

Minutes for the
Budget Committee - Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen
November 13, 2025
Town of Danbury, New Hampshire

6:29 p.m. Meeting called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Frances Bliss*, Ashlynn Comeau, James Farmer**, Tracy Feinauer, Jessica Hatch, Ruby Hill, Anna Hullinger, Karen Padgett

Not Present: Lenny Ryan

No Public in Attendance

Old Business:

Reviewed minutes from November 6, 2025. Anna made a motion to accept the minutes as-is, second by Ashlynn, motion carried with an aye vote.

New Business:

Reviewed written requests from departments not present at the last meeting and partner agencies/organizations, noting the following:

- The Danbury Community Center is asking for the same amount as last year
- The George Gamble Library asked for a \$300 increase in wages and a \$25 increase in supplies. Ruby asked if the library needed to add \$600 to their budget for tech support. Jessica said they do not because they have free service through Comcast. Karen suggested the tech support should be under General Government Buildings instead of apportioned to the individual departments.
- There was discussion about cemetery uniforms purchased through the supplies line.
- The Zoning Board of Adjustments is asking for the same amount as last year
- The Trustee of Trust Funds is asking for an additional \$79 for workshops
- The Planning Board asked for \$0 in postage; the Budget Committee changed that to \$1 in case they needed to use that line item
- The Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) requested the same amount as last year
- The Kearsarge Council On Aging (COA) requested \$275 more than the last budget; their budget in 2024 and 2025 was the same
- The Community Action Program (CAP) requested the same amount as last year

- The Lakes Region Visiting Nurse Association (LRVNA) is requesting \$2,000. They had no prior year budget because they did not submit a request during the budget process.
- The Lake Sunapee Region VNA & Hospice is requesting an increase of \$116.
- MidState Health Center's request is \$500 less than last time.
- The Tapply Thompson Community Center (TTCC) is requesting an increase of \$1,622. Ruby pointed out that their name in our Quikbooks documents is still the Bristol Community Center and should be changed.

The Fire Department's requested changes were discussed.

- Tracy asked if the volunteers are paid per call instead of given a stipend, will the Town have to pay Workers' Compensation for them.
- Karen shared that volunteers cannot be paid more than 20% of what a paid employee would receive for the same position.
- Ruby said the request was two-fold: 1. Asking for an increase in the stipend, and 2. Asking to change the way the firefighters are paid. She said the second part is not under our purview.
- Ruby asked if the firefighters become employees, will that affect the chief's position, where he is elected by the members, not the townspeople nor appointed by the Board of Selectmen.
- Anna said chiefs are appointed by the Fire Commissioner.

The increased ambulance calls were also revisited.

- Jessica shared that a specific situation resulted in multiple calls this past year which required transport most of the time, significantly raising our total calls.
- Anna said the ambulance is also listed incorrectly in our Quikbooks documents; it says Newfound and should say Bristol.

Wages and salaries were discussed.

- Ruby asked why each department proposes their own raises and does their own research.
- Karen said that the request for budget proposals that goes out to each department used to say, specifically, not to include salary requests because the Selectmen would propose those. She said the budget request form no longer has that language on it.
- Ruby shared that the Social Security Administration's Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) last year was 2.5% and this year will be 2.8%. Ruby suggested COLAs be part of the Executive Department budget and raises be part of the departmental budgets. She also suggested that the Board of Selectmen or a committee conduct a comprehensive study of our wages and benefits and bring that to next year's budget process with an overall plan for both wages and benefits.

- Jessica said when Lynn England was on the Board of Selectmen, she wanted to make a structured plan for wages and benefits, but the Town doesn't have enough employees to make it worthwhile.
- Ruby and Karen both shared wage and benefit information they gathered since the last meeting; Ruby through the NH Municipal Association, and Karen through contacts she has in other towns.
- Ruby shared that she had requested the following information from the Selectmen's Office after our last meeting regarding wages and salaries per position-rate of pay on January 1, current rate of pay, and date of the last increase.
- Jessica said the administrative assistant had a lot on her plate right now, but that information would be provided.

Jessica distributed the Capital Improvement Plan

Future dates were shared, as follows:

- February 7, 2026 is the last day for the Town to hold its deliberative session
- Thursday, January 15, 2026 will be the Public Hearing on the budget, with a snow date of Friday, January 16.

The next Budget Committee meetings, on Thursdays at 6:30, are as follows:

- December 4
- December 11
- December 18 (if necessary)
- January 8

8:03 p.m. Karen made a motion to adjourn; Tracy seconded

*Frances left approximately halfway through the meeting

**James left after the first few minutes on learning that this was not a joint meeting of the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen

