

Sustainability Committee Drafts Initial Budget, Explores Grants

PAUL CONYERS
HUDSON TIMES

The Hudson Sustainability Committee met on Aug. 25 to review its first budget proposal for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

"What you see are a few of our activities, a description, what we could find for historical costs based on what we did previously, and a proposed budget for upcoming ideas," explained Committee member Christ Thatcher. "I just put this together based on what we had in our discussions."

He cited the Christmas light recycling program, with freight costs needed to ship lights to a special-

ized facility, as an example of how the Committee estimated expenses for successful programs. Sponsorships and donations were considered viable ways to offset costs, as seen with the popular pumpkin smash.

Sustainability Chair Karl Huber called the initial draft a "good roadmap."

"Some items you can't find much information for," he noted.

The Committee aimed to expand operations in Hudson with centralized composting, additional roadside cleanups, and better recycling options, all of which would incur

extra costs. Members hoped to keep those costs "minimal." It was unclear whether the final approved budget would be close to the \$4,800 requested in the draft.

"I think that every committee in town, especially advisory committees, are sensitive to budget issues," said Thatcher. "I do think that our job is to promote some of these activities in our community. The town needs to weigh the benefits with costs, but I do see incredible benefit for what we do, and even if we get half of this budget, we can still do quite a bit."

According to Select-

man Liaison Heidi Jakoby, the Hudson Board of Selectmen wanted to limit any spending increase to 2.5%. Huber indicated that last year's budget for Sustainability operations was about \$1,300.

"That's the perimeter being put on budget requests," said Jakoby. "If you want, I think you should come forward with a 2.5% budget and the overall budget to see what those would look like based on what you're proposing."

Despite the suggested cap, she stressed that the 2.5% increase was only a recommendation, and believed the Board of Select-

men and the Budget Committee would still want to hear about the benefits of a larger increase.

With limitations expected for their preferred budget, the Committee also explored grant opportunities, including one from Clean Energy NH. According to Committee member Bob Larson, Sarah Brock from Clean Energy NH was already prepared to meet with them.

"I suggested that we should give her an hour or so, obviously for questions and answers. One of the things that should be covered for the group here is Clean Energy's function and what they do," said Larson.

Larson and the Committee hoped to learn what

a Clean Energy grant might include. The focus on nonprofit grants reflected the limited opportunities available at the state and federal levels.

"Another thing that should be important is the legislative status on grants and programs," said Larson. "It's been in such a state of flux, with money being yanked from so many of these programs."

He also wanted to connect with other New Hampshire towns to identify resources that could help promote municipal sustainability.

The next meeting of the Sustainability Committee is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m. in the Buxton Meeting Room.

Hudson Town Administrator Previews Budget Book Overhaul

ALEX MALM
HUDSON TIMES

At the latest Hudson Board of Selectmen meeting, Town Administrator Roy Sorenson outlined upcoming changes to the town's annual budget presentation, aiming to make the process more transparent and easier to navigate.

Sorenson told the board that this year's budget books will "look a little bit different" than in previous years. He explained that the documents are being reformatted to better align with each department and relevant committees.

"Reformatting them, trying to work through that and get them a little bit

more in line with each department respectively - as well as the committees," Sorenson said.

Board of Selectmen Vice Chair Bob Guessferd suggested that departments include a summary sheet at the front of their budget submissions.

"Some departments do it, some don't," he said. "It's really helpful if you have a summary sheet that explains the major

changes. Otherwise, we have to fish through and figure out what's there."

Guessferd added that clearer summaries would help the board focus on key issues more efficiently.

Sorenson responded that each department will now include a cover page outlining mission statements, relevant statistics, and any out-of-budget requests. These requests

will be detailed in accompanying memos, including item descriptions, value amounts, and supporting documentation.

"If something is of high value, we're asking them to provide backup," Sorenson said, citing software packages as an example.

Guessferd agreed, saying the changes will help streamline the budget review process.

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