

2/18/26 Hinsdale Budget Committee Meeting

TOWN HALL – Community Room

Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm

Budget Committee members present: Dennis Nadeau, Sean Leary, April Anderson (School board rep), Dan Seymour, Bill Nebelski, Scott Dalton, Mike Bomba.

Excused: Alex Duso, Bill Hodgman (Selectman's rep), Ken Howe, Karen Johnson

Public present: Lori Howe (with daughter)

Nadeau called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Motion to approve the minutes of February 10th, 2026, made by Anderson.

Seconded by Seymour.

6-0-1 Motion passed.

Nadeau asked the group if they had any questions, concerns, issues to discuss before town meeting.

- Anderson followed up on the question asked at the last meeting regarding a cap to the proposed fuel trust. Legal advised that the article could be amended on the floor at town meeting to include a cap.
- Seymour asked Leary if he is still willing to discuss tax rate impact with the townspeople at the start of town meeting.
 - Leary – Yes. He also stated he would contact the town administrator and school district business manager to confirm numbers so that nobody is blindsided. The discussion should include revenue impact as well as expense impact.

Discussion took place around the unassigned funds balance for the town. It is still critically low.

- Leary noted that it will most likely be a few years to rebuild the balance to DRA recommendations. Meanwhile, there is really no money to buy down the tax rate.
 - Nebelski expressed his concern about potential rate increases.
- Seymour asked about the impact of grant funding on cost per student in the district.
 - Anderson provided information.
- Nebelski asked what would happen to the afterschool program if federal funding disappeared.
 - Anderson stated that the board is still looking at options. It may become funded with user fees. There has not been anything definite yet.
- Anderson gave the committee information on the safety grant received by the school district. It will be used for security upgrades.
- L Howe asked about valuation and tax rate impact.
 - Leary gave information on town valuation, the re-evaluation cycle, and the formula breakdown he uses to estimate impact.
- L Howe asked how Hinsdale's valuation differs from Winchester and Chesterfield.
 - Leary stated that Chesterfield has much more money with higher property values. They have a lake. Winchester is a much closer comparison to Hinsdale in terms of demographics.
 - Seymour stated that Winchester has more land than Hinsdale as well.

Discussion took place around water and sewer user fees. The budgets are included in the total town budget but there is offsetting revenue from user fees.

- Nadeau reminded the group that the water department operated in the red for decades.
 - Leary – the current rate increases are to catch up.
- L Howe asked how Hinsdale's transfer station operates vs Winchester.

- Bomba gave some information.
- Seymour stated his strong opinion that Hinsdale should not contribute funding to Cheshire EMS.
 - Several board members were in agreement.

Motion to adjourn made by Nebelski.

Seconded by Dalton.

Discussion:

- Leary took a moment to thank the board for allowing him to serve as secretary for the last few years. He is not seeking re-election at this time.
- The committee thanked Leary for his work and help on the committee.

Vote Called:

7-0-0 Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.