



Board of Selectmen's Meeting

Conference Room at Rindge Town Offices

Date: Wednesday, November 12th, 2025

Time: 6:00 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chairman, Bob Hamilton, Vice Chair, Tom Coneys, Selectboard Member, Larry Cleveland, Town Administrator, Max Vandervliet, Executive Secretary, Victoria Stenersen, and members of the public. Finance Director, Helene Rogers, was present from 6:01 pm to 6:45 pm.

The meeting opened at 6:01 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Bob.

Selectmen's Announcements: Bob announced the Advent Lutheran Church on US Route 202 is hosting a Christmas Fair this Saturday, November 15th, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Payroll & Accounts Payable: Bob motioned to approve the payroll and accounts payable for 11.13.2025. Seconded by Larry, it passed 2-0-0.

Citizens' Forum: Bob opened and closed the forum at 6:03 p.m. There were no comments for the citizens' forum.

New Business:

Approval of Raffle Permit Application: Tom motioned to approve the raffle permit application for the Jaffrey Parks and Recreation Department at the Annual Holiday Craft Fair on December 13th, 2025, at the Rindge Memorial School. Seconded by Larry, it passed 3-0.

1st 2026 Joint Session of the Board of Selectmen and Budget Advisory Committee

Bob opened the joint session at 6:05 pm. Max asked that everyone keep the discussion respectful and as close to being numeric-based as possible. Present from the Budget Advisory Committee were Daniel Whitney, Mark Hower, Casey Burrage, and Roberta Oeser. Tina Sbrega and James Burger were absent from the Budget Advisory Committee.

Tax Collector's Proposed 2026 Budget: From Attachment A on page 3. Tax Collector, Andrea LaVache, was present to answer questions. Roberta asked if Shana's position as the Deputy Tax Collector had changed to a stipend. Andrea answered yes, which saves the Town quite a bit of money. Dan asked what she would like to add back in that was removed in previous years. Andrea responded that there is nothing else that she needs; the only category she is asking for an increase in is wages because she did not receive a raise this past year. She is asking for a 2.5% increase. The total dollar amount for wages in 2025 is \$55,084.40, the same as in 2024. The total number requested for 2026 wages is \$56,461.76. Wages for 2025 were confirmed by Helene.

There was a discussion about default numbers being incorrect. Max did not have access to the finance folder on the server to confirm the adjusted default budget. Dan asked that when they rerun this, to highlight where edits are made to the budgets that have already been reviewed. Roberta said Max needs to find out from the DRA if the budget numbers adjusted by the Selectmen, within the default, are the numbers that are used as the working numbers. Bob asked that they confirm the Social Security Taxes and Medicare Taxes match the actual wages spent in 2025. Dan commented that when adjustments are made to the salary and wages lines, then the retirement and social security lines need to be

adjusted as well.

Ingalls Memorial Library Proposed 2026 Budget: From Attachment A on page 14. Attachment B outlines the operating expenses, and Attachment C outlines the wages. Library Director Donna Straitiff stated that she negotiated her phone contract down so she is reducing the ask for that line, and she cut the Tech Support line down. All other lines remained essentially unchanged. Tom asked if the increase in wages is for a new hire or just an increase. The default budget for 2025 is \$154,000, and there is a \$24,000 increase to the proposed budget for 2026. Donna stated that her wage increase calculation was a 2% increase for the entire department, \$178,378.03 proposed for 2026. What was adjusted to be spent on wages from the 2025 Library budget is not reflected in the spreadsheet, as previously discussed above. Donna added that she signed a new contract last year, right before the March election. Dan asked what fell off the truck. Donna responded that if she had more money, she would do more programming, but she does not feel that the library suffers without it. This is a working budget for the department, and she would not request additional funds because other departments require it more. Roberta stated that the salary and hourly lines need to be split out because they are currently all under salary.

Recreation Department Proposed 2026 Budget: From Attachment A on page 13. Recreation Director Dan Bemis stated the biggest fluctuation with his operating budget is with the vehicle maintenance line. He spent \$6,000 this year, from the \$2,000 2025 budgeted line. He is asking for \$3,500 in that line for 2026. The phone increased by \$400. He decreased mileage by \$1,000 due to the use of the old police truck for the department. Everything else is relatively marginal changes overall. There was a discussion about the need to change the phone lines to fiber. Dan B. also explained how only a small portion of his salary and the wages for the Program Coordinator are paid out of the general fund, and the majority is taken out of the recreation revolving fund. Tom asked if the revolving fund is allowed to pay retirement benefits. Roberta responded that it is part of the package for the position.

Dan Whitney asked for a report on the expenses and revenues for the revolving fund. Tom commented that he was also looking for a line-item expenditure report for the Transfer Station revolving fund. Dan W. added that if heavy lifting is involved, he is okay with waiting a year. He then asked what Dan B would add back into the budget. Dan B. responded that he would like to increase the program coordinator's wages to meet the average median salary for that position. He would also like to better compensate the other hourly employees who are paid out of the revolving fund. Bob expressed concern that he is asking for a 5.8% overall budget increase this year. He asked Dan B. to look through the various increases, including dues and subscriptions. Dan responded that most dues and subscriptions are for the national and state recreation associations, National Geographic, and the Monadnock Ledger.

There was a discussion about how the retirement contributions are apportioned, and there was no clear answer. A report for the revolving fund was mentioned again. Larry expressed concern about the 7% increase in the salary line. Tom responded that the percent increase looks high because they are comparing against the default budget and not the adjusted or actual expenditure. Bob added that Dan and Max are working on drafting an employment agreement to propose to the Board. His current contract ends on March 13th, 2026, but they would like to put the numbers into the proposed budget.

Max asked why they had inaccurate numbers from 2025 and why they were not added to BS&A. Roberta responded that he does not have access yet to the Finance Director's files. Tom commented that the default budget is published and the numbers are fixed. The Board is allowed to move funds to different lines within the overall default total. But in the end, they need to base the default numbers for 2026 on the original 2025 default numbers. Roberta added that there was flawed data entry that needs to be revised when Max gets access. Max expressed that his concern is that the Town's numbers are only in one spreadsheet and on one computer. Dan recommended that Max pick a path forward to get to the point where they have reliable data, and he believes other things will come together after that.

Planning Board Proposed 2026 Budget: From Attachment A on page 5. Al Bump, Planning Director, stated that he has been diligently trying to find someone to train under the current Planning Secretary, as she would like to retire by the end of the year. He would prefer to have someone work at the office and not remotely, which is why there is a large increase. He zeroed the contracted services from \$5,000 to make the increase more palatable, and there has not been a reason to utilize that since he started in the position. Roberta asked if the \$50,000 includes funding for the current secretary to train her replacement. Al answered yes. Roberta recommended keeping \$1 in contracted services so money could be spent in that line if needed. Tom asked if the 4 days a week are the same hours as the planning office. Al answered yes. Larry asked if his salary for 2025 was \$66,780, as that is the amended 2025 budget. Al responded that he does not know. Larry commented that his request for 2026 is \$68,292.00. Roberta commented that the amendments might have to do with the assumed 53rd week pay period for 2025 that was budgeted. Andrea responded that the 53rd week will be the first week of January. Roberta stated that there is always a carry-over from one year to the next that is split, so all the 2025 adjusted numbers may be skewed. There was a discussion about the overall increase of 23.34% in the planning budget and the amount budgeted for the two positions in the department.

Town Buildings/Cemetery/Highway Department/Street Lights/Solid Waste Proposed 2026 Budget:

The **Town Buildings** Budget is found in Attachment A on page 5. Mike Cloutier, Public Works Director, stated he will skip reviewing wages because of the inaccurate numbers. He explained that one of the biggest increases is in the electric line because the supply is going up by 20% and the distribution by 15%. The numerical increase is \$5,000, bringing the request to \$50,000. For the heat-oil line, the rate will be \$2.68, and the average gallons used has gone down to 10,000 gallons from 11,000 gallons. For the heat - propane line, the rate will be \$1.50. The telephone line was calculated out over 12 months and came to \$5,797. Mike spoke with Max about switching over the phone system to fiber and getting a contact person for it. Roberta stated that Victoria has contact information for the person at Consolidated. Victoria responded that she may have it in her email, but Craig Clark is the better person to reach out to.

Mike continued that the contracts line increased to service the generators, boilers, and heaters for the buildings, and there was an increase in Monadnock Security's service in the building. The Town is in contract with Dust to Shine for cleaning, so the Office and Cleaning supplies line went down considerably because Dust to Shine brings their own supplies. Mike added that he is requesting a 3% increase for the hourly employees. Max stated that the increase is reflected in the 2026 requested line. There was a brief discussion about the errors in wages and benefits. Mark asked about the wages cleaning line. Mike answered that it is for an employee of the Police Department who cleans their building. It was moved from the Police Department budget to the Town Buildings budget. Roberta asked for the line to be moved back to the Police Department budget. She also recommended adding a budget line for generator maintenance, so that it goes in the default. The town voted to have the generators, and maintaining them is included. Mike stated the cost is about \$1,200 per generator for six generators. Tom questioned the necessity of paying for maintenance. Roberta responded that it is for the annual maintenance of the boilers in the generators.

Dan asked the table to refer to the position instead of the person, requested they not express opinions about companies the Town is currently contracted with, and asked if they would have the budget fully prepared for next Wednesday. He suggested not having a budget session next Wednesday to ensure there is time to get all the details correct. Bob stated that he hopes the total amended budget is equal to the approved default budget total. Tom commented that he predicts that with an average spend per month, they will come in at \$9,000 under the default. By taking the median spend per month, they will come in at \$107,000 under the default. He added that he does not have the data he had last year, so it is an estimate.

The **Cemetery** Budget is found in Attachment A on page 5. Mike stated that he wants the hourly wages line for the summertime mower. This was in the budget requested for 2025, but was not in the default, so it was added to the adjusted budget. Tom stated the adjusted line was overspent and must have been charged to a different account. Bob asked about

the overtime wages. Mike stated that the line should be spent due to the cremations that occurred. Bob asked if overtime is offset by the income from cemetery burials on the weekend. Mike responded yes because of the recent adjustments made to the prices for burials. Roberta stated that it is gross budgeted, so it comes in as department income. Mike stated that the plan was to utilize the funds from perpetual care to offset the maintenance of the cemetery and reimburse the line item. Roberta stated that the problem is that it is not a revolving fund, so it needs to be gross budgeted and is offset by income from the Trustees of Trust Funds. She added that they need to get an attorney to get the funds out of the account that has about \$250,000, but the current Town council is retiring, so it will need to take place with the new council. Dan thanked the people for raising the funds for the fence at Hillside Cemetery. It looks elegant but still rustic and makes a great difference. He asked Mike to thank the employees who installed it. Bob stated that the Women's Club donated the money for the fence. Mike stated they are also requesting a plaque to be put up.

The **Highway Department** Budget is found in Attachment A on page 11. Mike stated he overspent on equipment maintenance due to a few major repairs, but is keeping that line flat. The materials line went up because the cost of sand increased by \$0.50, and salt went up by \$4.25 per ton. He tries to keep the number of tons used the same year to year, but it is not an accurate prediction. The rate for salt is \$87.25, which is from the state bid. Bob confirmed with Mike that the overall increase to the Highway budget is 1.93%. Mike also requested a 3% increase in wages for the employees. Tom stated his questions were why the health insurance and the retirement group increased, because there is about a \$50,000 increase in wages and benefits. Dan expressed that he should also add the numbers that decreased to be fair. Tom stated he is not sure of the data, and it comes back to wages that he is questioning. He is concerned that the equipment maintenance is under and that there is nothing requested for line painting. Mike stated that it is going to be taken out of the paving line. Roberta stated that Mike also did this last year, but it was not reflected in the default. Roberta asked Tom what the default numbers were. Tom stated that the default for Highway was \$850,420. Larry stated that the amended or adjusted Highway budget is \$864,510.

The **Street Lights** Budget is found in Attachment A on page 12. Mike stated this was cut by \$1,000. There is a flat rate per lamp by the kilowatt, and transmission charges are built in. All the lights have been changed to LED lights. Bob thanked Mike and Pat Martin for doing this because the budget used to be \$13,000.

The **Solid Waste** Budget is found in Attachment A on page 12. Mike stated the telephone dropped by \$100. The contract with Monadnock Disposal Service (MDS) went up \$10 a ton, and the Department of Environmental Services (DES) will have a \$3.50 surcharge per ton for household and demo to the vendor, which is MDS. It is now \$180.50 per ton for household and \$175 per ton for demolition, which includes the surcharge. DES stated this is to give municipalities more incentive to recycle. On monthly bills, he submits an itemized invoice to the State of NH, and they will reimburse the municipality for the \$3.50 difference for the household and demo. The State will not release the paperwork and system until January. Tom stated that he believes it is partially to prevent other states from trucking trash into the state.

Mike stated that the five-year average cost for both household and demo is \$130,088.24 when the \$3.50 per ton surcharge is taken out. Mike plans to spend about \$98,000 based on the tonnage this year. He has \$92,000 in the 2026 requested budget, so he will use the revolving fund for the difference. He does not expect to reach \$130,000. Mike questioned that when they do pay the disposal cost and get the \$3.50 surcharge back from the state, he recommends putting it into the revolving fund to offset the contracts line. Dan said he agrees with that, but asked if he is budgeting enough and requested an explanation and the math in writing. Roberta responded to Dan that there was a \$35,000 increase last year that did not go into the budget because they increased the sticker and punch card prices. There is another \$1.30 increase per ton on top of the \$35,000 not shown.

Bob asked if the surcharge the Town is reimbursed on goes back into the general fund. Tom expressed that they need to be careful with spending from the Transfer Station Revolving Fund. It is currently being used to pay for disposal, which he does not believe is allowed. He recommended increasing the contract line to cover the difference. Roberta responded

that the majority of the Town's activity at the Transfer Station falls under the NH RSA definition of recycling, which is why the DRA representative said the Town could use the revolving fund. They do not use nearly the percentage that goes towards recycling. The tires, glass, paper, cardboard, and metals are considered recycled according to the state's definition. Mike stated that the purpose of the revolving fund was to offset the cost of the Transfer Station. According to the DRA, it is for offsetting the costs for disposal of recycling, demo, or household waste. They can use the fund to offset the contracts for disposal. Tom asked why they do not pay the Transfer Station attendant's salary out of the fund. Roberta answered that they would have to go to a percentage for spending, and the disposal fee being charged to the Town includes taking the plastic and glass recyclables to Monadnock Disposal Services. Mark asked for the number of stickers sold. Victoria responded that the Town Clerk, Shana Eichner, has the data for that. Tom responded that Mike generates about \$55,000 a year. With the fee being raised, it will be about \$100,000.

Tom returned to his suggestion of adding more to the contracts line. Bob responded that they need to look into whether the Town can take the reimbursement and put it into the revolving fund. Roberta responded that they can deposit income generated from disposal, but they have to read the warrant article to confirm. Bob asked what the fee is called. Mike responded that the state calls it a disposal fee. Tom added that if they were selling recyclables, it could be deposited into the fund, but they are paying for disposal. Mike added that he wants to utilize the fund to offset some of the cost to the taxpayers because they are paying for it. Bob stated that it might take a warrant article just to recoup the money instead of going into the general fund. Dan added that they need to find out what they can do, but they do not have an answer right now.

Parks and Playgrounds Proposed 2026 Budget: This budget is on page 14 of Attachment A. Mike stated that this budget pays the wages for the part-time mower for the ballfields and at Wellington Park. Bob asked if anyone had any issues. Tom responded that they should eliminate this because they have not expended any of the wages from the budget. Roberta answered that it was improperly journalized. Roberta asked how much Mike spent on parks and playgrounds. Mike responded that he would have to ask Helene because the Cemetery line was overspent, and he requested that it get transferred over to Parks and Playgrounds. He believes it is about another \$1,700 or \$1,800 and is still waiting for a bill on materials as well.

Bob closed the joint session at 7:58 p.m. and thanked the Budget Advisory Committee for their input.

Any Other Official Business: No other official business.

Informational Items, Communications, & Updates: No informational items, communications, or updates.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Stenersen

Victoria Stenersen
Executive Secretary