



TOWN OF
NEWMARKET
NEW HAMPSHIRE

TOWN COUNCIL FY2025 BUDGET WORK SESSION

October 28, 2023 at 9:00 AM
Town Hall Council Chambers
186 Main Street
Newmarket, NH 03857

MINUTES

Approved November 15, 2023

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Conley convened the Work Session at 9:00 AM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Katanna Conley, Council Vice-chair Brain Ward, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Justin Glazebrook, Councilor Sonke Dornblut (arrived at 9:15 AM).

3. Budget Review by Department

a. Public Works Department

Town Engineer Lyndsay Butler was in attendance to answer any questions about the Public Works Department's budget.

Town Manager Fournier briefly explained the proposed increase in the DPW Budget:

- Administration line increased by 11%, mainly due to an increase in salaries.
- Roadways and Sidewalks line increased by 11%, mainly due to increases in pavement and salt.
- Streetlights decreased by 5% due to overestimating price increases in energy.

- Bridges and Guardrails increased by 140% due to adding more guardrails in town and using new, more expensive material on the guardrails installed on scenic highways that are more aesthetically pleasing.
- Buildings and Grounds decreased by 2% due to overestimating the price increases in oil.

Councilor Ward questioned the increase in town clock maintenance. Town Engineer Butler explained that it is due to specialized repairs, and the previous clock keeper retired so the repairs are now contracted out.

b. **Cemetery**

The cemetery budget increased by 3%, mainly due to an increase in salaries.

c. **Vehicle**

The vehicle budget increased by 3%, mainly due to an increase in maintenance and the price of oil.

d. **Solid Waste**

The solid waste budget increased by 3%, mainly due to contract increases with Casella and an increase in tipping fees to Waste Management. There were also increases in recycling bins, garbage bags and fees associated with household hazardous waste day.

e. **Recreation**

Recreation Director Aimee Gigandet was present to answer any questions pertaining to the recreation budget.

The recreation budget increased by 5%, mainly due to salaries.

Finance Director Bill Tappan explained that the second account description "Recreation-equip purchase" for \$5,000 should read "Arts & Tourism Commission" which he will correct.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the 9% increase in the revolving fund does not affect the tax rate. The revolving fund is comprised of fees charged by the Recreation Department for programs they offer.

f. **Police**

Lieutenant Scott Kukesh was present to answer any questions regarding the Police Department's budget.

The budget increased by 10%, mainly due to salary increases. The Department is in year two of their collective bargaining contract.

g. **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

Community Development Director Bart McDonough was present to answer any questions regarding the CIP budget.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the CIP is a planning document. Each Department Head requests funds for future capital projects each year to add to the reserve fund to build over time and used when the project or object is ready to be purchased. The Town Manager only recommends an amount the town can afford; it cannot exceed the amount in the fund balance. The fund balance is unspent money from the budget each year that cannot be used to go toward the following year's budget. The money has to go into the fund balance account. The Town Charter requires the town to have at least 5% of the assessed value in the fund balance and we currently have 7 ½%. The Town Manager decreased the amount in the CIP budget by \$32,000.00. Director McDonough is putting together the final CIP.

h. **Code Enforcement**

The \$8,000 increase is mainly due to salaries and staff development.

i. **Conservation Commission**

The \$823.00 increase is due to increase in contracted monitoring services for conservation easements.

j. **Economic Development**

Town Manager Fournier explained that he reduced this line by \$10,000; it is used for consultants and advertisement.

k. **Town Manager**

The 8% increase is mainly due to salaries. Some of the Town Manager's salary comes out of the Environmental Services budge, but the total amount shows in the Town Manager budget line.

l. **Town Council**

It was determined and agreed upon that the Town Council budget be reduced by \$8,200 in the part-time salary line because there is no longer a need to contract out for a Recording Secretary to the Town Council.

m. **Environmental Services**

The town's water and sewer systems are based on enterprise funds. The funds are supported by user fees and do not affect the property tax rate.

Environmental Services Director Sean Greig explained that there are increases in chemicals due to higher prices and a reduction in suppliers. There is a big increase in the capital reserve fund due to the forcemain break off Bay Road underneath the riverbed. The increase in money will be used to determine a plan of action for a permanent solution to repair it.

n. **Finance**

The 4% increase is mainly due to salaries that include a new part-time position.

Town Manager Fournier pointed out an error in the formula, but it doesn't affect the bottom line. Director Tappan will fix the error.

o. **HR**

There is a 19% increase mainly due to health insurance. It is estimated to increase by 25%, but it could end up being lower than that.

p. **Town Clerk/Tax Collector**

There is a 24% increase due to an increase in the number of elections in 2025, purchase of a ballot box, and a part-time position changing to full-time.

q. **Welfare**

Town Manager Fournier explained that he reduced the budget from the proposed \$59,000 down to \$39,000 based on past actuals. He said that if they needed more money he would have to find it in other budget lines because the town is obligated to pay direct assistance to those town residents that qualify to receive it.

r. **Assessing**

The \$3,500 increase is due to increases in computer software. Town Manager Fournier commented that we are due for a town-wide reevaluation next year.

s. **Legal**

Town Manager Fournier explained that the town has legal counsel on retainer.

t. **Debt Service**

The increase is due to the first payment for the New Road project.

u. **Library**

Library Trustee, Mary Mahoney was present to answer any questions regarding the library's budget.

She explained that the largest increase was due to salary increases.

Councilor Blackstone commented that he would like to see the library open on Sundays. Ms. Mahoney said that she would look into how much it would cost to staff the library on a Sunday and bring the information to the Town Manager before the next Council Meeting.

v. **IT**

The 6% increase is mainly due to computer software licensing.

w. **Channel 8 (formally channel 13)**

The \$22,000 increase is due to part-time salaries and adding a communication specialist position to write the articles for the town's social media outlets.

x. **Fire and Rescue**

The 8% increase is mainly due to increases in part-time salaries that are mostly off-set by ambulance revenue.

y. **Liability Insurance** – Increase of 8%.

z. **Emergency Management**

The Emergency Management line of \$2,250 is used for training purposes. There is no increase.

aa. **Grants**

This line is used for contributions to different Newmarket organizations including COAST bus. Town Manager Fournier pointed out that there was an error in the formula that would be fixed. The error does not affect the bottom line figure.

bb. **Social Services**

Town Manager Fournier explained that there is a \$5,000 reduction due to some agencies not applying by the deadline date. He explained that all social service agencies receive a letter and application package that must be filled out and submitted by a certain date and time.

cc. **Patriotic**

The \$2,500 budget line is used for the Memorial Day Parade.

Town Manager Fournier concluded that the Councilors agreed to reduce the budget by \$13,500 (\$8,200 from the Town Council budget by eliminating the part-time salary and \$5,000 from the Social Services line due to a reduction in submitted applications), and the possible change in the amount of the Library's budget to open on Sundays.

4. **Adjournment**

Chair Conley adjourned the Work Session at 10:59 AM without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy V. Chase
Recording Secretary