're going to be done with the service in 2027. We got this payment and another one. What does that mean for you as a water user? How are you getting to put in the system? About \$900,000. That could be a combination of basically putting money in the bank, making sure that you're going to have the same rate for the near and the distant future, because you can make up the delta, or you can start closing loops now. You know, you have a lot of dead ends out there, and you're going to have to do some replacement. We haven't done that. We've taken care of the booster stations, the wells, things like that. Now we have to get into, like, the networking. So, that's where their money comes in. So, how do you do improvements without increasing the rates? Well, it's stuff like this. You pay off something, and then they start using some of their money to do something else. So, that's the plan of attack. We have formulated a schedule to what we're going to tackle, and we won't do that until this is paid off. But in a couple years, you're going to be debt-free as far as your water system goes, which is very nice. It's like the car payment. You don't have one anymore, and you get used to it, and just drive around and don't have to worry about it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: But then a new model comes out.

Elvis Dhima: Huh?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: But then a new model comes out.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah, then there won't be a new model for the water. None of that. There's not going to be any strawberry-flavored water either. You're going to get the chlorine one. So, guess what? We're not spending the money. But that's it in a nutshell, which is huge. That's a big deal. You got the sewer paid for, and you're kind of connected to the national about that, about the treatment, I mean about the improvements you put in. But here, you're going to have about 25% of your budget right now. It's going to be basically coming in, and you can decide what you want to do. You can send those bills on a daily basis instead of every quarterly. You won't even care about the \$10,000 for postage. You'll be like, that's it. Let's send them out every day. Let's have at it. Anyway, great shape. I mean, we're doing really, really good. Nothing but good things in the works. We're going to find out, I think, before Christmas what's going to happen with that transmission line. That's the main thing. Another thing that you're going to talk about maybe in the next week is obviously the GIS is very important to this particular utility. We're going to talk about that once you figure out how you want to handle it. But that's going to come up in the next week. And that's about it about the water.

Chairman Dumont: Questions or comments before we move on to Conservation?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Good job, Elvis.

Chairman Dumont: Keep on rolling.

Conservation Commission: 5586

Elvis Dhima: Thank you. Conservation, very straightforward. Two and a half percent increase, as you requested. It's equivalent to \$1,338. It's all going into one account, which is 252, other professional services. What do we have under that? We take care of the lake host program, which is folks that we hire during the summer to make sure that no invasive species are into the boats they bring in because we try to make sure that it's invasive. Weed control that we do every year, Robinson and Ottarnic. And then a volunteer lake assessment program every year for water testing. And that's about it.

Selectman Morin: Did we have any lake hosts this year?

Elvis Dhima: I think we did. I think we struggled. I have to check. I thought we struggled at first, and then they found someone at the very end. Yeah. Might not have been for the entire year, but I think eventually they found someone.

Selectman Guessferd: And we have them at two different places typically, right?

Elvis Dhima: Yes.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, Ottarnic and Robinson.

Elvis Dhima: Yes. And if you have anyone that's looking for \$17 an hour for the summer to be there just to check in, please let me know. We can set them up. It's very difficult, but it's a fun job for someone that might be, like, a senior in high school.

Selectman Guessferd: And my daughter did it. It was good.

Elvis Dhima: Yeah. It's not a bad gig. And it's fun. And if you do want to be an outdoor person, that's the place to go. So, with that said, everything else remains the same. And, you know, they're like the little engine they could. You know, they just keep on jockeying along and doing all the things they need to do, and that's about it.

Chairman Dumont: Questions or comments?

Roy Sorenson: Real quick, Mr. Chair. Just back to his comment on the GIS manager. So, that position, the Board needs to consider that, number one. We will need a detail on how you might want to either disperse that, whether you endorse the position in totality for FY27, whether you don't endorse the position, and or do you endorse the position for a partial part of FY27, and then the split. We'll have to develop the split, water, sewer in general, and then we'll have to get the numbers into the budget books in a timely manner So, we know what the real impact might be. All right.

Selectman Jakoby: I just have one other question. So, I noticed that in FY26, the signage, the kiosk update replacement, small equipment, went up to \$3,091, and now you're keeping it consistent at \$3,091 to the actual, yet in 2024 it was only \$331. What's the goal? Just trying to understand. So, these are things that you plan on replacing, and the estimate cost of those for 2027?

Elvis Dhima: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, So, what they're doing is it's hard to estimate at \$2,391.

Elvis Dhima: It is.

Selectman Jakoby: So, that was my question.

Elvis Dhima: And the folks already in the ConCom right now, they're doing a lot of volunteer work. So, what they have the tendency to do is if they can't build it themselves, they'll just buy the parts and do them. But if not, they'll just hire someone to help them out with certain things. So, I think they've been more active recently than in the past trying to replace some of the signs. It also, is a matter of if it's new, it's probably good for 10 years versus something that's been there forever, So, it's a bit sporadic. But that's why you probably saw, like, a significant increase last year. I think they were very proactive about replacing certain things. And it's not just kiosks. Sometimes there's a sign inside it as well.

Selectman Morin: We've also, acquired more land than I thought I needed.

Elvis Dhima: Yes, So, more signage required as well, yes.

Chairman Dumont: Perfect opportunity to reach out to the Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts.

Selectman Jakoby: I know. And that's just, you know.

Roy Sorenson: I think it's just a balance and act with the numbers.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, that's what I felt. And we can talk about it more later, because I think there's a bigger question here overall for the town. All right.

Chairman Dumont: All right, well, I think that's all. If there's no other questions, I think we're done with that.

Elvis Dhima: Thank you. Have a good night.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you. All right, next up we have IT. I will recognize Mr. Bosteels.

IT: 5520s

Doug Bosteels: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Board, Mr. Sorenson. I appreciate your time tonight. So, let's delve right in here. Go right to the nitty-gritty. The biggest increase I think you're going to see on my projected budget is the phone system. If you remember, we approved that phone system back in July. It's going to go from an estimated \$13.06 to \$29.04 yearly. Most of that money is coming out of the budget that's already in place. We just moved a few items around to compensate for that, coming from both the Highway Department and the Police Department line items as well. The next item you'll see that has a little bit of an increase is software subscriptions. I counted for about a 10% increase on our subscriptions, and mainly it was our antivirus that went up from \$60 a unit to \$69. So, that's pretty much a lot of what that line item is, and that's 215. The other line item you're going to see that stayed even was our storage array. I just moved some items around in that particular line item to compensate for some of the maintenance that we're not paying on right now. You'll notice that I added a little bit of money into the training, line 237, for the folks in IT. I'd like to get them out of the office into some formal training. I've got some folks that are newer, and getting them out of the office to get some training is going to be very helpful for us. So, that's where some of my 2.5% increase went. The other piece of the 2.5% increase went into a new piece of software that we purchased for our support desk. So, that was roughly about \$3,000 a year. So, that basically makes up for the other piece of the 2.5% increase.

Chairman Dumont: And that's 269?

Doug Bosteels: Yes, that is.

Selectman Guessferd: 237 is the training.

Roy Sorenson: Page 6, Doug.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: 269.

Doug Bosteels: Yes, and now back up. Yes, I don't see it.

Roy Sorenson: What was the item?

Doug Bosteels: It was the software for the help desk. Thought it was there.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, I saw it on the previous page. Did you?

Chairman Dumont: Oh, you have it in 215.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, in 215? Okay, sorry.

Chairman Dumont: 3,700?

Doug Bosteels: Yes, and web help desk.

Chairman Dumont: Yes. Sorry.

Doug Bosteels: So, that's \$3,700.

Chairman Dumont: I was looking at software maintenance.

Doug Bosteels: Yes, sorry. So, that's software subscriptions.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Doug Bosteels: That is pretty much it. Most of the other items remain the same. You'll see line 252, outside services, went down drastically. That's part of the monies I used to put towards the new phone system. So, there wasn't a huge increase in that for the phone system. Other than that, everything else pretty much remained the same.

Chairman Dumont: Could you just speak a little bit to the software maintenance, which is \$269. That would add about a 12% increase.

Doug Bosteels: Yes, So, the software maintenance. So, that big increase, if you look at the vSphere for Town Hall, the virtualized servers. Yes. So, vSphere or VMware was bought out by another company. Do you remember what company it was?

Amanda Bowen: Broadcom.

Doug Bosteels: Yes, Broadcom. Thank you. I tried to get in touch with them to get pricing. So, what they're doing, Broadcom is kind of squeezing out the little guy, and they're just adhering to the bigger players in the game. So, I cannot get a price from them on what they're going to charge us for our software and licensing. So, I had to assume that they're going to spike it up. So, I just accounted for what I think they might do. Right now, I think we pay about \$120 a unit. So, I just spiked it up there just because I don't know. And everything that I've been told is that they're going to price it So, high that they're knocking people out. So, I didn't know what to do there, So, I just increased that. We may not even go with them. We might just go with a third party that's kind of a freebie tool. So, that's kind of what I did there. I've waited for calls back. I've called them. I've emailed them. They just don't want to play with the little guy. Our vendor that sells us this, they actually dropped them as a vendor. So, I can't even get a price from the vendor.

Chairman Dumont: So, it looks like to me that you might have to go with a third party. Do you know when you might know that?

Doug Bosteels: I can try and contact them again and see if I can't get anywhere. We've got a test system in-house now that we're doing. So, we're trying to see if we can't just bring that up on our own and make it work.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions or comments from the Board?

Selectman Jakoby: So, on 303, we had this conversation when I toured the other day. So, I think it's interesting that all printer cartridges, are these all the printer cartridges come through your?

Doug Bosteels: They do. We order printer cartridges for every department, but every department actually has a line item for them.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay.

Doug Bosteels: So, this isn't just the whole town.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, but just for your department?

Doug Bosteels: No, we distribute to the whole town. We use this budget as well as the other line items from each department.

Selectman Jakoby: In order to do printer cartridges, USB drives, cables, fiber connectors, and office supplies? Okay. I just want people to be aware.

Doug Bosteels: Yeah, So, this isn't just printer cartridges. This is other small type of equipment that we utilize. We don't really do a lot of the printer stuff. I mean, we have printers, but we very seldom go through our cartridges.

Selectman Jakoby: That's what I thought. That's why I always find that an interesting line item.

Doug Bosteels: Yeah, I guess it really shouldn't say printer cartridges in there because we don't. I mean, we use printers, but very rarely will we go through a cartridge.

Selectman Jakoby: But you don't necessarily buy USB drives for everybody either.

Doug Bosteels: We actually did buy USB drives, and that was for the right-to-know requests when that came into play. So, we have a stack of them that we had to purchase.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Are our printers on the same contract similar to the copiers and all that?

Doug Bosteels: Our copiers are all on contract, So, the Xerox copiers. Our printers are all bought.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay, So, we own the printers, but the copiers we don't.

Doug Bosteels: Correct.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Is there any value into getting that under a contract where the cartridges would be supplied as part of the contract?

Doug Bosteels: I mean, I definitely can look. I'm not sure that they do anything like that. So, we standardize on a lot of the HP burners, but I can definitely look into that.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I know one of my former jobs, all of our printers were similar. They were on a contract, but the refills up to a certain quality were supplied automatically. And they had self-reporting when they were low and they would auto-reorder and stuff like that. So, I don't know if there's something out there like we could do for that that might save us some money.

Doug Bosteels: There may be, sure. Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, so, we have numerous desktop printers. Some of that we're trying to liquidate with one machine per whatever department it might be. So, we still have some work to do on there. So, this is kind of a work in progress at this point.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Sounds good.

Doug Bosteels: It definitely is. There're some departments that have several printers, as Mr. Sorenson alluded to.

Chairman Dumont: All right, thank you. Any questions or comments on that? We may continue.

Doug Bosteels: So, that is pretty much the IT side of the house for 5330 going forward to 5337 Tax Collector. In most of these other items, you're going to find the increase was mainly the antivirus subscription increase. I really didn't have a choice. I had to increase that. It was, for lack of a better word, underfunded. We weren't charging enough to the units. So, it went up from \$60 to \$69 in each of these departments. So, I think that's where you see most of the increase in these. Town offices, 5077, same thing. Town Administration, 5177. Same, you'll see it's about a 15% increase for the antivirus. And we were forced to go to a new antivirus solution about a year ago, I believe. The government told us we could no longer use what we were using. Because it was Russian-based, Kaspersky. So, we ended up going with what is called ESET, which is a little bit more pricey. But it's one of the better ones out there. Finance, same, just the \$69. Again, if you want me to go through all these, I can. But basically, it was just the ESET software that I added.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, I don't think we need to go unless if there's a specific one. I got a chance to look through it earlier myself. Is there any questions from the Board of Committee on any of these other ones? And they are pretty standard, like Mr. Bosteels said. There's just a lot of antivirus updates or increases.

Doug Bosteels: I think if you look at 5577, Public Works, you'll see that the phone item went up. That's to cover the new phones. And I think you'll find that as well with the Police department and their line item. That line item might have went up as well.

Selectman Guessferd: It's interesting that at least one department, the cartridges went almost to nothing. And the others, they're kind of maintaining. So, it looks like you're taking a hard look at it.

Doug Bosteels: We are trying to cut back on a lot of the cartridges we're spending money on. It may make sense maybe to do something that he suggested. But we do have a lot of unique printers per department right now.

Selectman Guessferd: Different vendors?

Doug Bosteels: Well, they're all pretty much the same vendor. We kind of standardize on the HP side. The problem, though, is a lot of the printers today, if you don't use the OEM cartridge, it breaks. So, you have to spend the extra money on the OEM cartridge. So, you can't just pay for a refill or a third-party cartridge because then it causes havoc with our printers.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: To the point for the refill services on the contract, originally we had started with HP. That's what we had. So, they do have that kind of service. And then we migrated to Lenox. And we hated them, So, don't look at them. Their products are not good. What we ended up on was Ricoh. They have a similar program. And I find they were moderately pretty stable printers. So, those are some you can look at.

Doug Bosteels: I believe we had some Ricoh printers here a while back, Lexmark's. We had some Lexmark's.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I said Lenox. I meant Lexmark's.

Doug Bosteels: The Town Clerks used to use Lexmark's.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, we found those. They were good printers when you first got them, but they weren't very durable.

Doug Bosteels: No, and they were beasts.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I found that the HPs were the most reliable because you could literally run a truck over those, then hit print, print out.

Doug Bosteels: Well, the problem now is they don't make the printers like they used to. They make them So, that you have to buy a new printer. And they make the cartridges So, expensive that it's cheaper to buy a new printer.

Selectman Guessferd: And obsolescence. It's easier just to buy a new one.

Chairman Dumont: All right. So, going through that, can you just speak a little bit to the outside-of-the-budget request that you have in there?

Doug Bosteels: Yes, absolutely. So, the outside-of-the-budget request is primarily our storage arrays. The storage arrays we have right now, which hold our data and our virtual machines, is going on 9 to 10 years old. They're Dell's, Dell Compellent's. Dell has decided to stop supporting them at the end of this year. What that means, there's no longer any updates being done to them, any bug fixing if there's bugs for the firmware, and we will not be able to get hard drives. So, what I have done is I've moved them into another third-party vendor support system that will support the hardware. But, again, we won't be able to get hard drives. So, if we lose some hard drives, we're kind of stuck in a place there. So, the out-of-budget request is to replace those two storage arrays. They're not cheap, but, again, they're at their end of life. I don't expect they're going to die tomorrow, So, it's not a we-have-to-have-this-tomorrow type of thing. But I'm just preparing for the future. I'm trying to stabilize our back end, our backbone, our infrastructure.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions on that?

Selectman Guessferd: Yes, just to kind of give ourselves some different options, is one or the other of these more urgent, I guess I'll say? You know, more end-of-life than the others?

Doug Bosteels: No, they were both purchased at the same time.

Selectman Guessferd: Same time, okay.

Doug Bosteels: So, they were put in place within days of each other. One unit resides here at the town hall, and the other unit resides over at the Police department in our other server room.

Chairman Dumont: All right.

Selectman Jakoby: What's the longevity of the new ones?

Doug Bosteels: Probably about the same.

Selectman Jakoby: Which is?

Doug Bosteels: About 10 years.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions? All right, that wraps it up. Thank you very much.

Doug Bosteels: Thank you so, much. I appreciate it.

BOS/Town Buildings: 5515, 5120

Chairman Dumont: Next up, we will go to the Board of Selectmen and Town Buildings, Mr. Sorenson. All right, we're ready to walk through it.

Roy Sorenson: Let's get this set up here. All right, we can walk through these just like we did typically the other ones, if that works. Okay, So, we'll start on BOS. You can basically see it's just some minor changes in here. You'll see some notices, newspaper ads. If you look at the actuals, it didn't necessarily get to that level, but we did lift it a little bit, probably still under what we might be. But I think some of that can be made up within the budget itself. That's really the only major change within this portion of the Board of Selectmen portion of the budget.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions or comments on that, guys?

Selectman Morin: Are we getting our money's worth out of newspapers these days? Every department has, you know, for publication. Are we getting our money's worth out of that? I know there are certain things we have to follow.

Roy Sorenson: Well, typically we just use it to post. So, whether it's a public notice, a legal ad, positions, a lot of it is electronic these days. You put it up on the websites. We still do utilize it, I think, because you can. There's still an audience to that, believe it or not. And until we see that completely fall off the cliff, like we wouldn't. Depending on the position and the level of the position, how we might post it. But, yeah, it's really, for our standpoint in our department, it's legal notices, public hearings, and things of that nature.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions? No?

Roy Sorenson: All right, Oakwood, just adjustment here, again, with the electricity. I did a little water and sewage based off of actuals, and then you'll see natural gas up quite a bit. And, again, that's based on actuals. We talked about utilities last week. We talked about equalization. So, basically the first thing I did was, okay, what is the market telling us the utilities are doing, as I showed you, and then where do we finish in 2025 versus what was budgeted? So, actuals. So, just getting back to level on a lot of these. That was probably the biggest one when you look at natural gas as far as making a major adjustment.

Selectman Morin: The Oakwood building, that's just storage. Why are we using So, much gas there?

Roy Sorenson: Well, that's a good question. I mean, it's obviously something we're going to have to look into. I don't really have an answer for you, but it's a good question.

Selectman Jakoby: Go ahead. So, just when I toured Oakwood, there has to be something about the temperature for the files that are in there because it seemed to be temperature controlled to some degree, but it still seems excessive, to your point.

Selectman Morin: That's a real small building.

Selectman Jakoby: It is, yeah. No, I agree.

Roy Sorenson: I mean, it's interesting because if you actually look at the actuals, I can look into it. I guess get back to the next meeting, but even back in 2023, it was at \$5,000.

Chairman Dumont: I'm sure that they're probably charged a commercial rate for that, I'm assuming. Commercial and residential rates differ for the natural gas as well.

Roy Soernson: Probably. It should be, but you'd be surprised. Some of that stuff adds up pretty quick. All right.

Roy Sorenson: So, we go into the next one, which is compare and contrast, right? Yeah. Now you have Town Hall where we actually have people working, and you're at 4,000, So, that's a good pick-up select memoir, and I'll have to get to the bottom of that regarding Oakwood. Again, electricity is up significantly. It was on the budget here. You can see I adjusted the water and sewer again, and janitorial supplies, just tried to bring that back into balance of what was expended, and the same thing with building maintenance as well. Actually, building maintenance went down a little bit, and that was based on actuals as well.

Selectman Jakoby: So, on janitorial supplies and things, just as I toured through, they were all over the place. I'm like, I just really question the accuracy and the need to increase. There was backups to backups, and there was containers upon containers all in different closets all over. So, I just wonder if there needs to be a good inventory of what we have and what we truly need. Just raising the question.

Chairman Dumont: Any other questions or comments?

Town Poor (Welfare): 5151

Roy Sorenson: Next section is Welfare. Reduce this a little bit just based on actuals. You'll see it's down \$15,000.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: We have town-run welfare? Yes. I thought welfare was a state-run program.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, people can come to town hall. A lot of people don't know it. They can come to town hall and get assistance.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay. Yeah, I thought it was a state program.

Selectman Guessferd: It's small stuff, but it can help people in a pinch.

Chairman Dumont: Utilize it quite a bit for rentals and, you know, quite a bit of people come in. I know not everybody knows about it, but it does get utilized.

Selectman Guessferd: It's not well known, no.

Selectman Jakoby: And then the person who helps with that also, hooks people up with other services and other run programs. So, it's kind of a starting point for anyone who is in need and doesn't know where to go.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: But it's a hidden gem, and you've got to find it. Once you find it, you can start.

Selectman Guessferd: And somebody who's been, just say, displaced due to, I'll say, a fire or something like that, we help them out as well through that program.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I'm not knocking welfare. Don't get me wrong.

Selectman Guessferd: No, no, no, no. But not a lot of people know about it. I didn't know about it before I became a selectman.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I think maybe a lot of people thought what I thought. It was like state or federal.

Chairman Dumont: Services, no matter where you go, right, are always one of those funny things where you've really got to look for them. They're not always out there in the open. There's a lot of different programs available. But unless if you go looking, it's hard to find.

Selectman Jakoby: Hard to find.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Any other questions? Move on.

Legal: 5200

Roy Sorenson: All right, So, we'll go to Legal. I don't have it pulled up on the screen. But just adjusted some lines based off of actual as well as we will have collective bargaining. So, you'll see that's put in for \$5,000 for that. That's for the firefighter's contract, which will start in FY27 on the tail end. So, that's in there. Lowered the legal fees slightly. And then just raised the other labor issues up slightly as well.

Chairman Dumont: I just want to say the same thing with the other departments. I really appreciate balancing certain line items out where you realize you could reduce some. So, thank you. Any questions or comments? All right.

Finance: 5310, 5320

Chairman Dumont: That will take us into Finance. And I will recognize the Finance Director, Laurie May.

Laurie May: Thank you all for having me in tonight to discuss the finance department budget. Just as a quick overview of the finance department, we're responsible for accounting and the water billing. And including myself and Dan, we are comprised of six employees. The most important function of finance is the oversight and protection of the town's funds. We're the hub of the town. We work with every department as all of their functions and activities financially filter down into the finance department. And in doing this work since I've been here, or just in general, it's our responsibility to follow the laws set forth by the federal government. State statutes generally accepted accounting practices or GAP. Governmental Accounting Standards Board or GASB. As

well as to implement the financial policies and practices set forth by the Board of Selectmen. So, in looking at the Finance Administration's budget, you'll see that the audits increased. Which it probably does every year. As well as equipment rental. And I know each of the departments that have copiers has been, theirs has increased as well. On mine, you'll see that it was an actual \$2,000 increase. And that was for copier overages. The finance department, it's my understanding, is responsible for the main copier upstairs in the central area where the postage machine is. And this year we had a \$2,000 overage charge. So, I'm trying to work with Kathy to figure out which departments actually use that copier. And get that charge pushed out to each of those departments that use it. One reason is because I'm looking also, to have a copier put into my department. My department has a number of those small copiers that we were just discussing in the IT department's budget. So, the cost of all of those cartridges is pretty expensive. I think if we get a leased copier to take care of all those water billings, that cost can come into my department. And the cost for the copier upstairs pushed out to each one of the other departments that actually uses it. So, each department would know, they'll put in a code when they go to use the copy machine. And we'll be able to figure out how that billing is actually, copier is being used. So, that's the equipment rental. The other increase you'll see here is the increase in training. As you're aware, the finance department has been through quite a turmoil in the last few months since my arrival in May. I've been working with the employees, trying to get ready for the audit and get caught up. And through that, I've been able to observe the tasks that the employees are actually doing. And comparing that to the job description. And I recently reached out to you all to discuss making some changes to the finance department. And I appreciate your help with that. So, through that request to restructure the department, I've realized that some of the employees could benefit from additional training. This, the financial administration budget would be mainly myself. And some of the increases for the various conferences that I've been going through throughout my career have increased. So, that right there has increased. But it also, affects the accounting side as well. They go to the same conferences. I'm working towards succession planning. That's one of my goals you'll see on the front sheet. As well as the training. So, those two things work hand in hand, in my opinion. The professional associations that municipal Finance Directors and accounting staff go to are things like NHGFOA, which is the New Hampshire Government Finance Officers Association, as well as the municipal association. And they give free and low-cost training. So, that's really what we're trying to take advantage of. Are there any questions?

Chairman Dumont: Questions or comments from the Board?

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, on the equipment rental. So, we had the overage. And moving out, you're looking to try to get those costs farmed out through coding and things to different departments. So, is the general message here that we think that this \$2,000 is going to occur anyway? It's just a question of where it goes? Is that why we're predicting for 27 that it's going to still be the budget?

Laurie May: If nothing changes, I would imagine we'd still have that overage.

Selectman Guessferd: But it might just get filtered to different places if we can get a hold of that. Okay. I just wanted to make sure. Because initially it sounded like just a one-time thing. And it sounds like the cost is going to occur anyway. It's just a question of where.

Laurie May: Yep. And where we don't know how that cost is going to affect which budgets, I just put it all here, and then we'll figure it out afterwards. And then figure out what needs to be done from that information. If we can see that certain departments are using it a lot, and maybe they would benefit from having their own copier with their own contract that specifies this number of copies. So, that is another thing, too, is reviewing the current contract to see maybe we need to increase the number of copies. So, I am going to be working with Kathy on that.

Selectman Jakoby: I just think I wonder if it's not necessary to put it at a full \$2000, because I know that the Town Administration office now has their own copier, and previous to that they were using the same copier. So, there is that significant change.

Laurie May: And I would imagine the number of copies just in this room tonight, right, and the ones that are going to the Budget Committee.

Selectman Jakoby: That's what I'm saying. So, it might be a place for us to consider carrying that forward. Yep. Thank you.

Laurie May: You're welcome.

Selectman Jakoby: And then I have a question on the out-of-budget request, but we're not there yet, are you?

Chairman Dumont: I did actually have one question before we get to that on the accounting side, just for office supplies. I know it's a 0% increase. Looking at the actuals, it's kind of the same thing. It goes up and down. I don't know if you could just speak to that a little bit.

Laurie May: So, I really didn't want to change a lot of things not having dealt with this budget. This is my first year. I thought I'd try to keep it the same. And if I go over, make it up in other areas of the budget.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. All right. Any questions on the accounting side? All right. I think we need to move that. Yeah, if you could just speak to the out-of-budget request, please.

Laurie May: So, if you look down at the Munis-Smart reports that you have in front of you, you'll see a column for FY26 Town approved. In order to start the budgets, I have to go into Munis-Smart, into the budget module, and I need to copy over those budgets, the FY26 Town approved, into the budget module from the general ledger module. And what it's doing, it's copying all those chart of accounts on the left-hand side of that sheet into the budget module. It takes 45 minutes to do that. And while that's working, doing that, I can't touch the budget module or the general ledger module. I have to stay away from my computer. And any time a new account is being added into the general ledger, as we're going through the budget and we say, you know, for example, Elvis had mentioned one of the accounts. We were just moving some of the other accounts up into that new account. When a new account is being added, I have to do that all over again, 45 minutes just waiting. Munis-Smart is very antiquated. It's my understanding that it was created specifically for the town and that it's like about 20 years old or more and that there's not very many people that use it anymore. It wastes a lot of time. It's not just me that waits for things to populate. Anyone, any user will tell you that it's a time waster because any small report you need to run, you have to wait for it to populate. Currently, each department actually saves a copy of any invoice that they send down to finance. So, all of the departments make a copy of any invoice. With new software, invoices can be scanned into the system immediately. The paper copy can then come down. If it becomes missing, a copy can be printed out of the system. Anyone can go into the system and see that invoice. So, much paper and ink and storage could be saved not having to do that. Some of the newer systems actually use AI to automatically populate an invoice into the system. So, you scan the invoice and it will pick out different information and data enter it in itself. You don't have to have a person entering that into the system. Along with that, all the data entry error that comes about with humans processing things. One of the concerns of everybody that's using MuniSmart is that there's only one support specialist at the software company that can help us with any questions. So, anytime he's at a conference or on vacation, all our needs wait. If anything should happen to him, we don't know what will happen. We won't have any help. The school has recently started looking for new software themselves. Inside the packet, you'll see the sheet from the school where they've gone out for a quote. And that's where we're coming with the number that we're looking as an out-of-budget request to start the search for a new software.

Roy Sorenson: Just to add to this, if you look at the MuniSmart pages, which is what the Finance Director commented on, this is what comes out of the software. These sheets here, which I reformatted, that's all Excel. There's nothing to do with that. This data, which took 45 minutes to put into MuniSmart, now we have to make sure the data matches what is inside Excel. Manual checks. Whereas if you have one software package and you are inputting data into just, say, I don't know, I'm on the finance department's page right now, line 103, temporary help, you plug that number in, it's going to inundate the other spreadsheets that are connected to that automatically. These fancy graphs that you see, again, handmade in Excel, arduous time, maybe I messed up here by making these books as good as they look, but this was a lot of labor-intensive work, whereas the new software produces this. Our reporting mechanisms, the reports you run on CLEAN, you can see that in your revenue expenditure reports. We have to take those reports that print out 150, 200 pages, you're talking about saving paper or wasting paper, and then take them, and Dan will now take them and put them into an Excel spreadsheet. Again, manually, okay, what's that number? Is that number matched? Then he comes over here and he puts it in an Excel spreadsheet. That's wasted time. We should be able to go in and run a detailed report on revenue and expenditures, and it takes all of one minute. And here's the report, whether we print it to give to the Board members, to give to the public through write-to-no request, or whatever it might be. We are

currently operating inefficiently. It's not something to blame on Hudson. We had the same software in Salem. They're looking to get rid of it. I think it's important to note, just like the Finance Director said, you have one person to support this. If that guy gets hit by a bus tomorrow, we're out of luck. You can't go online. You can't go in a chat box. None of that's available for this software. So, I think that's important to note. What we did is we looked at what the schools did and who they went with. We would have to do an RFP for this if the Board supports it. There's a slight contingency in there just to bring it to \$175,000. Do we know what the number is? No, we'll have to do an RFP. We have been interviewing different companies, sitting with them. I brought this to the Board's attention two months back just to get an idea. The other thing is they create budget books. So, the budget book that you put out to the public is much more clean than what we're doing now. And you can put any information in there you want. If one of you have a customized report you're looking for, you can produce it. You put the parameters in there. The other thing is they take all this information, historical, and they import it right into the new system. So, you're not going to lose any of your old data.

Selectman Morin: I know you don't want to debate this right now, but we've been talking about this for 10 years and have never moved on it. I think it's time. I really do. And we've heard from three Finance Director's now the same thing that we're hearing tonight.

Chairman Dumont: And one thing just to follow up on that, So, obviously Tyler Technologies went with the school, and now we're talking about doing an RFP. I think you did mention last time, is there any savings to work with the school on that same program, on that same software?

Roy Sorenson: So, there may be. We would have to interview them and sit down with them, because Tyler has two sections. They have a school section and they have a municipal section. And figure out.

Chairman Dumont: Is the municipal the enterprise?

Roy Sorenson: Well, it might be. That's actually like an HR portal as well. But we would certainly sit with them and talk and see if we could do that.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions or comments on that?

Selectman Morin: With new software, you could send it to the PD and the Fire Department, even with their systems. You know, like the Tele-Staff, would it populate right into that?

Laurie May: I'm sure it would.

Selectman Morin: So, you don't have to do that Monday morning thing that you guys always do?

Laurie May: Like payroll? It would just, they'd import it in.

Selectman Morin: It would take it right to you.

Chairman Dumont: All right. I think that wraps that one up. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. All right, back to Mr. Sorenson for insurance.

Insurance: 5910

Roy Sorenson: So, this is other departments. So, we're going to cover, you can see them on the screen right now. These are just lumped together as well. Insurance, community grants, patriotic purposes, other expenses, hydrant rental. JPW Director Jay Twardosky did cover Solid Waste. I can pull that up again tonight if you want, but we can move right into it. Insurance is just typical of what we have done in looking at the actuals and tacking on a percentage, 6%. And this is for the workers' comp and the related items there. As I mentioned, it's based on our estimated payroll and current rates and claim experience. Questions there?

Chairman Dumont: I'm not seeing any. Nope.

Community Grants: 5920

Roy Sorenson: All right. Community grants. We did send out our notices to the folks that are listed. I'll pull that up. They did all reply back. The only one that is not going to go forward is the Millstone Wildlife Center. I'm not

sure why. They just did reply back that they would not be seeking a grant this year, So, this line actually went down, given what we had previously on these. Questions?

Chairman Dumont: Nope. Real quick. Yeah, just real quick. I was looking for it. The only one that I saw, obviously, that wasn't in 26 that caused the increase was CHIPS.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: They're requesting this year. I know last year there was some discussion because there was some, I guess, management issues.

Roy Sorenson: Yep. They have resolved that. They did reach back out to us, and they are working for grants.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. Any questions or comments?

Roy Sorenson: The only other one that's gone up a lot is the Nashua Ride Share, the Transit as well.

Chairman Dumont: I did see that. I think those are the two where the increase came from, if I'm looking at it.

Roy Sorenson: Pretty much, and then there's the offset with the \$1,500, which is \$1,500 going the other way.

Chairman Dumont: Yep, that was the last one.

Patriotic Purposes: 5930

Roy Sorenson: Patriotic Purposes, flat, same as last year, \$7,100. Old Home Days, fireworks, and Memorial Day Observance Parade. All right.

Chairman Dumont: Next up, other expenses.

Other Expenses: 5940

Roy Sorenson: Other expenses, I pretty much left it flat based off of actual. These are some of the lines that the board has exclusive authority on, obviously, with the 298 and the 299. It's important that we obviously leave those where they are.

Chairman Dumont: This is actually the postage for this one. What is that used for?

Roy Sorenson: So, this would just be typical of anything else. We would have to send out the certified mail.

Chairman Dumont: Just if you're running out from somewhere, or if something else runs out, you're pulling from here.

Roy Sorenson: Correct, yeah, exactly.

Selectman Guessferd: And postage supplies would be things like envelopes and stuff like that. We already have enough.

Roy Sorenson: Exactly. This is almost like just a contingency-type area.

Selectman Guessferd: Yep.

Chairman Dumont: Questions, comments? No? All right. Next up, hydrant.

Hydrant Rental: 5960

Roy Sorenson: Hydrant rental is just based on hydrants in town. Actually, this is paying our water utility back, So, it's the town side paying the water utility back for hydrants and fire protection. It's just based on what we have out in the field. I think it's \$23,000 a month, roughly. So, unless Elvis decides to raise the rates, we're okay going into next year.

Selectman Guessferd: You might have some discussion with him on that.

Roy Sorenson: All right. I don't know if you had any other questions. I think Jay did cover this the other night.

Chairman Dumont: Yes, he did, yeah.

Roy Sorenson: And that's it for other departments. All right.

Chairman Dumont: All righty. Does anybody have any general questions? I know it's getting late, but what I think would be appropriate if it's okay with everybody. So, that we stay on track with our other meetings is to go through the departments that we reviewed at the last meeting and this one, and make decisions on plug-ins or cuts. I know Selectman Morin brought up one for the Tax Collector tonight. We had some conversation over a couple of small departments last week, and then some more discussion, obviously, this week. So, I think now would be the time to try to work our way through that. And if we can, at least get thoughts on some of the out-of-budget expenses, that way we'll be prepared for the next two meetings coming up.

Selectman Morin: Do you want a motion or just a consensus?

Chairman Dumont: No, a consensus would be fine. I think it's well within my purview to bring it back, but I want to make sure that everybody's okay with it. I know it's 9 o'clock.

Selectman Morin: I'd just like to add the postage and the other one myself. Just add that back into the budget.

Chairman Dumont: One thing, where is it? That's 50-30. I did have that written down. One thing I was hoping to do to see, just So, that way everybody could pay attention, because I think it would be a good exercise, can you pull up the Excel sheet that you had showed me that populated the tax rate?

Roy Sorenson: Yep.

Chairman Dumont: So, we can see where we're at right now before we make any changes.

Roy Sorenson: Laurie, do you have that live right now on your end? I'm not online right now, So, I can pull it up, but I can't populate those two changes. I mean, you really only have the two changes, right, right now?

Chairman Dumont: If we do Tax Collector, yeah, it will be just those two changes for right now. It won't offset it too much. For myself, I did want to revisit a couple of things on Library, but we'll start with the Tax Collector, because I have it in front of me.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, well, that will already put it in right now. So, just So, the Board is aware, this is basically the full budget, the general fund here. Okay, I know we haven't heard from all the departments yet, but they're in here. That includes the Library. You have this appropriating budget. You have the water fund. We plugged in the outside budget requests, which total \$1.1 million, I'd just say \$1.2 million. That's that number right here. And then these are all the warrant article requests. We do have to add some in. I do apologize. We have a couple from PD. They're going to come in here. And you're going to have to have a discussion on the cable franchise fee as well. There's no value in that one yet. But with that all-inclusive, this is what your tax rate impact would be is right here.

Chairman Dumont: Do we know what would be the tax rate for the budget the way it sits without all of the additional add-ins? So, outside of the budget request, just the way the budgets were presented to us tonight.

Roy Sorenson: So, it would be right here.

Chairman Dumont: \$5.789. And I know I asked you last night, but just for clarification, does that include the \$1.3 million offset out of the general fund?

Roy Sorenson: Correct, yes.

Chairman Dumont: So, that's already buying it down. So, that would be larger if this Board did not move \$1.3 million from the general fund.

Roy Sorenson: Correct, that's in the revenues, yep.

Chairman Dumont: So, everybody's aware. Okay.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: What's our tax rate right now? Sorry, I don't know.

Roy Sorenson: So, we haven't set it yet. We just finished the audit. The 2024, and this gets tricky because we're talking about 2027, and this is the calendar year of 2024, is \$4.90-something. They projected for 2025, which is what we're trying to get to now. We'll have another next week, I think, was around 5.30, somewhere in there. And then for 2026, which we're currently in, I think the projection there was, I want to say, and, again, I'm just putting this out there. I don't have the exact number, \$5.50, somewhere in there.

Chairman Dumont: Roughly a 28-cent increase, .29¢, if you're figuring it out.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: That's what I was trying to work towards.

Chairman Dumont: And it is rough because, like Mr. Sorenson said, every time you get your tax bill in the beginning of the year, it's an estimate. You get finalized the second half of the year. All right. So, I would agree with Selectman Morin. I think the Tax Collector, those two that she brought up, they have to get added in. If they don't, they're going to get paid. They're going to be pulled from somewhere else. So, I think just to formalize it, Selectman Morin, if you'd like to just do a motion on that. I think that's similar to what we've done in the past, if my memory serves me right.

[Selectman Morin made a motion, seconded by Selectman Guessferd, to raise \\$10,737 to cover the anticipated USPS rate increases tentatively scheduled for July 1, 2026, and January 1, 2027. In addition, to raise \\$7,000 for printing costs related to monthly motor vehicle renewal notices, \\$20,000 for biannual tax bills, and \\$45,000 for envelopes for the Tax Collector. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Chairman Dumont: All right. So, looking back on the departments that we reviewed last week, does anybody have any changes that they would like to make to Public Works? Or are we leaving that the same?

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: No, Jay did a pretty good job outlining all that.

Selectman Jakoby: So, one of the questions that I have is if there are, So, here's where my thinking is, and I'm kind of not willing to make a motion tonight on some of this because I really want to see the overall budget and look at out-of-budget requests, some of those needing to go in to some of these budgets. I'm trying to work through some numbers looking at some of the out-of-budget requests that definitely need to happen, in my opinion, and where there might be an offset or have a discussion point around how we do that more within some of these departments with some really critical out-of-budget requests. That's where I'm at.

Chairman Dumont: It's a very difficult balancing act, and I'll tell you the only reason why I brought it up tonight is because I was trying to forecast. We have Thursday with some larger departments, which I would expect to take a decent amount of time. We have a regular scheduled meeting on Tuesday with normal business to handle as well. And then we're coming right up against November. So, I was just trying to see how much of this we could make through tonight. I understand if the Board's not comfortable with certain things, you don't have to. We do have a little bit of time, but I would stress that we don't have a lot of time.

Selectman Jakoby: And that's why I just wanted to make that comment. So, I don't know if anybody else has things that they're thinking for DPW.

Chairman Dumont: As far as his budget in general, what he presented, I do agree with Selectman Vurgaropoulos. I think that he did a very well job balancing everything out, which I very much appreciated. One that I will tell you that I think I was considering was the overtime. And mainly because, again, very similar to Selectman Morin 's comment, I understand we figure it separately, but that's contractual, right? Us and the voters agreed for those pay increases. If we don't cover it, the only place it comes from his budget to offset that typically is from the paving. So, we make that decision whether or not we want to pull from that line item and cover it. You'll also, see that he's requesting another \$100,000 to go into town-wide paving.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: With the overtime, as it stands for this year, there was a blip there on that side, right? And we had to address that. So, in my head, just correct me if I'm wrong, it should be coming down next year because it was corrected. That was one of our audit findings.

Chairman Dumont: Mr. Sorenson, were you able to ...

Selectman Vurgaropulos: We should have it under control when I was playing Excel spreadsheet item.

Roy Sorenson: I'm sorry. Can you repeat that? I'm not quite sure I understood.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: If I'm remembering correctly, there was earlier in the year we had an issue with overtime not being tracked properly.

Roy Sorenson: Not that I recall.

Chairman Dumont: So, that investigation that you saw in the audit was not related to his request that he's making here today. His request pertains to contractual increases in salary, and that increase not being reflected in the budget line item for just overtime in general.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay, So, he wants to parse it out.

Chairman Dumont: So, they're just two different issues.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Chairman Dumont: So, while that was handled through the audit, and Mr. Sorenson and the other department heads, that has been rectified, but what hasn't changed is people are getting paid more, and obviously when they're working overtime, there's an increase there.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, So, that overtime line, if you look at the Board, that's really his seasonal not winter, because remember we endorsed the extreme weather cost center. It would fall in here. Now, it's a little tricky because this used to be combined under one, and last year they had a heavy winter. If you go to your expended, and you'll see they were way over budget, right, which is similar to what the chairman said. Unfortunately, that gets made up in areas in your budget where you may have some funds. Typically, that would be your road program, which is located in the Public Works budget. So, what we did is we took out and we went to the extreme weather. Let me just find that section. We created a new cost center, which is Public Works extreme weather. So, let's think this through logically. It's a bottom-line budget. Okay. He's got \$192,640 for wintertime, or extreme. It could be flooding, it could be a hurricane, it could be whatever it is. The money is still there. It's available in his budget. So, if you look at the \$40,000 what I think Director Twardosky was trying to do was just come back true to form with his typical historical numbers, and as the chair mentioned, that typically weren't getting adjusted based off of new CBAs. They would just stay flat line. Is there wiggle room in there? Again, I'm not the Director of Public Works, but I am just telling you, if this line or this cost center remains, there's overtime in the budget. The other thing behind this is if we go for a CRF, which I think the board should endorse for this, capital reserve fund, that money would be moved into that, and then you have the ability to take that money in and out as whether you have a bad winter or you don't have a bad winter.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I just have one question. I'm trying to refresh my memory. Didn't we just buy an asphalt hotbox? Didn't we just approve that? So, in his out-of-budget expense report, he's asking to purchase another one? That was the only question I had about his report.

Roy Sorenson: Let's see what you're looking at. What page are you on? Out-of-budget request?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah. Go to Executive Summary, page 2, well, page 1 into page 2, and he talks about the lease is ending on the asphalt hotbox, but I was pretty sure that we just approved the purchase of one.

Chairman Dumont: So, that is not an outside-of-the-budget request, unless I'm reading it wrong. That was within his 2.2% increase. That's his breakdown of how he came to that 2.2%. The outside-of-the-budget requests start on page 3.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, you're right. I see where my mistake was.

Selectman Guessferd: He's only got the money on page 3.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Do we need two?

Roy Sorenson: I think what he's saying here is if you look at the FY26 budget, the hotbox and the brush tractor lease, I don't have the FY26 in front of me. I don't know if you do, Laurie. So, whatever that number is, say the

number is \$75,000, all he's saying is that was last year, 2026. I want to keep the \$75,000 in there, but I want to go after these front-line vehicles. So, it's a balance. Do you know what I'm saying?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Oh, okay. Yeah, I got you. Thank you. He's just shifting it around.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, he's saying the funds are available because of these other things.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, I apologize. That is correct. All right, So, with that, you have the overtime and you have the town-wide paving. If we're accepting everything else he's got in front of us, are there any thoughts on those two here tonight?

Selectman Morin: What's the Board's feeling on his new extreme weather capital reserve fund? Because if we put this overtime in, we can put it into this, and then we don't have to worry about this in the future. So, it's kind of a win-win on both of them. If the Board's deciding to go with that general, the reserve fund.

Chairman Dumont: I think it's a good idea. Myself, I've spoke to Mr. Sorenson about this, and I give him and Mr. Twardosky credit for putting it together because, as we've seen just in this past year, we've sometimes over-budgeted, sometimes we've under-budgeted. Having the capital reserve fund will give us some leeway with that. We'll be able to pull from it when we need it. And then determining, let's say we have a heavy winter, well, we can then go to the voters and say, hey, we need to add to it. If we have a light one, it stays off the ballot for that year.

Selectman Morin: And it gives them a break.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, no, I agree with this.

Chairman Dumont: Maybe a little bit less of a guessing game and more of a savings account.

Roy Sorenson: So, with that, there's a number there. You could create the fund. You don't necessarily need the \$10,000 there, right?

Selectman Guessferd: Right, you're just creating it. You don't have to fund it.

Roy Sorenson: So, if you get through the winter now, see what's left over. Right, we can put it in there. As long as the fund's created.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Correct.

Chairman Dumont: And if that's the case, I just want to at least have the conversation. If that's where people are leaning towards, then we can hold off on these two until we have the discussion on all the warrant articles and our November meeting. But I just wanted to try to at least go one by one and be ready for when we get there. So, we'll move on to the next department, which was solid waste. That's more contractual than anything, but did anybody have any questions, changes, or attempt to change anything?

Solid Waste

Selectman Morin: Any idea on grants or anything? Can you move in the landfill to deal with this?

Roy Sorenson: To a transfer?

Selectman Morin: Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, I think Mr. Dhima is working towards that. I wouldn't impact this budget per se.

Selectman Morin: Right, right. No, I understand that.

Roy Sorenson: Perhaps in the future.

Selectman Morin: I'm just thinking, you know, the solid waste will go down once we get that in and where we're at with that, that's all.

Chairman Dumont: I think if we can get that put through, that would be a fantastic thing for the town. All right, So, we're good with that one. We'll move on to Police.

Police

Chairman Dumont: I will say it's very similar to a lot of the departments. Again, I'm going to give Mr. Sorenson and the department heads credit. They did a good job listening to the Board's direction for the increase, as well as balancing out a lot of line items. So, I, myself, didn't have any problems with their budget. But just based on their budget, is there any questions?

Selectman Jakoby: Yes. So, I had brought this up to Mr. Sorenson last night, and I just want to bring it to the Board, because it was a question asked of me. So, if you go to page 18, the employee wage and benefit detail, there's the Deputy Chief position that we approved, listed, and added. Now, this is where my confusion comes in. Isn't that probably going to be a promotion?

Selectman Morin: It is, yes.

Selectman Jakoby: So, it's not an additional \$147,200. It's an additional of whatever the difference is. Because we're not adding an employee, or are we? And that was the question that someone asked.

Selectman Morin: We will be at some point, because they've got to hire somebody to replace that move up, because everybody's going to move up.

Selectman Jakoby: Right.

Chairman Dumont: I guess to Selectman Jakoby's point, you know, you've got 51 positions right now. The question would be is, you know, and I know we had a little bit of conversation, are you comfortable with maintaining that 51, or are you looking to increase that to 52?

Selectman Jakoby: Right.

Chairman Dumont: I mean, obviously you've got about one, two, three, four, five vacancies.

Selectman Morin: Right, because usually when you promote, captain gets promoted, a lieutenant gets promoted, sergeant, and then you've got to hire an officer.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, I just want to make sure this is an accurate increase, or is there another way it should be looked at within the budget book as it goes to the Budget Committee? Because I thought it was a good question that was sent to me.

Roy Sorenson: So, if I may, Ms. Chair, no, I think that's a good point, Selectman Jakoby. We can certainly do two things. I'll have a discussion with the chief, number one. Ultimately, it's going to free a position somewhere, right, if everybody's promoted through the ranks, and then just get a true number we can take a look at. So, we would just go on the high end with the benefits, just assuming a family.

Selectman Jakoby: Right.

Roy Sorenson: And then pull back on the other end. If there is, in fact, a position that would not be filled, we would show that as well.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: It's a promotion from captain, correct?

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, one of the captains would probably become the deputy chief.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: So, that's approximately \$130,000. So, it's 17 grand split there, and then you do the splits, rolling splits down, and that should be what the fund number is.

Roy Sorenson: And then it will just keep the promotion will keep going, though, you know, So, ultimately you'll end up basically a patrol officer.

Selectman Jakoby: Right. And the key here is, is in the presentation for Police, this needs to be identified and spoken about, because it wasn't in the executive summary.

Chairman Dumont: I think those wages, too, the other thing to keep in mind, and it will confuse things more, depending on who goes into that position and what step and wage they're at, right? So, it won't exactly, it might be a little bit lower than that 130, that could be a, you know, So, knowing that exact dollar amount, I guess, would be difficult until we have identified that person and then all those other permits.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, I did find that the Budget Committee was pretty understanding on the fact that we usually hold it at a high rate, assuming a family, but there will be more questions about are we going to 52 people, are we not, and what's the plan? So, I'm trying to find some potholes for that, the Budget Committee.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, it's good to bring it up now. My recollection wasn't that we were jumping to 52, now that we're talking about it, I believe he was standing steadfast at the 51.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct.

Chairman Dumont: So, yeah, I mean, you're right, I don't think it'll be \$147,000 that's getting added into his budget for wages, but to Mr. Sorenson's point, it'll probably be somewhere of a difference more around the patrol officer salary.

Selectman Jakoby: Which is fair.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: I think the math just needs to be done out and then we could have a better, more accurate estimate.

Chairman Dumont: Well, right now, is that, because it's kind of a floater, is that total \$147,000 figured into this final budget? Do you know, Mr. Sorenson?

Roy Sorenson: So, yeah, you would, I mean, whatever the delta might be, you could just make the adjustment, you know, as far as the spreadsheet goes, you mean this year?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, we would just adjust this number, So, whatever the delta might be.

Selectman Jakoby: Right, because right now the delta is 13%. If the column is correct, there's a 13% increase. That would technically be lower than that if we're not going to 52 people.

Roy Sorenson: Let's see what I got here. Let's see.

Selectman Morin: The only other thing on the Police budget, and we haven't had fire yet, So, take that into consideration, is the yearly wellness cost. Why can't we combine those two departments? Because the Fire Department has the same issues the Police do and get a better price on a contract and take care of all the employees between those two departments.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, I had that written down because I liked your suggestion that night to do a town-wide Police/fire in the whole municipality. I agree. All right. So, I guess then not necessarily a change, right, Selectman Jakoby, what you're looking to do to see is if, and Mr. Sorenson, you'd have to speak to it, if there's a way to possibly short up that dollar amount or at least get a better idea.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct, and then to be able to present it clearly to the Budget Committee. Okay.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, I think it's just an exercise in numbers, to be honest with you. I think you put the benefits in on the deputy chief based off of the salary, right, family plan, and then you're probably removing a patrol officer, family plan and then whatever that delta might be. That's your difference. Because regardless of whether the other folks move up or move around, like you said, you're never going to get that because you don't know who's going to be in what position.

Chairman Dumont: I was going to say, you won't have the final dollar until everybody moves up.

Roy Sorenson: But you'll be close enough.

Selectman Jakoby: Yes.

Roy Sorenson: So, we can do that. I can look into the wellness and see if there's any savings in combining those.

Selectman Morin: Yeah, just make a contract for the whole town versus just that one department. Because we had talked about, again, the Police Chief wanted that report software and things to that nature, but that's also, the training reports and everything. The Fire Department also, has that same thing. So, if we can buy one set of software for both departments instead of both departments having two different things.

Roy Sorenson: Let me pull that up. Let's see. Which one were you talking about, the NeoGov? Time-Ready, this one here?

Selectman Morin: The Central Square Pro Suite.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, I don't know if – we can talk to Fire as well. The other thing is – I don't have my – do you have your CRF?

Chairman Dumont: I don't, actually. I left it sitting in my truck. I apologize.

Roy Sorenson: This might be an area where we could potentially use a CRF, a current CRF. I'd have to talk to the IT Director on that. I think it qualifies, and maybe council would have to weigh in. But to me, it could. It's going to eat up a lot of that fund. But it's an avenue.

Selectman Morin: Wow. And now that you say that, personally, in my opinion, the finance software is probably more important. Because, like I said, we've been discussing that for 10 years, and the issues with that is absolutely.

Roy Sorenson: And that's my point. So, if you look at them both ...

Chairman Dumont: And I think that that would be realistic, right? If you looked at the yearly wellness consultations, and then the Neo-Gov is something that we could probably tackle this year if we're going to be looking at the finance as more of a big-ticket item. Happy you brought that up, because that's the order that I had my numbers listed in here. And the Chief did, too. His number one was the yearly wellness consultations, and his number two was the Neo-Gov. All right. So, it looks like nothing that we'll be able to – Well, I guess, how does everybody feel about the Neo-Gov? We're going to be looking to see if we can make a town-wide contract for consultations. We're going to be looking into the Central Square Pro Suite with a CRF. What is everybody's thoughts on the Neo-Gov power and gauge time ready? Okay.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Sounds like it would be very beneficial without actually reading up on these programs themselves. But I think it's worth exploring.

Chairman Dumont: Go ahead. Selectman from Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby: It was interesting to me that he prioritized the wellness over the Neo-Gov. From the outside looking in and from thinking about finance and efficiency and things, town-wide, if we had the Neo-Gov, some of the stress and things would be taken – there are some time stressors and extra things that they're doing that would be decreased with the Neo-Gov. If we can get a contract for the other that's all together, great. But I don't know. There's something about the detail in that that's putting me on the fence.

Roy Sorenson: On Neo-Gov?

Selectman Jakoby: No, on prioritizing. Because you're right. He did prioritize the wellness and then Power Time and then the Pro Suite.

Chairman Dumont: I think based on recent events over the past couple years is where that really comes from. I think everybody throughout the municipality, Police, Fire and the town side experienced something significant and got great use out of the Wellness Officer and everything else. So, I think that's where he sees it. And obviously I think we can see with the Chief he takes a lot of care and consideration for his guys. But if we're going to pursue this as a town-wide contract, we might be able to look at other avenues if that's a possibility. We do have the contingency. You do have the general fund to take care of the wellness consultations.

Selectman Morin: I was just going to say what you guys say. The wellness program is related to the mental stability and taking care of our employees, which we are terrible at. Seriously.

Selectman Jakoby: Even with what we have in place? Right.

Selectman Morin: Yeah, what we have in place is really nothing. And it's an after the fact type of situation. It's not let's try to prevent it. That's the issue. You know, suicide and Police officers is, like, number one.

Selectman Jakoby: I'm very worried about that.

Selectman Morin: And that's where he's going with that.

Chairman Dumont: For me, the NeoGov, I saw great value in that. I know every dollar counts to me, but I see that that is actually paying off in the long run. So, I would be comfortable with adding that back in. But I would want to say that we should definitely, as a town, pursue the town-wide consultations.

Selectman Jakoby: I would agree with that.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: I would agree with that, too.

Chairman Dumont: It may not necessarily have to be in this budget or in the Police's budget, but I don't see why we can't figure a way to take care of that, because the mental health is definitely a problem.

Selectman Jakoby: Absolutely.

Selectman Guessferd: Agreed.

Selectman Jakoby: But I just didn't want to. That's where I was on the fence. I didn't want to sacrifice the NeoGov.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. That's fair. So, with that, I'll make a motion to add into the Police's budget the NeoGov Power Engage/Time/Ready at \$12,195.

[Chairman Dumont made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropoulos, to include NeoGov Power Engage/Time/Ready in the Police Department's budget at a cost of \\$12,195. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Selectman Guessgerd: And we'll address the consultation.

Chairman Dumont: We're going to look into that, and we're also, going to see what we can utilize for CRFs.

Roy Sorenson: Cut that balance, and I'll have to speak to the IT Director, but it's a little under \$103,000. It may cover some of it. It wouldn't cover it in totality.

Chairman Dumont: Right.

Roy Sorenson: Between the two software packages, Central Square, ProSuite, and then your budgeting software, you could knock one of them out.

Chairman Dumont: And that's kind of the way I was looking at it, is we'll get a better idea of what we can utilize that for. It doesn't necessarily mean we have to do it this year. Like I said, I think finance, I would agree, again, with Selectman Morin, that it will save a lot of time. I mean, if anybody came into any of the departments over the past couple of weeks, it was painful to see. All right, any other questions about Police? All right, we'll move on to Library.

Library

Chairman Dumont: I don't think they didn't have an executive summary. Where is this?

Roy Sorenson: May I clarify, Mr. Chair?

Chairman Dumont: Go right ahead. Oh, yes.

Roy Sorenson: So, I was contacted by a Library, Karen Bohrer, who presented. She's the chair of the Library Board of Trustees. We can hand these out. There was a couple of questions that we answered. Let's give these to them. I'll go this way.

Selectman Morin: Thank you.

Roy Sorenson: Do me a favor. Give one to Laurie and Dan, please.

Roy Sorenson: All right, just a couple of things here. I had one extra. I apologize, Dan.

Chairman Dumont: Oh, you've got more?

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, I've got another one. You've got one for you, too. How's that?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Oh, you get to have them.

Roy Sorenson: So, there's a couple of questions asked that night, at least that she's addressing here. One of them was the tuition policy, which is attached. You can see that. That was one of the questions we had. And then one of the lines, I think it was Chair Dumont, that asked actual spent versus what was being budgeted, and that was just an expenditure to the wrong fund. So, if you go to the third page, I kind of highlighted what it should have been. Red is where it was billed to, and yellow is where it should have been. So, then if you look at that, those numbers make sense. So, I'll share that.

Chairman Dumont: I appreciate that, because that clears up a couple of my question marks here. I did have, and I'm struggling to find it here, one question to get the Board's thought on. I thought, to me, it sounded a little bit odd. There was a \$2,000 reimbursement to the Library Trustees. It seemed to me like it was just a normal expense. I cannot for the life of me find it here. It was \$10,000. It got increased to \$12,000. The explanation for the \$2,000 was to reimburse Library Trustees money for the flooding that occurred in the basement. I don't understand the reimbursement. I just figured that that was a regular cost.

Roy Sorenson: This is going to be under page 7.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I've got a star next to that for me today.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you. Maybe it's just me looking at it bluntly, but I would figure that that cost would just have been absorbed. I don't know how the Board feels, but it's like my morning.

Selectman Morin: I can't understand the circumstances. First of all, if we had flooding in a town building, why are they borrowing money for somebody instead of just coming to the town and taking it out of their budget to take care of it? That's my question there because that doesn't sound right. Why would we be borrowing money from another group?

Roy Sorenson: Laurie, you can't reimburse out of a fiscal year anyways.

Laurie May: No. True. Yeah, if it was a prior year.

Roy Sorenson: The fiscal year it occurred in was previous. We can't reimburse the following year with additional funds.

Chairman Dumont: So, there's the answer. With that, we'll reduce 224 down to \$10,000.

Laurie May: Correct.

Selectman Morin: Do you need a motion on that?

Chairman Dumont: Yes, if you'd like to make the motion.

[Selectman Morin made motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropulos, to reduce Rodger's Memorial Library FY27 budget line item, 04-4550-5060-224-000, from \\$12,000 to \\$10,000. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Chairman Dumont: There's one small cut. Everything counts. Did anybody have any other questions on that? That was the one that kind of stuck with me. I know that we have more work going forward with this budget. There will be probably some further tweaks depending on the actual maintenance, depending on what the town does with that building over there. But overall, I didn't see anything that was too glaring. No, I adjusted a lot of the utilities.

Roy Sorenson: No, just a lot of utilities.

Selectman Jakoby: So, if you read the procedure for the education reimbursement, I mean there's no – it's kind of at the discretion.

Chairman Dumont: Open-ended.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah. Employees who take job-related courses providing paid time and attended courses must be pre-approved by the director eligible for financial assistance. It's eligible for assistance, not for received tuition assistant agrees to remain. It's not saying for a class. Because I know Selectman Morin had asked for the details, So, it's not very detailed.

Selectman Morin: My question there was, is this a bill? Somebody's going to take ten years to finish their degree. That's the question I asked, and that's not answered here.

Selectman Jakoby: That's what I wanted to point out.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: One thing I don't particularly like about this policy, it's too open-ended, and it doesn't say financial reimbursement. It says assistance. Reimbursement would apply 100%.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Where assistance would mean we'll pay partial. So, I think there needs to be some rework in there.

Selectman Morin: Right, and it doesn't specify how you reimburse, how much you reimburse.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, there's a lot of vagueness.

Selectman Jakoby: And for this, they came to the \$6,000 based on who's currently employed. And generally, if you're doing assistance in your budget, you have a budgeted amount every year that's for assistance, and you encourage people to take advantage of it. So, that's just.

Selectman Morin: And what else concerned me is when they talked about this, it was directed at that one person taking, which this says it can be reimbursed to everybody. So, how do we figure that out? Who's going to get what?

Roy Sorenson: Why don't we do a historical dive on this, maybe get ten years out with the actuals. I don't know if you can do that right now.

Chairman Dumont: So, while she's doing that, does everybody on page two, you can see it's on the bottom, 236. You've got your 2023, 2024, and 2025 actuals. \$1,100, \$4,700, and 142.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, that's what throws it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I don't think it's unreasonable that we request that the Trustees revisit this document and make it more robust.

Roy Sorenson: The policy?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah. I don't think it's unreasonable, because this is way too open-ended for comfort for me.

Chairman Dumont: I would agree and say that in order to support that dollar amount, which is relatively large in my opinion, I would need to see a better policy.

Selectman Morin: I'll make a motion that we request the Library to come up with a more definite policy on how this is all going to be handled to include payment, how they're going to determine who gets the payments, how long they have to finish their degrees to be part of this program. There's much here. I mean, Police and fire have an educational reimbursement, and they have a policy, and it's very specific.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct.

Selectman Morin: And this needs to be very specific.

Chairman Dumont: So, it's a simpler one. Sorry. Go ahead.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: No, sorry. You can finish.

Chairman Dumont: Is there a second to that motion just for discussion?

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: I'll second it.

Chairman Dumont: The only thing I was going to say, maybe a simpler one for a friendly amendment would be similar to Police or Fire CBA contracts or something along those lines, because I don't know if Lorrie was able to write everything you just said.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: Just to pick your brain for your knowledge, the Police or the Fire Department, you said reimbursement. So, does that mean it's 100% for them?

Selectman Morin: Well, see, and that's what, if 10 people take a class, I believe, I know the Fire Department is basically first come, first served. When it runs out, it runs out.

Chairman Dumont: And the other thing that they do in those contracts is that, let's say you go for a class that benefits the town, you get a stipend. It's just an actual dollar amount. Here's what we're going to pay to do that. A lot of times you don't see the reimbursement like the way that this is worded.

Selectman Morin: Right.

Chairman Dumont: Which I'm more in favor of. It's cleaner, I think.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: Yeah. Just more definition.

Chairman Dumont: All right. So, with that motion made, second, any other discussion? We're looking for a cleaner policy based on that. It doesn't change anything in the budget right now, but.

Roy Sorenson: We'll get some historical numbers.

[Selectman Morin made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropoulos, to request that the Library Trustees establish a more defined policy regarding tuition reimbursement, including payment procedures, criteria for determining eligibility, and alignment with the guidelines outlined in the Police or Fire collective bargaining agreements. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Chairman Dumont: Motion carries five to zero. Laurie, are you able to grab those historical numbers?

Laurie May: Yeah. So, I went back to 2012. And nothing, let's see, 2011, 2012. Actuals were \$1,098 for 2012. Year-end actuals for 2013 were \$499. Nothing for 2015. 2016 was \$1,848. That was 2016, 2017 was \$1,332.

Chairman Dumont: I think you're going to find that it's ...

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: It's like a \$2,000 average at best. That's what it sounds like.

Selectman Jakoby: I'd like to make a motion to reduce line 236 of the, do I have to say the whole number?

Roy Sorenson: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: 04-4550-5060-236-000 Library Education Reimbursement to reduce that line to \$2,000.

Chairman Dumont: We have a motion by Selectman Jakoby. Seconded by Selectman Vurgaropoulos. And I just want to say I appreciate that because the \$2,000 was what was sticking in my head as well.

Selectman Vurgaropoulos: When I was hearing the numbers, it's just what it rang in my head.

[Selectman Jakoby made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropoulos, to reduce line item 04-4550-5060-236-000 Library Education Reimbursement, from \\$6,000 to \\$2,000. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Chairman Dumont: Motion carries 5-0. That line is reduced to \$2,000. All right. Let's follow and see. Are there any other questions on the material that they provided or about their budget in general? Not seeing any, we will

move on to, actually, I don't think, they didn't have any outside of the budget requests, right, because they didn't have an executive summary. Okay. Not seeing anything, Planning and Planning Board is the next one up under Developmental Services.

Planning and Planning Board

Chairman Dumont: Very, obviously, very small, but nonetheless, just go through it real quick. Questions, comments, changes? I personally don't have anything for this.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I only have one thing that was posted, but that's all explained away, So, it is what it is.

Chairman Dumont: Unfortunately, that's not getting any cheaper.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah. That was the beginning of the night highlight.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. No, I thought the same thing in the beginning. All right. If there's no questions or comments on Planning, we're going to leave that one alone.

Selectman Jakoby: Well, just what about the GIS specialist and out-of-budget requests?

Chairman Dumont: So, that is just for, but where am I at here?

Selectman Jakoby: Anything need to go back in or?

Roy Sorenson: So, if I may.

Chairman Dumont: Go ahead.

Roy Sorenson: On that one there, I would recommend to the Board. All right, So, this is where the position would be. It would fall under here. So, you would have your split. You would have a 40-40-20. So, 40 Water, 40 Sewer, 20 General Fund. Okay?

Chairman Dumont: And whose budget would that other 20 sit under?

Roy Sorenson: I would put it in engineering.

Chairman Dumont: Okay, that's what I thought.

Roy Sorenson: Yes. Okay. It would go in Engineering. So, the question becomes, what is the Board's appetite for this position? A, to fund it for a full year, to fund it at all. How would you want to approach it? I think Mr. Dhima kind of laid it out in his executive summary, right?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, that's what I was going by, because he's got Planning and then you had Zoning, and that was it.

Roy Sorenson: So, what's his total cost for this position?

Chairman Dumont: \$148,740.

Selectman Jakoby: For a full year?

Chairman Dumont: Yes, yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Because the other recommendation was to fund it half.

Roy Sorenson: You could do a multitude of things. You could do half. You could do three months out of the year. The \$148,740 number, I just want to make sure that that's accurate. Does that include benefits? I don't think it does.

Selectman Guessferd: Well, I think it does.

Roy Sorenson: Do we know on that, Laurie? By any chance?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I would be open to a half year with a scheduled revisit to fully fund it or disband it after six months. I don't know if that's the right terminology.

Roy Sorenson: If you don't hire someone?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Kind of like a trial period to see what the benefit is.

Chairman Dumont: I don't think you can really do that. I appreciate the thought. I mean, if you were trying to reduce the overall cost, you'd have to go more like a part-time position and see if it's something that you'd eventually want to bump to a full-time. But I will tell you, whether you do a half year, quarter year, once you create the position, you create the position. While it may only be funded for a portion of that year, you're only biting off a piece of the apple. But next year-round, you're going to get there with it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: But you're going to come full circle?

Chairman Dumont: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay. And then it becomes part of the oh, my gosh, what's that word we all hate?

Chairman Dumont: Contractual obligations?

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: Don't you hate those?

Selectman Jakoby: The default budget. That's the bad word. But then if we funded a portion of it, it becomes part of the default budget for the following year. That's the benefit to doing it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Default. That's the word you were looking for?

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, default.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Selectman Guessferd: I like the concept. I've heard the advantages of it. I've heard what it can do for us. But I'm just wondering, as I was going through the budget, there's just a lot of things here, and we're already increasing our tax. I think maybe we hold this and make a decision when we're doing the rest of these, probably Tuesday, and decide, you know, when we look at everything then and say do we want to include this or not, maybe there's other things that we might have to horse trade a little bit in order to kind of stay within a reasonable number. I'm just saying there's a lot of things here.

Selectman Morin: So, correct me if I'm wrong. If it's coming out of sewer and water, it's coming out of that.

Selectman Guessferd: That's true.

Selectman Morin: So, how much is that, 20%?

Roy Sorenson: That's what I'm getting at. We're going to have to run an analysis, A, on what is the total salary. I want to make sure the benefits package is in there, similar to the discussion we had with the Deputy Chief, and then give you that full year at the 40-40-20 split. Six months at the 40-40-20 split. What is the impact?

Selectman Guessferd: Oh, yes, it does say \$53,370 for water and sewer each. So, that would bring it up to \$106,000.

Chairman Dumont: So, those numbers did change a little bit just, you know, at the presentation. So, it's not going to be allocated the way that it is here. So, that's why Roy had mentioned.

Selectman Guessferd: The numbers sounded different than this.

Chairman Dumont: It is, yes.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: It came out to about 30K in engineering and 59K for water and sewer.

Roy Sorenson: We've got to rerun the numbers.

Chairman Dumont: But just So, you know, Bob, for that clarification, we eliminated Police, Fire, IT, assessing, planning, zoning, DPW. It's just Engineering.

Selectman Guessferd: You just said three places, right? That's what I heard tonight.

Chairman Dumont: It was six from everybody, and it's not anymore.

Selectman Guessferd: So, it may not be a big hit.

Chairman Dumont: I would agree with you, though, and I will say this, like I've said before, Water and Sewer, I understand, yeah, it's not part of the tax rate. It is a bill that people still have to pay. It should be taken into consideration just as much as the tax rate.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, yeah.

Chairman Dumont: All right, So, I just want to make sure I don't want anybody to think that, oh, well, because it's coming from water and sewer, they don't care as much.

Selectman Guessferd: Oh, no, they do.

Chairman Dumont: And I know you guys do, but, you know, perception is obviously a lot different when you're watching. We've all had conversations about items like that, So, I understand everybody does care deeply about that. But I want to make sure everyone is clear. But I would agree. I think that this one in particular is best handled at the end.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Chairman Dumont: Because it would just be the same thing with the software. When we get to finance, I would say that that one should be looked at the end. So, what I'd like to do, we'll flip back, go back to Planning. Was there anything in particular about planning their budget that Mr. Dhima had put together? No. Like I said, I didn't have anything about just that department. That way I can just check it off the list when we get further down and I don't have to keep thinking about it.

Zoning

Next up would be Zoning. So, we heard that. Again, minimal Zoning Department and Zoning Board. Your increase is a couple hundred bucks.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: It would go to required percent salaries.

Engineering

Chairman Dumont: Yep. All right. Next, we go to Engineering. Some of the increase is a little bit larger, but telephone and just some Engineering fees for the larger ones. Were there any questions or changes to any of that? I didn't see anything.

Selectman Morin: Nope. All right.

Selectman Guessferd: I didn't see anything.

Grants

Chairman Dumont: So, that now brings us back to the outside of the budget request. You have the \$10,000 for the, for the grants. What's everybody's feel on that?

Selectman Morin: Oh, we've been doing very well with grants. So, I don't know why we would stop. It's been saving us in the tax payers a huge amount of money.

Chairman Dumont: And Mr. Sorenson, where would that, so, that would just go under the Planning Department.

Roy Sorenson: It's an ad. There is another \$10,000 in Engineering.

Chairman Dumont: Well, did you put it into Engineering or Planning?

Roy Sorenson: No, this is, this is an ad. So, Engineering currently has it, it has been in the budget, \$10,000. This is an ad for another \$10,000 to be placed in Planning to be similar as Engineering does, which is a good idea given trying to rebuild the Planning Department in general.

Selectman Jakoby: So, my question is, is do you set up? So, if both of these line items are for grants, is it necessary to split it or should there be, with this new department, a grant line for the overall department that can be then used as needed because some years planning might be the place for more grants and sometimes it might be engineering that needs more grant help.

Chairman Dumont: So, I'll tell you, I think that Planning is probably, I think it will get utilized now and then we will bring things up. I think you'll see less and less of it as we bring things more up to date. I was almost thinking I was going to run the question by Mr. Sorenson and the Board about, I know we have a lot of them, but a capital reserve fund for just grants for the town in general.

Roy Sorenson: A new capital reserve fund?

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah.

Selectman Jakoby: Because there's not one that exists.

Chairman Dumont: There's not one that exists just for filing for grants and that would give the ability. You know what the staff does I think is fantastic and they could pull from that. But if you see something out there that's worthwhile, they need a little bit extra support on. Just a thought.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, you could. It doesn't have to be done this year, but I just wanted to throw it out there because I think what the staff has been able to do is fantastic.

Selectman Jakoby: And it brings me to my other thought is that if we have \$10,000 in Engineering for grants, do you just raise that up to the departmental level and start there that it can be used in either direction or do you do that to \$15,000 for next year not to have another \$10,000 hit? I don't know.

Selectman Morin: If there's concern with that, that group has saved us millions of dollars in Engineering.

Selectman Jakoby: Absolutely.

Selectman Morin: But if Selectman Jakoby, you know, with the planning, we raise it up a little bit and make the expenditure for that section of town, Land Use or whatever the new name of it is.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah.

Selectman Morin: So, they both, everybody grabs from that.

Selectman Jakoby: Exactly. That's what I'm saying.

Selectman Morin: Sort of what you're saying, but not for the whole town, just that section.

Selectman Jakoby: Just the Land.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah. I think, yeah. Where would you put it, I guess, is the question, right? So, I would probably just leave it in Engineering at this point. Like we don't have an administrative cost center for development services.

Selectman Jakoby: Not yet.

Roy Sorenson: We may, correct. And then you can make that conversion.

Selectman Jakoby: Because I think it's important, but I don't, I'm just trying to figure out a way So, that, you know, anything that can be started can be started. And I also, believe that, as Mr. Dhima said, some grants don't need as much help as other grants, and one year it might be the planning that needs more help and the engineering that needs less.

Selectman Guessferd: Correct. And pretty much the same people are working those internally. You know, our employees, there's a couple of employees that focus in on that with Elvis, and Doreena, I think, has been doing a

lot of that work with Elvis. So, I think it makes a lot of sense to kind of keep it in one place and then it can be delved out. But I think a lot of the same expertise is going to be brought to bear on these grant applications.

Selectman Jakoby: And having a new director, that director will be prioritizing the grant requests no matter where that money sits.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I think it's an opportunity to create a fund that works from the parent level, i.e., department head down, which would cover land use and all that stuff, but also, an opportunity to save money. Because are they using 10 grand in both locations? No. So, if we do what Selectman Jakoby said and we cycle it up to department head and we give them \$15,000, I think that's fair. And then we reassess next year.

Chairman Dumont: Do we have any motions or where does the Board want to go?

Selectman Jakoby: What I'm hearing is that if we want to just keep it as one line item to keep it in engineering on that line item, the question would be do we increase that by \$5,000 and call it?

Chairman Dumont: Mr. Sorenson, do you know what line item that is, just So, we're clear?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: That's what I was talking about.

Roy Sorenson: Do you want the line?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: So, again, engineering. It would be under 225. So, page 16.

Chairman Dumont: So, they have \$20,000 in there now. Am I understanding that correctly?

Selectman Jakoby:

Oh, is there \$20,000?

Roy Sorenson: I'm sorry. You're right. There's already \$20,000 there.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, so.

Chairman Dumont: Which is still \$10,000 or \$20,000. What you've gotten out of that has been absolutely tremendous.

Roy Sorenson: Again, at five, that would be the line you would adjust for now.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Guessferd: So, we're going to raise that to \$30,000?

Chairman Dumont: I mean, realistically, we could raise that for whatever the or any amount that this Board sees fit. You have a \$10,000 request for Planning. I would agree. I think it's probably cleaner just to stay in Engineering. The question is how much does this Board want to add, if any at all? I'll tell you personally, I think probably for this year around, you work it up a little bit, you split the difference, and you go with the five.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I'd support that.

Selectman Guessferd: \$5,000? Yeah, I think so.

Selectman Jakoby: I would make the motion, and I don't have the number in front of me, to add \$5,000 to line item.

Chairman Dumont: It would be?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: 225?

Selectman Jakoby: For the, to cover, well.

Selectman Guessferd: Additional grant writing.

Selectman Jakoby: Additional grant writing. I'll second that. That's a 5K.

Chairman Dumont: All right, motion by Selectman Jakoby. Seconded by Selectman Guessford. Do we have any discussion?

[Selectman Jakoby made a motion, seconded by Selectman Guessferd, to add \\$5,000 to line item 01-4311-5585-225-000, Engineering Fees, for additional grant writing. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Selectman Jakoby: And that would eliminate the Planning Professional Services out-of-budget request.

Chairman Dumont: Correct. Give me a second to keep track of that. All right. Any other questions? Obviously, we're done with the GIS. So, that brings us to what we reviewed tonight, which should be a little bit easier, but Trustees of the Trust Fund.

Trustees of the Trust Fund

Chairman Dumont: I didn't have any questions about trustees of the Trust Fund or any changes.

Selectman Guessferd: No, I'm good.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I do have one question, though. When are we going to address the Library?

Chairman Dumont: The Library building itself? So, I would hope at a future meeting. I don't think that what we're doing here tonight. Obviously, we've already gone through the Library's budget. We're going to have to make some tweaks to that going forward.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Roy Sorenson: They'll still fund it through their budget this year?

Chairman Dumont: Correct.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Selectman Jakoby: Through 2026 or 2027?

Roy Sorenson: Through 2027.

Chairman Dumont: Through 27. Yeah, fiscal year of 27.

Selectman Jakoby: I just wanted to make sure that was clear.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, So, beginning June or July of 2026.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Chairman Dumont: All right. So, Trustees of the Trust Fund. Any questions, changes? No. Nothing? All right.

Cemetery Trustees

Next up, Cemetery Trustees. Questions or changes?

Selectman Guessferd: No.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No.

Chairman Dumont: Nothing. Okay. Tax Collector.

Tax Collector

We had already done the add-in that Selectman Morin had suggested. Are there any changes to anything else in there that's under Town Offices? So, that was a \$10,000.

Selectman Jakoby: I just have a question as the copier keeps circling around in my head.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah.

Selectman Jakoby: So, does the Tax Clerk Collector's office and the Clerk's office all use that main copier, right? Okay. Just to give people an idea who the departments are.

Chairman Dumont: No other questions or changes, add-ins, cuts? I did not see much there myself. Next up is Town Clerk.

Town Clerk

Anything from the Board on that one? I'm going to keep on rolling. If I don't hear anything, next up would be Supervisors of the Checklist.

Supervisors of the Checklist

Chairman Dumont: Printing, she answered my question about that. Just let me get to the right page here. 55. There we go. All right. Nothing on supervisors of the checklist?

Treasurer

Treasurer? We'll hop into Sustainability Advisory Committee. So, you have their updates.

Sustainability

Chairman Dumont: Where's everybody at with this?

Selectman Morin: I got two, but I'm not sure where they're going to come in with their budget. First of all, the newspaper ads, they've got more money in there than most of our departments.

Chairman Dumont: So, if you look at his new update, it brings him down to \$300.

Selectman Morin: I want to make sure, that's all.

Chairman Dumont: So, I would go by his update as far as their budget goes. Maybe it's a little, I don't know, I guess mean of me, but we're in the budget season. I think that every board, every committee should have been prepared by the time we got to this. And I think we need to hold them to that standard. So, I'm going to go by what he supplied here tonight. So, with that, I think that the newspaper ads for \$300 is significantly more reasonable than the \$1,075 that they had proposed. I've got to be honest with you, a lot of the things in this budget I think can be done through donations. But that's just my first thought.

Selectman Jakoby: I want to say that I think many of the things are through donation. I do also, think that as far as the lights, as good of a plan as that is, I think they have to secure how they're going to ship them and fund that prior to. So, I would look at least taking the \$1,000 off of the line item 5055-265 is my thinking.

Chairman Dumont: 265.

Selectman Jakoby: Minimally.

Chairman Dumont: So, while we're talking about that line item, because it also, goes in with the newspaper ads that Selectman Morin brought up, the pumpkin smash. Can somebody explain that to me?

Selectman Jakoby: It's a beginning program of you. It's a community event where you ...

Selectman Guessferd: It's about composting, right?

Selectman Jakoby: It's about composting and recycling. And it's actually an opportunity for kids to bring their pumpkins. And it's actually a pumpkin smash. And it can end up being a larger event. The hope is that they'll grow it into a much larger event. They've talked about pumpkin throwing. And it's kind of that fall event for sustainability and composting and education.

Chairman Dumont: Where does it happen?

Selectman Jakoby: By the barn. By Alvirne.

Chairman Dumont: So, there's no cost there, I would imagine. What is the cost for?

Selectman Jakoby: The truck.

Chairman Dumont: The food truck.

Selectman Jakoby: Not the food truck. It's a company that then takes everything and supplies a truck So, you can chuck them and throw them. It's a program.

Chairman Dumont: Black Earth is the one supplying the truck to take this stuff away.

Selectman Jakoby: They're supplying the truck for the event. It's a whole activity. I'm sorry, I haven't been to one.

Selectman Morin: Like a catapult?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, that's why I'm asking that, right?

Selectman Jakoby: They knock down things and it's an event thing. And it's \$350 for that event. Which they're doing for the first time this year. So, they put it in the budget for that year. That's where that came from.

Chairman Dumont: So, here's where I guess I'm a little confused. They're going to spend \$300 on advertisements for this pumpkin smash?

Selectman Jakoby: No, no, the advertising is for...

Chairman Dumont: His new one has an advertisement, pumpkin smash, \$300.

Selectman Jakoby: I think he's... So, the newspaper notices and things... So, their overall advertising is for the Button-Up New Hampshire, all of the programs that they do. They advertise. From the lights to Button-Up New Hampshire to... I know some of you are liaisons. You know the list of...

Chairman Dumont: I haven't been to that committee.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah. So, all of those events and all the programs that they do, they do promotional materials. They do the news ads for. So, that's not just for the pumpkin smash.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, no, I know what you're saying. Christmas lights and stuff like that.

Selectman Jakoby: They've done other donation things. They've done things before.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, I'm trying to remember some of the other stuff.

Selectman Jakoby: They really supply the community with those things.

Chairman Dumont: This changes to \$300.

Selectman Jakoby: I mean, you can cut it down.

Chairman Dumont: I was just trying to make sure that I understood it before. I didn't want to do anything without knowing. Because I was reading it, I just couldn't figure it out. Dues and fees, that stays at \$300. So, we'll leave the \$350 in there. All right, the meals in town, is that the \$1,000 that you're removing from that event? Or was that the Christmas lights?

Selectman Guessferd: No, that's cleanups. That's for cleanups.

Chairman Dumont: Well, it says fried dough food truck.

Selectman Morin: Yeah, that he said we don't need.

Chairman Dumont: Sorry, sorry. And so, he's figuring two cleanups at \$100 apiece, So, that goes to \$200.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct.

Roy Sorenson: I just want to make sure I'm looking at your numbers. So, \$214 is \$300. \$217 is \$300.

Chairman Dumont: I didn't change that. \$230 is \$200. \$241 stays at \$50. Outside hire goes down to \$350. Office supplies, \$60. \$60. Uniform purchases, he eliminates completely.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: So, we're going to remove that \$1,000?

Chairman Dumont: From?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: From \$265 for the Christmas lights?

Chairman Dumont:

Selectman Guessferd: Correct.

Chairman Dumont: Yes.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I'm going to make a motion for that.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, I'm just trying to figure out.

Selectman Jakoby: And what I was going to say is we might want to just put that at \$450. I'm just trying to find out what his total is.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, let's.

Selectman Jakoby: Because you had \$1,300 was for Fiscal Year 26.

Chairman Dumont: Correct.

Selectman Jakoby: And just those costs may go up, so, you know.

Chairman Dumont: Then small operating, So, he left that. Small operating materials, he increased to \$350.

Selectman Guessferd: Right, he's got three things in there for that.

Selectman Jakoby: Is that what's our total?

Selectman Morin: I've got a question for you, Selectman Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah.

Selectman Morin: What do they do with the wires that they collect? Because we have a metal recycler right here in town.

Selectman Jakoby: Because there's one company in the country that actually takes all the recycled Christmas lights and processes them.

Selectman Morin: So, is it for the metal, though, for the copper and everything? Because we have them right on Dracut Road.

Selectman Jakoby: But I don't think they take Christmas lights.

Selectman Morin: Yeah, but it's copper.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, but it's covered in the rubber and the lights and all the. So, they take them and I think they probably decompose them.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, when you look at recycling companies like that, like on Dracut Road, they grade copper at different levels, bare copper, bare stranded, whether it has solder on it, whether it has casing on it. And for them, it's probably not worth it for them to process it down and get that copper out of it.

Selectman Guessferd: I would agree, yeah.

Selectman Morin: About 600 pounds might be.

Chairman Dumont: You never know, yeah. You never know.

Selectman Jakoby: They weren't shocked by that.

Selectman Guessferd: That's a pretty accurate number.

Selectman Guessferd: But I guarantee you that's probably less than 200 pounds of copper.

Selectman Morin: You can just burn it off.

Selectman Guessferd: Burn it, there you go.

Chairman Dumont: That wouldn't be too sustainable.

Selectman Guessferd: I was going to say, that would be kind of toxic, wouldn't it?

Selectman Jakoby: What did you get?

Chairman Dumont: I came up with \$1,610 for my final going by his numbers and our adjusted ones. And I'm just trying to look back.

Selectman Jakoby: That's what I got. I got the same thing.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: That was the total?

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, which is a \$310 increase from last budget.

Chairman Dumont: All right, So, I'm going to go back to the outside hire. So, it didn't exist before. This is a completely new line item.

Selectman Jakoby: Outside hire was an existing line item.

Chairman Dumont: Well, it existed, but it was always zero.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, I don't know how long. Yeah, I don't know.

Chairman Dumont: So, it's zero for every year except for this one.

Selectman Jakoby: For 25?

Chairman Dumont: 23, 24, 25, and 26.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, they didn't request it. I see what you're saying.

Chairman Dumont: For actuals and for requests.

Selectman Jakoby: So, then how are they spending it?

Chairman Dumont: I don't know.

Selectman Jakoby: Where are they spending it from?

Chairman Dumont: Let me ask you. I'm tempted to go back to zero for that. The pumpkin smash, if it's a trial thing, see what you get for turnout and make your own compost. I would imagine that the people that come out for that would probably utilize that compost. I don't know why we would pay for that third-party truck unless if I'm missing something.

Selectman Jakoby: It's like a carnival rental. It's like a game. It's like an event rental. I don't know how else to describe it.

Selectman Guessferd: It's not just a haul away the compost.

Selectman Jakoby: It's the whole event. It's like hiring a clown or hiring a magician. They hire this company to do this event.

Chairman Dumont: I can give them a sledgehammer and they can go.

Selectman Morin: Gallagher?

Chairman Dumont: For \$350, I don't see them getting this big machine. So, it has to be something.

Selectman Jakoby: Then maybe we should table this because I can give you the details of the event because it is a fall rental. And it's especially geared towards families and kids. For the fall. I don't have the details in front of me. I did not bring the details with me. I can bring you a video of the whole event and why they went with them.

Chairman Dumont: No, and selectman Jakoby, I don't fault you. All of us have quite a bit on our plates. It's up to the committees and the departments to bring that information forward. And if they don't, this is what they're subject to. So, I hate to be the brute about it, but it took a lot of time to be prepared and they weren't.

Selectman Jakoby: I'm going to have to say this one more time. The two committees I'm on were never consulted on the budgets previously to this year when I raised it to them. And I raised it to them late because I thought they were contacted. And they only have one meeting a month and their meeting happens to be at the end of the month. Benson Parks happens to be before our meeting. So, I really would not take that strung of a line. This is the first time that they've come up with a budget, that they've been asked to do this. And I think that has to be noted.

Chairman Dumont: And I would, but to your point, if you look at Benson Park right there, they have a 0% increase.

Selectman Jakoby: They did not have time. They did not bring that before their Board. I had a meeting with them stating this is what the budget's in the budget book. They were not notified or asked to come together and put a budget in here. I asked them about their budget, about the page that was put in. I met with the chair and vice chair asking for their input. And that's the input that I received because that's what I was hearing in the meetings. But they did not have time or were asked in a timely manner to submit a budget.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Well, you guys know my standpoint, So, I guess ...

Selectman Guessferd: I found it, I found the truck.

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, you did? Okay, thank you.

Selectman Guessferd: It looks like a big dump truck with a whole bunch of different stuff on it and kids throwing stuff at it, pumpkins and all kinds of stuff.

Selectman Jakoby: And I don't know if there are prizes or what. I don't know.

Selectman Guessferd: I just saw a picture of this thing.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I would want to know who gets to keep the compost.

Selectman Guessferd: Again, I'm just ...

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, no, no, I get it, and I know the details. You don't have them. But I'm just saying, only for the sheer fact when you look at it on its surface, it's a small win and a big loss, right? So, you get the win of the community event, but you lose the compost and yada, yada, unless they allow the residents to take ...

Selectman Jakoby: Well, it's not compost, it's pumpkin guts.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Oh, it goes to compost.

Selectman Jakoby: Let's just be honest. It'll take a long time for that to become compost.

Chairman Dumont: It adds up at the transfer station. It costs us there, one way or the other.

Selectman Jakoby: No, the company does this regularly.

Chairman Dumont: All right, well, we're down to \$1,610. It's \$350. I'm not going to beat a dead horse, but ...

Selectman Morin: How are they paying for it this year?

Selectman Jakoby: That's my question.

Selectman Morin: Yeah, because ...

Selectman Jakoby: It would have had to come out of somewhere in their budget.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, out of their budget somewhere.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Or donations.

Selectman Jakoby: Or donations, yeah.

Selectman Morin: I'd like to find out where that came from.

Selectman Jakoby: Yep.

Selectman Morin: Because if they could pay for this out of their other stuff, obviously they're not using all their money for their other stuff. That's my question.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Right, fair question. And it's also- Yeah. I would, and having the, and I'm just going to say this. Having the \$350 there also, gives them an opportunity to not necessarily do the punk and smash, but to have something in case they need some funding for shipping or another event that they haven't planned for 2027 fiscal year.

Chairman Dumont: My question to the Board would be, what do we envision the Sustainability Committee's job? Because we've asked, obviously, that this start at the beginning of the year, and we still don't have direction as far as their charter, at least I haven't seen anything. So, now ... Go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay, So, they were asked to do their charter by November 1st. They have a draft of their charter, which they're looking to approve Monday.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Jakoby: Which talks about their direction for it to come here. So, they are on schedule per the request of this Board.

Chairman Dumont: No, I'm not saying they're not on schedule with that. My reply to that was going to be, okay, if we're going to be the ones approving that charter, tied to this budget, how do you envision them operating? What do you envision? Is it the \$1,610? Is it more? Is it less?

Selectman Jakoby: So, I would envision around the \$1,610 or the \$1,300. I wouldn't go less than the previous year. If you want to budget at previous year until the charter comes through, and then we even have time to adjust this before then. That's my other thing, is, like, there's time. As much as we don't have a lot of time, we do have time, because it still has to go to budget and to deliberative and so, on and so, forth.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, but we hand it over to budget. It becomes theirs.

Selectman Jakoby: I realize that.

Chairman Dumont: It becomes theirs at that point.

Selectman Jakoby: But we still have a liaison to the Budget Committee.

Selectman Guessferd: One of ten.

Selectman Morin: Selectman Jakoby, you helped them write their new charter.

Selectman Jakoby: Yep.

Selectman Morin: Does this fall under the charter?

Selectman Jakoby: It does. There's a programming section. But I don't know if that's the will of the Board of Selectmen for them to do programming.

Selectman Morin: No, I understand that.

Selectman Jakoby: I just want to be clear.

Selectman Morin: I understand that.

Chairman Dumont: I'm going to make a motion to fund the Sustainability Advisory Committee the same as Fiscal Year 26. And we'll see what the Board wants to do with it. If there's a second, great. If there's not, it dies.

Selectman Morin: I'll second it.

Chairman Dumont: Seconded by Selectman Morin. So, we're going to just stick with Fiscal Year 26. Any discussion?

Selectman Jakoby: I might as well discuss. I would prefer to fund it at \$1,610. That's, I think, more reasonable based on the expectations of the committee. So, I will be voting against this motion.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. Any other discussion?

Chairman Dumont made a motion, seconded by Selectman Morin, to fund the Sustainability Advisory Committee the same as FY 2026 in the amount of \$1,300. Motion carried, 3-2. Selectmen Vurgaropulos and Jakoby opposing.

Chairman Dumont: We are done with Sustainability. We're only halfway through the list. Let's see what we can do here. Benson Park.

Benson Park

Chairman Dumont: I have no changes. I think what they're able to do on that budget is pretty outstanding.

Selectman Jakoby: So, I just want to make a comment to that. I think moving forward, you will probably see that a more robust presentation from them next year as far as what their needs are. And we are also, working with both the Benson Park Advisory Committee, the Friends of Benson, and the Town Administrator to ensure that there's better communication and donations around all of it.

Selectman Morin: I think this Board needs to come up with a policy for these committees because, as you saw tonight, the Engineer presented for Conservation. So, we have different things for different committees. So, we need to decide, are we going to do like we've done in the past, or are we going to have the committees come in and submit us a budget? That's something we can talk about after budget season. But I think it needs to be across the board one way or the other. I mean, we can't have some committees coming in and then not others.

Chairman Dumont: So, like, I guess you'd have either a staff liaison or if it was the duty of one of the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Morin: Right.

Selectman Guessferd: The bottom line is when the department heads are notified of their budget request requirements, so, the Sustainability chair should be as well. Not Sustainability, the committee chairs.

Chairman Dumont: The committee chair.

Selectman Guessferd: That's a good opportunity for them to put together a budget. That would give them the same amount of time as the department heads.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct. I think that would be good.

Roy Sorenson: The committee should develop their budget. As far as coming here, the department head can come speak to it, but there should be someone from that committee here.

Selectman Guessferd: Right. I mean, speaking about the time necessary for them to give them the time necessary to actually develop their budget. Give them the same amount of time as we give the department heads.

Selectman Jakoby: I think that would be appropriate.

Chairman Dumont: And I don't disagree with that, but, unfortunately, we are where we are today.

Selectman Jakoby: Absolutely.

Chairman Dumont: All right. So, moving on from Benson Park, we will go to the Budget Committee.

Roy Sorenson: Can we go back to Benson Park real quick?

Chairman Dumont: Yes.

Roy Sorenson: Selectman Jakoby, do you want to make a change?

Selectman Jakoby: Oh, I thought I did. Oh, I didn't do that.

Chairman Dumont: Sorry. It was officially done. I do have it written down, but, yeah, let's finalize that in a motion.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: \$300?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. Go ahead, Selectman Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropulos, to decrease Benson Park Committee line item 01-4520-5063-230-000, Meals in Town, from \$500 to \$200 and increase line item 01-4520-5063-241-000, Printing and Signage, from \$500 to \$800. Motion carried, 5-0.

Chairman Dumont: Motion carries 5-0. Thank you for catching that, Mr. Sorenson. Move on to Budget Committee. They love to slash our stuff. You guys want to cut theirs?

Budget Committee

Chairman Dumont: I'm just kidding. Hopefully everybody can take a joke. It's 10:30 at night. All right. I don't have any problems with it.

Selectman Guessferd: I'm good. All right.

Ethics Committee

Chairman Dumont: Next up, ethics. Again, I don't know what you can do with \$100 anymore.

Selectman Guessferd: One dollar.

Chairman Dumont: But I think, nonetheless, I still think it's a very important committee, So, I don't have a problem with it.

Roy Sorenson: The only suggestion I'd make here, well, disregard that. I was going to say we could take this and place it in the administrative section, but.

Chairman Dumont: I think I would leave it out only just because it's an elected committee.

Roy Sorenson: Correct.

Selectman Guessferd: And it's kind of a neutral sort of.

Chairman Dumont: Yes. Yeah, it should remain neutral by all means. Good point.

Selectman Guessferd: Okay.

Sewer Fund

Chairman Dumont: Sewer Fund and Water Fund. Let's flip over there. I don't think I had anything answered. My question is for that. Any questions, comments, changes on either one of these? I know we had.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, there was line 252 we were questioning for \$10,000.

Chairman Dumont: Was that sewer or water?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Sewer, 252. Billing collection services.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Billing.

Chairman Dumont: Yes. Yeah, So, Mr. Sorenson, you might be able to speak, but that was basically his.

Selectman Jakoby: Safety net for.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, he believed that in case if there was an issue, whether it be deed research, attorney fees, I think.

Roy Sorenson: It's just typical legal areas.

Chairman Dumont: It was Selectman Jakoby that did note, if you look back, the actual was utilized in 2023.

Selectman Jakoby: Correct.

Chairman Dumont: A little bit less than 2024, not So, much in 2025. Attorney fees I'm always weary of. They go up and they go down. It's like riding in a taxi. So, I'm fine with that unless if the Board wants to make a change to it. All right. So, next would be the water.

Water

Chairman Dumont: I don't have any changes, but I do want to. I don't know if a motion is necessary, but I want to make. I do believe that there's some waste. I don't know how much of it, So, I'm not trying to make this. And this is nobody's fault. This is just my opinion. The duplicate billing for the water bills for account holder and property holder. I think is just redundant. I think what would be appropriate is instead of sending out duplicate bills, if we're worried about when that shutoff comes due, make sure that the shutoff notice that goes out gets sent to both parties. I think during the normal billing schedule, it should just go to the account holder, the person that's responsible for the actual bill. That's just my take on that.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Page three, line 303, that's the one you're talking about?

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. Sorry, I was going off my notes on my paper, not the.

Roy Sorenson: He's talking about 272, wasn't he?

Chairman Dumont: No, that's fine. I'm just trying to get to the line.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, that's fine. We need to get some more details, actually, from the staff as well on that. Yeah, 303.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, 303. It's just a different way of doing it, and I understand it operates fine now, and maybe the answer is, well, hey, you know, Selectman Dumont, that was dumb. It only saved us \$50. I just don't know. But like I said, for me, on my end, it's just personal experience. I get a stack of water bills that I don't pay. The tenant pays them, and I throw them in the shredder, and every time I do that, I just think, wow, what a waste. I don't know how much it adds up across the town, but.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Probably significant.

Chairman Dumont: You never know. It might not be much at all, but I just wanted to raise that up because I wonder it every time. But other than that, I didn't have any problems. I think that the budget was done very well. Again, great job balancing everything out.

Selectman Guessferd: I concur.

Chairman Dumont: All right. If we don't have anything else, we'll move on to Conservation.

Conservation

Chairman Dumont: I didn't have anything for Conservation. They stuck right with their 2.5% directed by the Board. I'm not seeing anything from anybody. We'll leave that alone.

IT

Chairman Dumont: Go into IT. Did anybody have anything for IT? I did not.

Selectman Jakoby: Are we addressing out of budget?

Chairman Dumont: I apologize. I did jump over that, didn't I? Water and sewer, I don't believe, had any out of budget.

Selectman Jakoby: No, no. I meant for IT.

Chairman Dumont: Sorry. Yes. Go right ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: Can we do IT next week? I have some research I need to do before I go okay to IT. I have some major questions that I need to do research on for IT. So, I would prefer not to address that.

Selectman Jakoby: The entire budget?

Selectman Jakoby: Yes. I would prefer not to address that this evening.

Chairman Dumont: On the entire budget or the outside of budget request?

Selectman Jakoby: Well, I think if I do the research on the outside of budget request, I might have some additional questions for the inside budget request.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. Yeah, that's fine by me.

Selectman Jakoby: So, I would just ask that since it was only presented this evening, that we don't address that until next week. And it's also, 10:30.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Guessferd: How relevant is that?

Selectman Jakoby: I need a personal break.

Chairman Dumont: I'm sorry for pushing you guys, but I think you'll be happy when we get to the other meetings, hopefully. Otherwise, we've got to do it all then.

Selectman Jakoby: So, I just want IT to ...

Selectman Guessferd: We'll revisit that too.

Chairman Dumont: You know, it is what it is. All right. So, we'll revisit that, that's fine by me.

Selectman Jakoby: I would also, ask that town buildings be visited later.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. Yeah, that's fine by me.

Selectman Jakoby: And that's ...

Legal and Town Poor

Chairman Dumont: I didn't have any changes to legal or town for.

Selectman Jakoby: Town Poor.

Selectman Guessferd: I'm good with that, too.

Chairman Dumont: The only thing that I would like to raise and just Mr. Sorenson is going to look into it, but I can just like the more brought up was Oakwood. The natural gas.

Selectman Jakoby: That's part of the reason I'm going to skip that.

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah, why are we spending so, much money on gas?

Finance

Chairman Dumont: So, that brings us to finance. And I would bring up selecting Jakoby's point. I agree with the copier expense. I don't know if there's any way to try to simplify that, but that might need some research as well.

Selectman Guessferd: I'm not sure we're going to have that answer by the time we have to get the budget in, but it's something we certainly should look into.

Selectman Jakoby: Well, my point is, is if we know that there's a contract in admin for 2000 sheets, then those 2000 sheets are not going to show up in the 2027 fiscal 27 budget. So, I don't know what your contract is out at.

Roy Sorenson: Well, there's all separate contracts. We'd have to get to the details of the contract.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, I would just balance that out because I have a feeling you can take that extra expense off of there.

Roy Sorenson: I think some of it is.

Selectman Jakoby: Is that \$2,000? What was it? An extra \$2,000, Laurie?

Selectman Guessferd: Yeah. Yeah, the extra \$2,000.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, take that off.

Chairman Dumont: So, bring it back to, I think it was \$400. Let me see where the...

Laurie May: Down to \$2,400.

Selectman Jakoby: Down to \$2,400.

Laurie May: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, \$2,400. Sorry, I was just looking at the one-line item. Oh, sorry. Okay, So, we're going to bring that down to \$2,400.

Selectman Jakoby: Shall I make that motion?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I got lost. Where are we?

Chairman Dumont: You're on page four of Finance 221.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay. I went ahead too fast. Thank you.

Selectman Jakoby: I'd like to make a motion. Should I just make it?

Chairman Dumont: Yep.

[Selectman Jakoby made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropulos, to reduce the Finance Department line item 01-4150-5310-221-000, Equipment Rental, from \\$4,400 to \\$2,400. Motion carried, 5-0.](#)

Chairman Dumont: So, just discussion real quick, and I just want to make sure because I know it is getting late, but from Laurie and Mr. Sorenson, do you see any problems with that? I know that it was put in there to cover because right now you're trying to figure out where that's going to go. If that happens, is that going to cause a crucial problem?

Laurie May: I don't think it will. I see the point that there is a new copier, so, it should absorb that issue with having extra copies.

Selectman Jakoby: The delta.

Laurie May: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: I'm just not here making the copies, So, I figured I'd ask the two that are here a lot more than I am.

Selectman Jakoby: And I also, believe once you put the codes in, that will be much better. And I think that will decrease any frivolous use that we may not be aware of. That's the best word I could come up with.

Chairman Dumont: All right. No further discussion. Motion carries. That takes care of finance, unless if there was anything else from anybody.

Selectman Jakoby: We'll do the out-of-budget request later.

Chairman Dumont: Correct. That was a large one.

Selectman Jakoby: Excellent.

Insurance, Community Grants, Patriotic Purposes, other Expenses, and Hydrant Rental

Chairman Dumont: That brings with my other sheet here just down to insurance, community grants, patriotic purposes, other expenses, and hydrant rental. I can say right off the bat of all those, I had nothing.

Selectman Jakoby: I had nothing.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Me too.

Selectman Guessferd: I'm good.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Now it brings us to everybody's favorite time.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: We'll let Bob have it because he hasn't been here.

Chairman Dumont: I'm just amazed. Quite frankly, you guys could have made that motion at any point and just stopped me.

Selectman Jakoby: I almost did.

Chairman Dumont: Nobody did.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Guessferd made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropulos, to adjourn at 10:35 p.m. Motion carried, 5-0.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Lorrie Weissgarber, Executive Assistant.

Dillon Dumont, Chairman

Bob Guessferd, Vice-Chairman

Xen Vurgaropulos, Selectman

Heidi Jakoby, Selectman

Dave Morin, Selectman