

Town of Haverhill
SELECTBOARD BUDGET WORKSHOP
MINUTES
January 27, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
Robert E. Clifford Memorial Building

Zoom link to the recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/iM99f5jAFVnjWOX4vDbWR8qwzdrPqkjk2F4Ca8eVINbJ45gGk_pELZk79ykvzovrm.n5PIIXTUMMkBWA7S

Passcode: sfyNBj9D

Select Board Present:

Kevin Knapp, Ron Hurlburt, Theresa Paige, and Joe Longacre. A quorum was met.

Attendees In Person:

Regis Roy, Dick Guy, Robert Michaelson, Dottie Long, Ray Martin, Emily Loomis, Gary Scruton, Matthew Bjelobrk, Jill Hill, Peter Tice, Margo Longacre, Gary Hebert, Greg Mathieson, Mike Bonanno, Vickie Wyman, Evelyn Elms, Sarah York, Adam York, Lisa Edwards, Brenda Jewett

Attendees Online:

Dorothy Beth Foldeak, Delcia Vinnacombe, Barbara Stansfield, Joanne Young, Craig Davis, Carolyn Hofmann, Christine Hebert, Alex Nuti-de Biasi (Journal Opinion)

CALL TO ORDER

J. Longacre called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

ATTENDANCE/ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA APPROVAL

J. Longacre added items to the Agenda.

MOTION #1: R. Hurlburt made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. K. Knapp seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 4-0-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION #2: K. Knapp made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 4-0-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes to approve.

NEW BUSINESS

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant

J. Longacre explained this grant was taken out in 2014 and 2019, and is up for renewal. The funds will be sent to the Fire Chief for planning and training to address hazards. Mike Bonanno explained it is a \$9,000 grant and the Town provides \$1,000. He suggested adding \$10,000 to the budget under emergency management.

MOTION #3: J. Longacre made a motion to approve signing the application for this grant. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Paige - aye, Knapp - aye, Hurlburt - Aye, Longacre - aye. The motion carried 4-0-0.

BUDGET REVIEW

Advisory Budget Committee (ABC) Chair Gary Hebert noted the challenges they faced in reviewing the 2025 budget, including receiving incomplete or no information, a lack of transparency, and department heads refusing to work with them. The ABC recommended a 10% cut to the budget and left it to the Selectboard to decide whether to follow this recommendation. If the Selectboard does not follow this recommendation, the ABC will not recommend any other amount.

G. Hebert reviewed the line items over which there was contention, including the executive line, Maintenance, IT, and the Police Department, specifically an increase in salaries. The Board discussed line items in the Police Department budget.

G. Hebert continued to review the budget. The ABC recommended that the Town be more proactive in looking at options regarding employee contributions to health insurance.

The Board noted the budget being presented is lower than the 2024 budget. G. Hebert explained the ABC decided unfunded liabilities of \$1.32 million paid last year will not be incurred this year. R. Hurlburt said the Board cannot anticipate whether similar liabilities will be encountered again this year. He asked if the ABC believed the 2024 budget was inflated, even though they recommended it. He noted that expenses are either set or have increased, so cutting 10% from the 2025 budget is unrealistic.

The Board clarified that only one department head refused to meet with the ABC, along with one who was leaving the Town's employ. The Board asked for specific recommendations as to how to cut 10% from the budget. The ABC said that due to a lack information, they decided to let the Board determine how to make those cuts. An extended discussion followed. The ABC offered to meet with the Board to share information in an effort to help the Board make the requested cuts.

A member of the public spoke in support of the Police Department salaries.

MOTION #4: T. Paige made a motion to accept what ABC Chair G. Hebert stated and the Board will review it further. R. Hurlburt seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 4-0-0.

G. Hebert offered recommendations to facilitate the budget process next year. J. Longacre noted it was a struggle to keep the Town afloat this past year. R. Hurlburt said once they have an experienced Town Administrator on staff, it should be easier to follow these recommendations. He noted the lack of appropriate tax increases in the past few years is partly responsible for the large increase this year.

The Board thanked the ABC for their work.

ROAD BLOCK GRANT MONEY

J. Longacre reviewed the details of this grant. He said the law is clear and there should be no opinions voiced on it.

MOTION #5: R. Hurlburt made a motion that block grant money, since it is not taxpayer money, from the State, any monies that are not taxpayer money that gets funneled through the Town goes to the Woodsville Precinct. There is no need of bonds, as the law does apply. Any money, as the law states, that is from the Town itself must be bonded. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

T. Paige said she was not ready to vote on this issue.

R. Hurlburt rescinded the motion and J. Longacre rescinded his second of the motion.

MOTION #6: R. Hurlburt made a motion to table this issue for further discussion next week. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 4-0-0.

SET DATES FOR SELECTBOARD WORK SESSION AND PUBLIC HEARING

The Board work session and public hearing will be held on February 4th and 5th.

TOWN REPORT

J. Longacre asked the Board to review the Selectboard section of the Town Report compiled by Chair R. O'Shana and send him any suggested changes.

NON-PUBLIC MEETING

A non-public session was held per RSA 91-A:3, II RSA 91-A:3, II (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee.

MOTION #7: R. Hurlburt made a motion to close the public meeting and enter non-public session. J. Longacre seconded the motion.

Voice Vote: The motion carried 4-0-0.

The public meeting was closed at 7:16 p.m.

The Board returned to public meeting.

ADJOURN MEETING

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Haggeli