

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
March 24, 2025**

7PM - MUNICIPAL OFFICE BUILDING - HANOVER, NH

The meeting of the Selectboard was called to order at 7p.m. by C. Callaghan, Chair.

Also present were: Joanna Whitcomb, Vice Chair, Athos Rassias, Selectboard Member, Rob Houseman, Town Manager, Jennie Chamberlain, Selectboard Member, Jarett Berke, Secretary; Ellen Bullion, Finance Director

Absent: None

1. Opening of Meeting

a. Call to Order

C. Callaghan called the meeting to order and adjusted the order of the agenda.

3. Agenda Review

Public comment will be first. Budget discussion will be moved ahead of public hearings.

5. Public Comment

a. Public may address the Board

Dave Chaffee, Etna spoke about the Bressett Trust and requested to utilize \$4500 of funds for the Memorial Day celebration. He explained the funds would cover a large tent and a band. He gave additional information about the programming planned.

Some discussion continued between R. Houseman, the Board, and K. Asmus regarding getting the funds reimbursed by the fund.

At 7:10 pm J. Berke MOVED to give consent to submit a request to Bressett Fund for up to \$4500 to support the 2025 Memorial Day Celebration as outlined by Dave Chaffee. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

Adrienne Coutermarsh, Town employee, requested the Board make it a Board priority to ensure a policy regarding the sharing and storage of sensitive employee personal information is put into place as soon as possible. She gave background information on the topic.

David Vincelette, 93 Lebanon St mentioned he received a letter from Rob Houseman in March relating to asphalt waste. He gave background and historical information about the topic. He addressed letters received from NH DES. He recapped their findings. He has been bringing this information to the board for 20 years and would like to know how the public was notified this material was going to be used on the roads and when Hanover will admit to polluting the water ways.

A. Rassias arrived at this time.

Item 7b Approval of FY26 Budget (Discussion)

E. Bullion prepared an analysis of budget options for Board consideration. The three options keep the budget in line with inflation.

R. Houseman thanked her for her work on this item in his absence. He also noted the proposed cut options show that the zero-based budget process was a successful process and that he is not an advocate for implementing the cuts at this time.

C. Callaghan noted the presence of Finance Committee members: Greg Snyder, John Dolan, and Kari Asmus.

Selectboard

March 24, 2025

E. Bullion presented the options to the Board:

Following the March 10th meeting, the Selectboard directed Town staff to develop budget scenarios that included additional use of fund balance and/or potential reductions to department budgets. The analysis focused on the General and Fire Funds, both supported by tax dollars, and calculated the resulting tax rate increase over last year's rate. The documents provided include the build-up of the scenarios, the resulting Undesignated Fund Balances and the impact on the Municipal and total tax rate.

GENERAL FUND - Four scenarios were developed for the General Fund:

- Use of \$200K Fund Balance to buy down the tax rate to stay in line with inflation - resulting in 3.8% increase
- Use of \$190K Fund Balance to pay for one-time expense of DPW Storm Water Study- resulting in 3.8% increase
- Discontinue curbside recycling, resulting in \$292,429 reduction to DPW budget and tax levy- resulting in 3.0% increase
- Utilize \$82K of proposed department budget reductions, some with operational and service impacts - resulting in 4.7% increase

The Board discussed the options.

J. Whitcomb is not in favor of option three. It is too soon to discontinue the curbside recycling program. The Sustainability Committee and DPW are actively working on this. C. Callaghan agreed this isn't the time to make that change on short notice.

Discussion ensued. J. Berke agreed, but believes the residents have a misunderstanding about how much of what they put out is recycled verses what the Town pays for.

J. Chamberlain is concerned about cutting back when we know we have many projects coming in the future and feels we should be putting money away for that rather than cut the tax rate to save tax dollars and push off funding for later.

E. Bullion provided additional information about the balances and the worksheet numbers.

Finance committee members spoke:

Greg Snyder noted the Hanover Finance Committee will provide its annual statement on the budget prior to town meeting. He made a general statement on behalf of the Committee tonight. The budget process to date has been exemplary.

Kari Asmus (as an individual) commented on the great conversation among the Board on March 10th.

She addressed the difference between using one-time monies for one-time needs verses using one-time monies for operating costs. She reviewed some of the budget guidelines.

Board discussion continued.

J. Chamberlain is in favor of the original budget proposed by staff with a 5+% increase based on a zero-based budgeting process.

J. Berke would like to see the undesignated fund balance down to 15%. Option two as presented seems to be where the Board is leaning. He is in favor of the lower tax rate. Curbside recycling should be prioritized to look at later in the year to see whether it is in the best interest of the taxpayers or not. If not, it should be eliminated.

R. Houseman gave some information about the recycling contact timeline.

E. Bullion noted the amount needed to bring the UFB to 15% is \$168,000. If they can find one-time uses for that amount of funds to be allocated, the tax rate increase would be 2.5%.

One-time uses for funding were discussed.

Selectboard

March 24, 2025

J. Whitcomb suggested and the majority of the Board agreed to the following plan:

- option 2: Use of \$190K Fund Balance to pay for one-time expense of DPW Storm Water Study, and
- use Fund Balance for \$100,000 of overlay and \$10,000 for assessing peer review as one-time uses
- these adjustments total \$300,000 which gets the tax rate increase to 3% and the fund close to 15%. (15.32)

J. Chamberlain asked some additional questions about process and budgeting and future consequences. She would prefer to fund known future expenses rather than buy-down the tax rate.

Additional reiteration of opinions continued.

Greg Snyder agreed with bringing the tax rate in line with inflation and having the UDF close to 15%. The Finance Committee would support that.

FIRE FUND

E. Bullion reviewed the blended tax rate with the changes discussed tonight and incorporating Fire fund, the increased tax rate would be 3.7%

K. Asmus noted the budget is not fully accessible on the website. Spreading out the budget meetings is an improvement, but the budgets from that first meeting are not available to the public.

R. Houseman noted there is a transfer occurring for online services and the new system will be much more user friendly.

2. Public Hearing

a. FY26 Budget

No additional public comments were given at this time.

J. Berke summarized a few emails he received on the topic.

At 8:25 pm A. Rassias MOVED to approve the FY26 Budget as amended March 25, 2025, by the Board.

J. Berke SECONDED. All in favor with J. Chamberlain opposed

Public hearing was closed.

b. South Main and West Wheelock TIF District

Public Hearing has been postponed to the April 7, 2025, Selectboard Meeting

At 8:27 pm J. Whitcomb MOVED to postpone the public hearing on the TIF to April 7, 2025.

A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

4. Announcements/Recognition

R. Houseman recognized the 5-year anniversaries of employees.

6. Business Requiring Discussion

a. Review Capital Reserve Funds Budget Based AG Architect Recommendations

The current and proposed space needs and facilities upgrades were provided in an assessment by the AG Architects. Due to the hour, the discussion was postponed.

b. South Main and West Wheelock TIF District Warrant Review

Selectboard

March 24, 2025

R. Houseman noted the TIF document has been updated to include cost estimates for South Main St. Counsel has reviewed and agrees it is appropriate and consistent with State law. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

7. Business Requiring Action

a. Recommendation to set a Public Hearing on Monday, April 7, 2025, at 7:00 pm for the Pre-Town Meeting Public Hearing including approval of the Town Meeting Warrant

Action Requested: Set a Public Hearing on Monday, Monday, April 7, 2025, for the Pre-Town Meeting Public Hearing.

At 8:33 pm C. Callaghan MOVED to Set a Public Hearing on Monday, April 7, 2025, for the Pre-Town Meeting.

J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

J. Whitcomb will not be present at that meeting.

b. Approval of FY26 Budget

E. Bullion prepared an analysis of budget options for Board consideration. The three options keep the budget in line with inflation.

Action Requested: Approval of the FY26 Budget as presented or as modified by the Selectboard.

See above.

c. Approval of March 10, 2025, Selectboard Minutes

At 8:33 pm J. Berke MOVED to approve the March 10, 2025, minutes as submitted.

A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

d. Approval of Items by Consent

i. Donations – Etna Library

- \$100.00 given by Jerry and Pat Balkom
- \$250.00 from George and Dominique Lightbody

ii. Donations – Parks and Recreation

- \$500.00 given by Margery Phillips

iii. Banner Requests s – CHaD, Prouty, The Early Care and Education Association

- 2025 CHaD HERO banner has been requested to bring awareness to the event which raises funds for Children's Hospital at Dartmouth
- 2025 Prouty banner has been requested to bring awareness to the event which raises funds to support cancer research and patient supportive services at Dartmouth Cancer Center
- "Thank an Early Educator for Helping Upper Valley Grow" banner celebrating educators of children from birth to 5 years has been requested by the Early Care and Education Association

iv. Light Pole Banner Requests – CHaD Hero and New England School for the Arts

- 2025 CHaD HERO light pole banners have been requested to bring awareness to event which raises money for Children's Hospital at Dartmouth
- New England School of the Arts is requesting light pole banners for a fundraising concert supporting scholarships and programming needs.

Action Requested: Approval of the Consent Agenda as presented.

At 8:34 pm A. Rassias MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

8. Selectboard Reports

Selectboard

March 24, 2025

- A. Rassias
 - Conservation Commission
- J. Whitcomb
 - Sustainable Hanover
- C. Callaghan
 - Finance Committee
- J. Berke
 - Downtown group
 - Parking meeting updates and ideas
- J. Chamberlain
 - Planning Board public hearing

Other Business

Discussion on proposed state legislation.

9. Adjournment

Per NH RSA 91-A:3:II A, B, D, E and L, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. The Board moved and took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session.

At 8:47pm A. Rassias MOVED to enter nonpublic session. J. Whitcomb SECONDED.

Roll call vote: Whitcomb- yes, Rassias- yes, Callaghan- yes, Chamberlain- yes, Berke- yes

The board entered non-public session at 8:47pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jarett Berke, Secretary

SUMMARY

Item 5

At 7:10 pm J. Berke MOVED to give consent to submit a request to Bressett Fund for up to \$4500 to support the 2025 Memorial Day Celebration as outlined by Dave Chaffee. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

Item 2a

At 8:25 pm A. Rassias MOVED to approve the FY26 Budget as amended March 25, 2025, by the Board. J. Berke SECONDED. All in favor with J. Chamberlain opposed

Item 2b

At 8:27 pm J. Whitcomb MOVED to postpone the public hearing on the TIF to April 7, 2025. A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

Item 7a

At 8:33 pm C. Callaghan MOVED to Set a Public Hearing on Monday, April 7, 2025, for the Pre-Town Meeting. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

Item 7c

At 8:33 pm J. Berke MOVED to approve the March 10, 2025, minutes as submitted. A. Rassias SECONDED. All in favor

Item 7d

At 8:34 pm A. Rassias MOVED to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. J. Whitcomb SECONDED. All in favor

Item 9

Per NH RSA 91-A:3:II A, B, D, E and L, the Selectboard needed to attend a non-public session. The Board moved and took a roll call vote to enter the non-public session.

At 8:47pm A. Rassias MOVED to enter nonpublic session. J. Whitcomb SECONDED.

Roll call vote: Whitcomb- yes, Rassias- yes, Callaghan- yes, Chamberlain- yes, Berke- yes

The Board entered non-public session at 8:47pm.