

BUDGET HEARING– February 2, 2026

Present: Margo Connors, Richard Bielefield, Chris Ellms
Jennifer Gaudette

Guests: Larry & Judy Sawyer, Chief Mike Ho-Sing-Loy, Road Agent Doug Glover,
Kathy Jablonski, Peter Carbonneau, Brian Beaulieu, Mike Claflin, Chief Allan
Clark, Doug & Irene Amsbary. Ralph Bradley, Austin Albro, Stephanie Ingalls
Andrew Ricciardelli, Sally Field

JENNIFER GAUDETTE presented the budget line by line and taking questions.

The **Executive Budget** was underspent in 2025 as the Select Board do not take a salary and we did not use the assistant budget in full. **Elections** There will be three elections in 2026, so all costs are up including ballot clerks, supervisors and the programming of the new voting equipment. **Financial** is up slightly due to bookkeeping costs for software. Perhaps time to look at other alternatives.

Planning Board is back to regular budget with a slight increase for the secretary as expected to be busy this year. Fees do come in and cover a percentage of the line item. **Revaluation** is an unknown as we have Purvis & Associates for a couple months and then we are without an assessor. The **Insurance** line includes an increase in health and general liability and workers compensation. Currently the health insurance is a 90/10 split with the employees. The employee payback will be \$17,128. The town has two insurance buyouts that save the town money. **Legal** will stay the same and hope that we do not have a lot of Right to Know requests which cost the town as they are all reviewed by the town attorney. **Building and Grounds** last year we added a second person for 8 hours a week for 12 weeks and this year that will be 16 hours. The third year of the truck lease is a warrant article. **Cemetery-** KATHY JABLONSKI reported that the budget is \$11,000 this year and a warrant article to set up a capital reserve fund with \$5,000. **Regional Associations** includes North Country Council and Franconia Notch Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber increased their request and the board decided after conversations with the Franconia board that the increase of \$1,000 would go to Old Home Day committee.

CHIEF HO-SING-LOY noted that the **Police** budget increase of 6.7% is for salaries in hopes of keeping them in line with area departments and to help with retention. With funding this year, the department bought two storage units and with highway assistance they have an area to put the cruiser under cover and a place to store the traffic trailer and other equipment.

CHIEF CLARK spoke to the **Ambulance** line item with a 4% increase but should be expecting a larger increase next year once the current contract expires. The **Fire Department** is up 2.6%. The department will be installing several dry hydrants to aid in water supply.

Building Inspections are currently being funded by permit fees we lost our building officer Dave Wiley and pleased to announce we have hired Sugar Hill resident and long-time builder Doug Amsbary to fill that spot. **Emergency Management** is budgeting for the Emergency Operations Plan that the Sate requires every five years which we did not start in 2025.

ROAD AGENT DOUG GLOVER noted that his budget includes the increase for wages and is adjusted for buyouts of leave and overtime which is an unknown. They are plowing most days and overtime will be up.

IRENE AMSBARY, **Library** Trustee noted that the budget is less than last year.

Home Health Agencies all agency requests will be included in this line item.

Capital Expense is the fifth year of a five year note for the solar system at the highway garage.

The regular CRF fund articles were discussed the increase of \$125,000 for the non-lapsing roadwork fund will be the same as last year. This allows the highway department to make some good progress on roads. The town will return both Crane Hill and Indian Brook funds back to the Bridge CRF. In addition, the town will put \$4,032 back in the Transfer Station Capital Reserve Fund from the sale of a container.

The tax impact as voted on at the 2025 town meeting will appear on all Warrant Articles being funded through taxation.

The board was thanked for their work on the budget and work throughout the year.

With no more business before the Board, RUSTY TALBOT made a motion to adjourn, seconded by RICHARD BIELEFIELD the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM. The next regular scheduled Select Board meeting is Monday February 9, 2026, at 5:00pm. at the Crapo Building.

Respectfully submitted:

Jennifer Gaudette
Town Administrator