HUDSON, NEW HAMPSHIRE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of the September 10, 2026 Board of Selectmen Meeting

7:00 PM

Board of Selectmen Meeting Room, Town Hall

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – by Chairman Dumont the meeting of September 10, 2026 at 7:04 p.m. in the Selectmen Meeting Room at Town Hall.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Selectman Allan.

3. **ATTENDANCE**

   Board of Selectmen: Dillon Dumont, Xen Vurgaropulos, Kimberly Allan and Heidi Jakoby via remote. Bob Guessferd is excused.

   Chairman Dumont: Selectman Jakoby, could you announce yourself and who is in the room with you?

   Selectman Jakoby: I am Selectman Jakoby, and there is no one else in the room with me.

   Staff/Others: Town Administrator: Roy Sorenson; Chief Assessor: Jim Michaud; Fire Chief: Scott Tice, Business Manager: Erika LaRiviere, Library Director: Linda Pilla, Library Trustees: Mimi Guessferd and Margaret St. Onge, Town Moderator: Deb Stoddard, IT Director: Doug Bosteels, Finance Director: Laurie May, Executive Assistant: Lorrie Weissgarber.

4. **PUBLIC INPUT**

   Chairman Dumont: Next up, we will handle public input, so at this time, I will ask anybody in the audience to please come on up, state your name and address for the record, if there is anything you wish to address the Board of at this time.

   Dave Morin: Good evening, my name is Dave Morin, 29 Library Street. Before I start, I do have to say I like this chair in this room much better. Much better. It greatly disheartens me that I have to appear tonight in front of the Board on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks. 2,977 innocent people lost their lives, and as of today, an additional 5,000 to 6,000 have lost their lives due to 9-11 illness. These lives were lost at the most devastating attack on our country that we have ever witnessed. I am here to address comments made by Selectman Jakoby at the August 11 meeting, Selectman's meeting, and in a local tabloid. These comments perplexed me to say the least because at no time has she ever tried in any way to seek information on the memorial, the ceremony, or the history behind it. These comments were unwarranted, unsolicited, and total false propaganda. Selectman Jakoby's statement, and I quote, I just was very concerned last year when the connection to the Hudson, to Hudson directly, and why we have that piece that was not recognized at last year's memorial. And this year, the 25th anniversary, I think it would be something that actually I think should be done every year, that there should be recognition or some of the historical pieces as we do have the 23-foot piece of the North Tower, excuse me, the North Tower, especially for the member of our community that passed on the plane. The second comment, and it just contextualizes it and gives people an opportunity, because I think there's a lot of young people who don't know the significance of this piece being in Hudson, and I just want to make sure it's emphasized. Let me provide you a history and background on why the memorial is as it is, timely and a fitting tribute. Sorry about that, I hit one too many buttons. During the last 24 years, we never had any complaints, requests to change, or negativity towards our memorial service. Again, only praise, positivity, and a place for all to reflect, commemorate, and to pay homage to those lost. For as long as Selectman Jakoby has been a resident of Hudson, and during her term as concerns, changes, and or ideas for the town's memorial service. I am doubtful that her sudden issue with the town resident who was lost not being recognized, or the young people who do not know the significance of the piece in Hudson, or the meaning of our memorial does not stem from the September 11th tragedy, it stems from her not getting her way to speak at this year's memorial. She had plenty of time over the last year to address her concerns with the Board of Selectman. She also brought this crusade up during Old Holmes Day weekend. She only brought this in a text message and emails that she sent to the Board and Chairman and others that she wanted to speak at the ceremony, at no time did she speak that she had any concerns. As the town did for the 20-year anniversary of the attacks, a group came together and brainstormed a fitting tribute. Why didn't Selectman Jakoby do this if she had so many concerns? Instead of seeking out information on why the service is performed the way it is, or directing her concerns to the Chairman of the Board ahead of time, she waited to publicly make malicious and erroneous comments relating to the honorable tribute during a Selectman's meeting, and then again in an area tabloid. As Chairman of the 9-11 Memorial Committee and a past Selectman Chairman, it was the right of the Board of Selectman Chairman to make the decision to be the speaker at the service. Let me remind you, the Chairman not only represents the Board as a whole, but he also represents the town of Hudson. That is a designated responsibility and expectation. This determination was well within his purview and the speaking detail has been carried out by the Board Chairman for the last 24 years at the 9-11 Memorial Service. To all of you that sit on the Board of Selectmen and to the citizens of Hudson, our 9-11 service was designed to ensure that we remember the victims of that tragic day, and so it is done in a dignified and honorable way. The family has been a long part of why we have our memorial service as it is. I missed a bunch here. Sorry about that. Hit the wrong button at the wrong time. Before the dedicated memorial was built, the service was held at Library Park during the morning and school children from the area schools were brought to the park to participate. Other years, the service would be held at the Firefighters Memorial. Selectman Coutu and myself for years regularly visited the schools and completed tours at the memorial for our school children, groups, or citizens. Here, I have a book that was written about our memorial. I have completed numerous videos with HCTV on the memorial and most recently, two weeks ago, filming over an hour for the Benson's Park Centennial video. Today, when asked, I will provide a tour or information to anyone who requires it. These are just to name a few of the public education presentations provided about the memorial over the years. On September 11th tomorrow, our school district holds a moment of silence at the middle and high schools at the time the first plane struck the North Tower. Both schools will have a brief announcement and at Alvirne High School, the announcement will be completed by members of the ROTC. Students in both schools also study the 9-11 tax in their social study courses. The remembrance takes place at these grade levels as they can understand the gravity of what took place that day. As you can see, we have provided a great deal of information to all those and anyone who wanted to know about our memorial. We do this in all manners of media, documentation, and personal tours. As for memorializing the victim from Hudson, Resident David Kovalcin, we always have. What Selectman Jakoby does not know, and again could have asked, is how the Hudson family was involved in the process and about their thoughts. I have spoken with the family on numerous occasions through the years. They are very private and remember and reflect in their own way each year. Three times they have publicly visited the memorial, which was the groundbreaking, one time during construction, and the dedication. The ceremony we have today, we have used since 2012. It was developed with much consideration given to the family's wishes and a discreet ceremony was drawn up. The memorial was written so it allowed the family privacy, but it was also a fitting tribute to their husband and father. The ceremony also allows our residents and visitors alike to participate in the remembrance. The 9-11 committee was to include a granite column at the memorial with a portrait of Mr. Kovalcin with a written tribute of him, but the request from the family was not to do that and the monument was not erected. It must be remembered that every year, starting in the month of August, the Hudson family is drawn to relive September 11, 2001. They must bear the videos, the newscasts, the social media posts, and many other types of media that bring that awful day right back into their lives. Our ceremony was made so that our community didn't add to that horrible time in their lives, but give them some solace that we do remember and honor his life. And to finish up, to Selectman Jakoby, for your comments, you owe the victims, the families, and the town of Hudson an apology. Your comments, again, were uncalled for. Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Is there anyone else in the audience at this time that would like to speak? I'm seeing anyone. It's 7:20. I will close the public input.

Selectman Allan: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Dumont: Selectman Allan.

Selectman Allan: I'd like to make a motion to discuss an item that was brought up at the August 11th meeting and also during public input tonight concerning tomorrow's 9-11 memorial event. I believe that a discussion is warranted.

Chairman Dumont: All right. I would agree and I think it would be fair. That was the part of our conversation at the last meeting. Obviously, Selectman Jakoby is here and has the right to speak on that as well. So, go ahead.

Selectman Allan made a motion, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropulos, to accept and approve the original September 11th memorial ceremony scheduled as prepared by town staff with the Board Chair serving as the sole speaker on behalf of the Board of Selectman. Motion failed, 2-2.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I'll second for discussion.

Chairman Dumont: We have a motion by Selectman Allan, seconded by Selectman Vurgaropulos for discussion. Who would like to go first?

Selectman Allan: I'd love to hear what Selectman Jakoby has to say. She wasn't at the last meeting.

Chairman Dumont: Selectman Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby: Am I on?

Chairman Dumont: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay. Because my video didn't come on. I would like to say that it is very unfortunate that Mr. Morin misinterpreted what I had said and put many different phrases that were taken out of context by him. I always, I'm very aware of the privacy of the family. I have been to many of the ceremonies. I, Mr. Morin, you may not know this, but I've been here since ‘94. I read those things and how this came about and all of it. So, there's not a lot. I'm not, and I never said I was going to discuss, I never said what I was going to talk about. All I said is I wanted to do a little five minutes on the history, and that if the Board wanted to read what I had, I would be happy to do that, and no one asked me for that. And then, so that's where I'm at. I am here to honor all the hard work of this community and just put some context around why we gather at the memorial. And that's also why the five Selectmen voted five to zero to have me speak at the beginning of the ceremony just to put a short context around it for those who haven't lived it and weren't here when this all occurred. That's all I was intending on doing. I think, you know, it's important to include those words and to then allow the chairman to speak, you know, to have the overall ending part of that ceremony. And Mr. Morin, yes, the ceremony is lovely, but I have heard from other people that they would like a little more context put in it, and I've heard that. I'm sorry that they didn't go to you or the committee that I'm not sure is still in existence to talk about that. Things evolved, times changed, and this was just a small part of it. I did make this request last year as a member of the Board of Selectmen. I said on the agenda it says the Selectmen comments, and I said I would like to make some comments. And I was told generally it's the chairman, and I was like, oh, okay, well, let's see how that goes. But I still think, and I said it publicly, that I thought every Selectman should have an opportunity to speak if they so chose. So, you don't know what I was going to say. You don't know what I'm planning on saying. You know, it was just a conversation about allowing me to speak, and the select men voted to do that. So, I'm not sure why this has come up again.

Selectman Allan: Chairman Dumont, correct me if I'm wrong, but I do not believe that we took a formal vote. It was asked if everybody was okay with it. There was no formal vote taken. I didn't shake my head yes or no. I was caught off guard during that meeting. It was only brought to my attention when select men Jakoby had brought it to us. I do not believe that we took a formal vote on that night.

Chairman Dumont: My recollection of it is there was a vote taken on the proposed schedule. We did have discussion, obviously. Me and Selectmen Jakoby both had shared our concerns at that point. There were some concerns, I believe, and select men Vurgaropulos can speak to those. Select men Guessferd had made some comments, obviously. He's not here tonight. And then we had taken a vote on the motion for the proposed schedule. Either way.

Selectman Jakoby: With my addition, the schedule included me as part of that. That's what we voted on.

Chairman Dumont: Either way, the motion on the floor right now, obviously, has been made and seconded. We have the discussion. I've got to be honest, this whole thing kind of makes me feel a little bit uncomfortable, even that we're going this far into it. I would hate to see that this drives a wedge between everything. So, I would ask select men Jakoby, do you think that it would be maybe more appropriate to hold a history lesson that's televised through HCTV, or do you feel prominent that it has to be done during the 9-11 ceremony?

Selectman Jakoby: I guess I think it's unfortunate that no one asked me to. I would have been happy to supply a context and a speech. And as I said, I was looking for like a two-minute statement. So, I don't understand why this has become such a big issue. I had asked to speak last year. I had said afterwards not speaking that I plan to speak this year. You know, some people talk about traditions. There are a lot of traditions on this Board that aren't always maintained. So, it sometimes bothers me when we talk about tradition when there's nothing, you know, in policy and things like that because there are a number of traditions we did not follow this year. So, me speaking for a couple of minutes, I don't see that as a big deal the day before when I've done a lot of research and done a lot of work on my words for tomorrow.

Chairman Dumont: And out of fairness, Selectman Jakoby, I'm not saying that you haven't put that work or that effort into that. The way the Board operates obviously changes as the board changes over time. Traditions, though, this is my personal opinion, not an opinion of the Board, such as the 9-11 one, I don't think should be changed. And that was my statement from the beginning. I know I shared those thoughts with you. You shared your thoughts with me. I guess that's where I'll leave my thoughts at on the whole thing. Does anybody else have anything for discussion?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I'm just going to say obviously 9-11 affected everybody differently. Some of us were in the military active duty at the time, and a lot of us weren't. I don't think it's unreasonable to allow Selectman Jakoby to speak for a brief period of time. She's not going to go up there and teach a whole class on 9-11. That would be unreasonable. But I don't think it's unreasonable to let her speak her words that she's prepared. It's a little ridiculous to me that we are having this argument. Well, this discussion, I'll say. Sorry. I don't know. Selectman Jakoby is a New York native. She was there for the majority of her life before she moved here. I think that's important, not to say that it should be the swinging characteristic, but I think she knows a little bit more about New York than we do maybe. There's lots of different aspects. You could come at this, and where I stand is I'm going to vote yes to allow her to vote to speak because that's what we already voted upon, and I don't think it's unreasonable.

Chairman Dumont: One thing I just want to add to that to make clear is that I don't believe any member, including myself, deserves the opportunity or is just granted the opportunity. I think that it happens for a reason. It was set up this way. This wasn't a structure that any one of us picked. It was a structure that's rolled over for the past 24 years. I don't think personally where somebody comes from demands the right to be able to speak. I don't think it does. However, I am only one member of the board. Motion on the floor. There's a second. I would suggest at this point we take a vote and move on. If there's nothing further, all those in favor?

Chairman Dumont: Motion fails 2-2.

5. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Chairman Dumont: All right. With that, we will roll into our budget presentations, and I will look to the town administrator to introduce our first one, which I believe we're going to be starting with the Trustees of the Trust Fund, Section 5020.

Roy Sorenson: We will, Mr. Chair. I'm going to go through the introduction first.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Go right ahead.

Roy Sorenson: All right, so we'll draw your attention up to the screen. I'm going to kind of give you a flipbook version of what we'll be doing over the next three nights, potentially four nights, starting tonight into next week and maybe the week after. All right, let me see if I can. I was having trouble with this earlier. All right, so the proposed budget, we talked about this quite a bit. We're trying to maintain our existing municipal services. Obviously, we're going to recognize contractual obligations, benefits, I should say utilities and other unavoidable cost pressures. As an example, that's going to be a lot of utilities. Postage, believe it or not, is a cost pressure at this point. The departments did a great job. They were directed to exercise restraint over what would be just traditional discretionary or operating expenditures. And then looking at the economic outlook regionally, CPI 3.9%, will that come down by ‘28? It may, but it's probably still going to be anywhere from 2.5%, 2.6% in that area. So, we took a lot of that into consideration. This is obviously making a lot of assumptions. So, generally level funded operating budgets for controllable items. Salary and wage adjustments, this is going to be something we don't control. That's driven by your CBAs. I did ask the department heads, and if you look in the executive summary, you're going to see it. It's not necessarily an outside the budget request. I did ask them to look at their overtime lines and do what I would call an equalization because what's happened is a lot of those lines have fallen behind the new CBAs. So, they didn't attempt at that. So, there's some big numbers there. So, the board will need to weigh those. Utilities, electricity remains the big driver there, but the rest of them we're trying to just do some housekeeping within the budget and get them back to current market conditions. Contractual increases is a lot of your softwares and things of that nature we can't control each year that go up. Employee benefits, we have a major disclaimer in this budget. We do not have our benefits numbers yet from our provider, and I'll explain how we did that. And again, that's just a number that's going to have to go in once we have those numbers in October. So, the Board needs to keep that in mind. One-time requests, Board's familiar with how we do this. I put everything into the budget because I want you to see the number first. Then you can back things out as opposed to starting with a low number and putting numbers in. Again, the biggest thing here, and you'll see this, there's a lot of areas where you're just going to see a bunch of zeros when we're talking about increases, is part of the operating discipline that the department had spent quite a bit of time researching and putting together. Another thing we did this year is we set up two new sections. We have a facility section and in the administration section, which is also the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, we put legal into that. Legal is typically broken out as its own entity. We put that under administration. So those two areas have changed. Another big change within the facilities itself is the Hills Memorial Library. So that used to be under the Rogers Memorial Library. The Board's well aware that we're taking over the building itself to manage it as a municipal facility moving forward. So, we created its own budget line item for that. So basically what we did is take the money out of the Rogers budget, push it into the general fund budget, and go from there. Quick snapshot on the general fund. So last year, $41.648 million, with everything included that I talked about, with the increases, $43.555 M right now. The 8% increase attributed to just general fund benefits, that was 8% of our current portfolio. I'll walk us through that in the next slide. For a total proposal, this is just general fund, only $43.935 million. Roughly 5.5% in the end when you look at it. Again, everything is in there. Your out-of-budget requests, your equalizations, your utilities, everything. So that's your large number, and that's where we'll start. All right, so benefits. Our benefits portfolio, this is labor. Obviously, the benefits, health insurance, and all that, $31.736 of that million of our budget. It's actually a little bit north of 70% of the budget. The other 30% is operational. The benefits only, or what we pay each year for our portfolio, is roughly $5 million. That's where we added the 8% increase. You can see the impacts down there. General fund, a little bit under 380,000. SOAR fund, not as much. We don't have as many employees there. Water fund, $68,978. The reason that impact is up is because in FY28, we will be taking over the water utility. The Board is well aware of that, so we have more employees in there. Another thing we did as part of that reorganization is we shifted some of the monies of the development services, director's salary, as well as the Executive Coordinator of Development Services, to water and sewer. So, you'll see that reflected, and we'll speak to that on the nights when I think it's the next session. He'll be able to speak to that more as well. All right, so compare last year. There's the numbers for last year up there. We'll put in the new numbers, and you'll kind of see the increases. The big three, of course, is going to drive the budget. A lot of that is out-of-budget requests, equalization. Again, non-departmental, 0.0%, and you can walk right through it. Administration, you can see, is up 10.5% because legal is now in administration. Some of these other things include professional services and legal services. We'll talk about those tonight when we get into detail. I think they'll be necessary for the upcoming year, particularly as it relates to the assessed values of some properties. All right, one time out-of-budget request. We call them out-of-budget requests, and the Town Administrator just told me he put them in the budget. I guess your job is to take them out if you want. But nonetheless, you can see at the bottom the history of that and the range of that. In general, over the past six years, what the Board has approved or put in is roughly around $440,000, and a little more than that. We actually, or I gave to the Board, I said, look, let's put a sale on a $400,000 on it, and then perhaps you consider bringing it back down to $250,000. The department heads were well aware of that messaging. They themselves only brought forth $257,292 in out-of-budget requests. Therefore, I placed them all in the executive summary for you to consider, as opposed to saying, well, maybe we take some of these out, or I can't support some of these. I didn't have an issue with what they presented. I think they make sense. Slight variance, $7,300. Sewer and water fund. Sewer fund is up 56.3%. Very scary. Why is that? Because there's an extra million dollars in there related to capital improvements as part of our deal with Nashua. That number is probably going to change. We don't have the final number there yet. So, we put the largest number in there, and that will be another number that changes. We will be taking over the water fund, as I mentioned. You can see there's actually a reduction. It's at minus 1.4%, and that's with actually adding staff and labor and moving away from the contracted services line. So, that one's leveling off. The other thing with the water fund is the debt service for ‘28 will be the last year of debt service. So, at that point, we own the utility in totality, and you'll also see that reflected within the budget itself. We did notice, and we'll talk a little bit about revenues tonight, the adjustments that were made in the sewer fund to kind of stabilize that fund appear to be doing that, which is good, and we'll continue to keep an eye on that as well moving forward. Utility costs, again, a big driver. Electricity is the biggest one. You can see the biggest increase in there. In general, 9% across general fund utilities. Water and sewer, we control that, and that was just a balance in within the budget to kind of equalize that out. Heating oil has gone up. Again, this is probably a lot of housekeeping in that we just never really put the right numbers in the budget for that, so we equaled that out. The same thing with natural gas. You can see some heavy increases there. Overall, the water utility itself, the utilities within there, roughly a little bit under 7%, 7.5%. The sewer, telephone and telecom, we're obviously doing better in telephone. That's a little more scattered to break out. The IT Director did put new phones in. We're paying lesser for our service as far as that goes, but we also have multiple lines and multiple fiber providers, so generally speaking, that wasn't along the lines of too many increases worth noting or pulling out specifically. All right, items still subject to change. Health insurance is the biggest one. Nashua Wastewater, as I mentioned. We'll talk about that more next week. Tonight is your review. I would ask that the Board, as the department heads present, go after your cuts tonight. I would say let's try to get ahead of it, look at the numbers. If you want them to take action, we should probably do it tonight. We got a little bit behind last year. We went through the review, and then we came back, and I think we cost ourselves an extra week with that. So, if we can do some due diligence tonight, I'd appreciate that. Warrant articles, I'll give you a quick snapshot of that. And then the revenue update, we will cover revenue. That could change a little bit, but the Board will adopt that revenue before it goes off to the budget committee for their review. Not going to get into these tonight, but here's what we have so far for warrant articles. There may be some others in here. I was actually just talking to Linda Pilla, so there might be a library warrant article. They'll go up here as well. You can see them, and we'll give you the actual language for these and the detail by Tuesday of next week, with the intention of discussing them on Thursday. And at that point, you can make, or you can push it to the next Tuesday, whether to recommend or not recommend. You control the warrant articles exclusively, so just keep that in mind as well. That's pretty much it. So, thanks to the department heads, finance department, everyone who kind of pushed this up a month. There's been a lot of things happening with RFQs, RFPs. The auditors are in town. We've been extremely busy, so everybody has worked hard to get to this point, and they were diligent in what they did. I kind of gave them that message, and they followed it, which I greatly appreciate. This is a lean budget as far as I'm concerned. As I mentioned, you're going to see a lot of zeros in here, but I would just say multiple areas where we're trying to find two numbers that maybe have not been looked at in three or four years.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you, Mr. Sorenson. Appreciate the executive summary, and would also like to extend thanks and gratitude to staff. It's been a heavy lift, like you said, doing a lot sooner than we normally do to try to accommodate some requests by the budget committee, so thank you very much. Whenever you're ready, we'll roll right into it.

SNAP SHOT

Roy Sorenson: All right, so at the beginning of your book, you see the snapshot, and we're just following the analysis. This is your detail breakout. It comes into the details, and it gives you the overall numbers. You will see here on page five, there's the disclaimer right there. So, we didn't try to push in the increase into individual benefited positions. What we did is we took our overall benefits number from last year, and we added the $379,467. Don't forget, this budget also contains the additional four firefighters that were brought forward, and it does not consider what will be part of the fire CBA, so there will be some more changes within the labor and benefits line here. I would also express to the board that we are, as you know, looking at health insurance in general, and perhaps what could we do there to perhaps save money. I will have more information on that most likely this month. So, it's just a very dynamic issue right now. So, all it is right now is a number, and that's it. I wouldn't get into any type of debate on it other than it's there, and we leave it there. Breakout per department. Revenue, we'll get in with some finance tonight. Capital reserve funds are in here, so you can see your balances. So, if you're looking at maybe saving money by pushing some money from some of these funds to some of the requests, we can certainly review that as well. All right, we'll start off with the town offices. You can see the breakout here.

TRUSTEES OF THE TRUST FUNDS

We're going to move right into the Trustees of the Trust Fund. I'm just going to pull up the spreadsheets where you'll see your breakdown. I don't know if you'll have any issues here. You have a minus 37.6%. If you would like to proceed and move forward as is.

Chairman Dumont: I apologize. I thought I had it open, but I did not. All right, does anyone have any questions on this section? Not a whole lot going on, but.

Roy Sorenson: Page 4 of your Town Offices section.

Chairman Dumont: Speak now or forever hold your peace. Selectman Jakoby, do you have any questions? I can't see your screen.

Roy Sorenson: Selectman Jakoby, if you can hear me, just because I don't have you up on the screen.

Selectman Jakoby: Yes, I'm all set.

Roy Sorenson: Thank you.

Selectman Jakoby: I'll just say I'm all set. Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you. Selectman Allan, Selectman Vurgaropulos?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, I'm good for this one.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Easy enough.

CEMETERY TRUSTEES

Roy Sorenson: All right, Cemetery Trustees, this is scary. This is 142.6% increase. What are they doing at the cemetery? So, this is why the budget is where it is. No, it's all stonewall work, and that's the biggest line, 252. It's in your book. It's definitely warranted. I did walk the sites myself, Jay Twardowsky, as well as Dan Barthelemy. Spoke to Christina Madden as well. They also have an additional quote here. So, their request right now is for

$7,200, and there's another one here for $5,300, which they asked to also put in here and to consider. This one's actually for Sunnyside Cemetery. And you can see the break-off for the other one. Center is 3, and 4 is $4,200.

Chairman Dumont: So, Sunnyside, same style of work, but $5,300.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, it would be an add to that budget.

Chairman Dumont: I would imagine it's a significant amount. Is it the same vendor? Why such a difference in the price? Is it a lot more lineal footage?

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, this is extreme property line work on one of the stonewalls. You have more lineal feet, things of that nature. A lot of this is bulk work, meaning you have heavy set granite, things of that nature as well.

Chairman Dumont: That's what I was going to ask you. I know we have them in here, but a lot of times, you know, it just says stonewall repair, relay stone. So, are they just taking down the traditional stonewall? Are they going to be concrete, mortar?

Roy Sorenson: If they need to. A lot of, it's loose preservation stone, but if some of that needs to be done, they will. But it won't show. It'll look like the old-style farm wall versus seeing joints and things of that nature.

Chairman Dumont: And was this the only person that they reached out to supply a number for this?

Roy Sorenson: They did get a separate vendor who came in higher, so I just explained to them, why don't you give me on the lower end and we'll start there. One of them was actually much higher.

Chairman Dumont: No, and Abbott does good work. Obviously, they're local to Hudson, so I appreciate that. I just wanted to make sure we were doing our due diligence. Questions or comments from anybody? All right, so you have the out-of-budget request.

Selectman Jakoby: I have my hand raised.

Chairman Dumont: I apologize. I can't see that. Selectman Jakoby, go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: Okay. I was just waiting. So, I had walked all of these as well, and I raised some of those questions to Mr. Sorenson, Jay, and the Board of Trustees. I just want the public to know my concern is without taking some action now, these walls are continuing to deteriorate, and I encourage the public to walk the cemeteries, especially the edges and things, and just to see. They've done a lot of great work, but with all of the age and everything, and also, we all know we had a lot of rain in the past couple of years. There's been some changes there, so I really appreciate the Cemetery Trustees coming forward with this. I do realize it's an increase in an expense, but as Mr. Sorenson says, how do we get ahead of these things? Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you. My only question, and it might be more for Mr. Sorenson or Selectman Jakoby, so for each one of those that was listed, Ford, Sunnyside, and Center, is there any other wall work that's going to need to be done, or are these three quotes going to encompass everything to get those up to where they need to be?

Roy Sorenson: Well, just these sections. There's still a lot more work. DPW is helping to contribute to some of the work, as they typically do with maintenance. I've also asked them to do additional things that they can handle that is non-modular regarding costs, pretty much labor. This is the urgency behind any type of what I would call significant maintenance. There's a lot of tree work that needs to be done and things. We'll try to work through that as we go and maybe piggyback some of the tree work that might need to be done in there when DPW is doing it to try to get some better pricing. But this, as I mentioned, is the focus right now.

Chairman Dumont: So, more work, but will this, I guess, and maybe I'll rephrase, take care of just the stone walls? I get there might be other issues.

Roy Sorenson: Not in totality, but it'll take heavy burden off of what I would call stonework preservation in the cemeteries. Okay. But just the walls. We're not talking monuments or stones or anything like that. That's typical of what comes out of our operating budget.

Chairman Dumont: All right, so we're looking. So fiscal year 28 under line 252 on page 6 would be 17,5 instead of the 12,2. Is that correct?

Roy Sorenson: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: I'm not going to bother doing the percentage in my head. Okay. No, I agree. I think it's necessary, and obviously for the cemeteries, it's something that we want to make sure we take care of, so.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you. Just a general guess. I'm obviously not going to have an exact number. What would you say the percentage of the walls will be done?

Roy Sorenson: That's going to be a question for the Trustees. From my experience, cemetery preservation is in perpetuity.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, I understand. I'm asking this request, how much of the current existing walls that they're asking to be repaired would be repaired? You've walked them. I haven't walked them.

Roy Sorenson: I'm picky. I would say this is just a good start. I don't want to put something out there. I might scare the Chairman, and he's going to have something right now to move forward with, so.

Selectman Jakoby: And I just want to chime in and say I agree with Mr. Sorenson. I think this is a solid beginning, and this is the, I would say, more urgent.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. One thing that I would ask Selectman to go, because I think me and Selectman Vurgaropulos have the same concerns, is if you could get the information to see if they could maybe give us a rough percentage or a lineal foot. I would imagine that whoever put that bid would have a lineal foot, and we could kind of maybe compare that and make us feel a little better. I'm not advocating to take this out. I'm just kind of more curious from my own knowledge.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I'm in the same boat. Like, I want this to be done because I think it's very important. You know, you've got to make sure those stay pristine for the spectrum and people that have to be in there. But I just want to have that idea because obviously if it's not complete, I want to know what's going to be coming down the pipe in the next year or two.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, get a better plan for it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: All right, any other questions, comments? So, we're good with adding that in? All right.

SUPERVISORS OF THE CHECKLIST

Roy Sorenson: Next up, supervision of the checklist. Major change here. It's not major, but it's a change is the postage. As I mentioned, small budget, but with the postage increase, 10.7%. I think, again, this is nothing outside of the ordinary.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I've got to be calm throughout this whole process.

OTHER

Roy Sorenson: Town Treasurer is 0%. Benson Park Committee, 0.0%. If you want to add to these, stop me. If you want to deduct, stop me. But Budget Committee, 0%. Ethics Committee, 0%. Any questions on the last three at 0%?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Roy Sorenson: All right, we're going to jump ahead a little bit. I'm going to ask the Chief Assessor, Jim Michaud, to come up to the table. And we are going to go to Assessing, which is 5400. Oh, did I miss the library? Linda, you know what? She's going to be yelling at me because I'm sorry. She already gave me grief. She said, you haven't returned my calls. You haven't read my emails.

Linda Pilla: That's true.

Roy Sorenson: I apologize. So, Linda, first of all, congratulations on your pending retirement.

Linda Pilla: Thank you.

Roy Sorenson: And I will turn it over to you. The library is at the back of the book. So, we're going to go towards the end.

Linda Pilla: Just keep turning until you get to the very end.

Roy Sorenson: Margaret St. Onge is.

Linda Pilla: I'm not going to take it personally, Roy. I'm not.

Roy Sorenson: I can't even believe it. And I promise you, it's just old space, I guess.

Linda Pilla: Do you know, even just pulling the budget forward this little bit, it changes the dynamics and the flow of how things get done. But thank you so much for having us here tonight. Appreciate it, nice to see you all again. The library budget is a little different this year because, as Roy mentioned already, we have deducted the expenses that were regularly incurred for Hills Memorial Library. And then, of course, you turn right back around. I hate to say it, but you turn right back around and then the regular prices go up. Electricity is one that, again, jumps to my mind. The increase in labor reflects a 3% COLA increase for the library staff. They are not unionized. And so, there is no contract that protects them having any kind of pay increase. The other very large increase is, well, it's because of me retiring. I'm very sorry about this. But all these years, I've been making use of the flex payment because my husband has had very adequate coverage. And so, we have to prudently prepare for a new Library Director. So, the health insurance on that position is up. And then just within the last month, we had another staff member unexpectedly be offered a very nice position. And so, they handed in their notice and they left. So, they were a single. Again, we've had to list the job with the health insurance of the family plan. And so that's a substantial jump for us right there. The rest of the numbers on our budget, the big increase on 201 is the P&L insurance. We've been working with Town Finance and Town Administrator to come up with a number that's realistic for next year. And this is the number that Laurie May gave us as a proposed number for next year. Other numbers are pretty much flat-lined. Line 269, software maintenance contracts, includes our GMILCS, which is our consortium that includes our contract agreement price. And then everything else, I finagled around, you know, to try and find little places where we could save money on the operating side of the budget. And so, we've come out with a 1.3% down on operating side and 4.8% up on salary and benefits. And if anybody has any questions, I'd be happy to take them.

Chairman Dumont: All right, we'll go up first to Selectman Jakoby. Did you have any questions?

Roy Sorenson: Selectman Jakoby, do you have any questions?

Selectman Jakoby: No, I do not. Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: All right, Select and Vurgaropulos.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you, sir. Can you just speak to the 150% increase on 236, education reimbursement?

Linda Pilla: Yes, so that particular line item is offered to our library staff who are taking college-accredited courses, normally for a master's in library science. I did have five staff members signed up to begin their master's degrees this year. Having said that, they're starting them this year. We have no, well, we have $2,000 in the budget this year, but they will be continuing next year. And one of the staff member who handed in her notice is one of those five staff members. But typically, what we've tried to do in the past is to reimburse these students for each of the courses that they take. We work off the basis of a number, and then we divide it among the number of people who are taking courses, and then we further divide it by the number of courses that they're taking. It doesn't come up very much, but it is a small measure of the amount of work that they are doing for their own professional development, plus a measure of the value that they have to us as the library, plus to the town of Hudson for their continuing expertise and bringing up the standards that we have in our own people.

Linda Pilla: Okay. Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: So, a couple of questions, and just refresh my memory, because I remember you guys speaking about this before. Was it at last budget season, or was it at one of your meetings? I remember you talking about education.

Linda Pilla: So, it was last year, and I was remiss because I was in Ireland at my nephew's wedding. My sister had passed away, so I was representing the family. So, I missed the presentation last year, and I don't know whether it was just because of maybe a lack of preparation on our part to make sure that the people who were here presenting were comfortable with giving the information.

Susan St. Onge: Just throw me out of the bus. It's okay.

Linda Pilla: We never do that. We never would do that. It's nerve-wracking. I think you all know that.

Chairman Dumont: It's difficult. It's a lot of work, and you never know exactly what questions this Board will throw at you.

Linda Pilla: Exactly.

Chairman Dumont: One follow-up to that. So, like anything, we have education stipends figured in for all different kinds of levels of employees. So, you speak to the master's in library science and the benefits. Can you give me a couple of examples of what those benefits the Hudson taxpayer would receive from them having that?

Linda Pilla: When somebody gets a master's in library science, they become more qualified with regard to collection development. Depending on their specialty, they might become an administrator in their own right, so there's special administration courses. There's courses that speak to archives and preservation of documents, and there's just a general increase in the professionalism, understanding what the history of libraries, the value they have to their community, and just the ability to move us on and continue to keep us relevant to the community as we continue to work together.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Is there a question for the Board? Actually, I guess it's good for you because it's old news. I believe last year when this was presented, I thought we asked for the policy and how they hand out the educational benefits. Am I wrong on that?

Chairman Dumont: I believe we did, and maybe I'll turn to Margaret on that one. I honestly, with everything going on, I can't recall exactly where we ended up on that policy information, but I think the curiosity was to, and Linda, I believe Director Pilla explained a little bit, was to how that was dispersed.

Linda Pilla: So, we have an application form. First of all, we have a policy that says if you've been at the library for six months and you are a full-time employee or a qualified part-time employee, in other words, someone who's working more than 20 hours a week, you're eligible to apply for this particular funding, which is only available for college-accredited courses. And again, typically we're particularly targeting that master's in library science, although we would take other master's degrees if they were relevant to the work that the person was doing. So, the rule is this, that the staff member has to supply, has to complete an application form that notifies us of their intention in the next year. And we can't really jump a full-budget year ahead because most people don't know what they're going to be doing six months from now, never mind 13 months from now. In fact, one of the people who applied is the person who handed in her notice, and that was done earlier this summer, and here it is September, and she has moved on. And so, you do your best guess based on the information you have at the time. So, they fill in their intent, they fill in the college that they've been accepted to, and they fill in their projected number of courses that they will take fall, winter, spring, summer. So, four semesters is an option, and I don't ask them to commit to it. I just ask them to give us their best idea of what it would be so that we can prepare with the monies that we have to meet those needs as they come up. And then that's what we do. We meet the needs as they come up.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Quick follow-up? Forgive me. I'm not trying to beat you down on this. I'm just trying to understand it. I think we brought this up last year. I was hoping you could refresh my memory. What's your policy on incompletion? Do they have to pay you back?

Linda Pilla: Okay. The rule is you pay for the course, you take the course, you pass the course, you provide documentation that you have passed the course within 30 days of completing the course, and then based on the agreement that the Board of Trustees has come up with, we reimburse up to a maximum amount, which is a floating amount because we never know how many people are going to apply to do school courses and then complete. If people, just to follow-up further, you didn't ask this question, but I'll answer it anyway. If somebody leaves the employee of the library within six months, we would ask them to reimburse the library for those reimbursements that they had received. So, the intention is that they will make a commitment to us just as we're making a commitment to them.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you. That's what I was getting at, like we're putting money into you. Hopefully you guys have a pretty good reputation for retention.

Linda Pilla: We've worked very long and hard at it, I have to tell you. It's something near and dear to my heart.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: You guys are pretty good at it, so thank you.

Linda Pilla: Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: I just want to look at it from a little bit of a different angle. You have some reductions, a few thousand dollars in reductions starting with small equipment maintenance. Are these reductions relative to the Hills Memorial Library going away, or would they have been made irregardless of that?

Linda Pilla: Some of them are relevant because, for example, when you look at small equipment maintenance, the fire extinguisher systems, for example, we're not now covering the fire extinguishers at Hills, but that really is a small part of it. I went through and looked at our actuals. I always sit with FY26 actuals as I'm preparing the budget for FY28. If there is a place where we have not fully expended a line, that's where I try to make a cut if I can see it as a relevant thing to do. That's, in fact, what I've done here. I'm aware that we've cut close to the bone on some of these lines. What might happen, for example, if we have some small equipment go out this year, we might go over that thousand dollars. We would be looking at the small equipment repairs, again, a fairly small number for us. Then we're floating on that bottom line budget thing where you're just trying to do the best. Then it would roll around next year where I would look at the actuals and say, okay, maybe that line is going to have to come up a little bit more. It's always a year behind.

Chairman Dumont: I appreciate it. I think that's definitely due diligence. I'll explain. The reason why I was looking at that is because I think you could find that the difference between your education, $2,000 to $5,000, $3,000, it looks as though you've made that up in some other cuts elsewhere. Overall, I think that there's a wash there. Mr. Sorenson was saying he believes that we did receive the policy, Selectman Vuraropulos, that we had asked for last year. If, in fact, the library is getting a benefit to that education, and so is the taxpayers, I think I'd be fine with that. But I'm happy to see that it looks like it was made up elsewhere. It wasn't just added in on top of everything else. I appreciate that. Any other questions?

Roy Sorenson: To what you started with, and I missed on this one, I mull again from my presentation, we did work with property and liability insurance within the general fund to split it out what we believe to equalize it. Fortunately, to equalize it for lender, that means she pays more money. So that was my going away gift to her.

Linda Pilla: You wouldn't do it for just anybody. I recognize that.

Roy Sorenson: But you'll see in water and sewer as well, we push some that way, too, when we're based off of the square footages and things like that.

Chairman Dumont: Right. No, that's fair. And the reason why I brought up the Hills is because, obviously, we're going to be absorbing that in a different section of the budget, so I didn't want to count that. But other items where they equalized out or less than, I could justify an increase in another area. Okay.

Roy Sorenson: We're good. Thank you.

Linda Pilla: Thank you very much.

Roy Sporenson: All right. Now I'll ask the Chief Assessor. We're going to go back to the front, 5400.

Jim Michaud: Can I make a suggestion that we put me in front of legal, since I'm going to stay here for legal anyways?

Roy Sorenson: I'm definitely going to, yes.

Jim Michaud: And the moderator has had a long week, and she could be next.

Roy Sorenson: That's a good point. I like that.

Chairman Dumont: You're looking for extra steps back and forth.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: So, we're going to legal?

Chairman Dumont: No, moderator.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Oh, moderator. Okay.

Chairman Dumont: Come on up.

Selectman Jakoby: So, I just lost audio on that. What just happened? Where are we going?

MODERATOR

Roy Sorenson: We're actually going to go to the moderator.

Chairman Dumont: 5041.

Roy Sorenson: So, you're going to Town Offices, and we're going to have some work to do here because we have some numbers to adjust. So, Jim, do you have your pencil ready? I have what is the original one that we put in the book. So, if you want to walk through what you think the changes are going to be.

Deb Stoddard: Sure. First of all, thank you all for your time and attention. And for all of you that helped out with the election, I really appreciate you greatly. It was a very long, ardent day, and it's been a long, ardent quarter. You'll see there was a slight increase. The slight increase for the first one is for salary and benefits. It went from $26,062 in fiscal 27 to $26,900.

Chairman Dumont: I apologize, just because I was struggling to find it a little bit, but it's page 33 under town offices. Does anybody have it in front of them? I just want to make sure.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I'm looking at page 36. Okay.

Roy Sorenson: It starts on page 33.

Deb Stoddard: I don't have that page.

Roy Sorenson: I'm going to pull up on the screen so you can see it.

Deb Stoddard: Perfect.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. I apologize. I misstarted. I just wanted to make sure that everybody was in the right location so if they had any questions.

Deb Stoddard: All right. Thank you for clarifying.

Chairman Dumont: Continue. Thank you.

Deb Stoddard: No worries. I'll wait until it comes up. We're not there yet. Close but not quite.

Roy Sorenson: I'm going to have your cover sheet up first because I think this is where some of your changes are going to be.

Deb Stoddard: Yes.

Roy Sorenson: Can you see that okay?

Deb Stoddard: Yeah. Thank you for bringing it in a little. Okay. All right. First of all, fiscal year 28, we have three elections again. We'll have the presidential primary somewhere between end of January, beginning of February. Depending on when the state decides, we'll be first in the primary. Town election in March and then the state primary was moved from September to June, which means we'll have three elections in 2028 as well.

Selectman Jakoby: Excuse me. I apologize for interrupting.

Chairman Dumont: Go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: I don't know if you're not speaking into the mic but it's very difficult to hear you.

Deb Stoddard: Is this better?

Selectman Jakoby: Yes. Thank you.

Deb Stoddard: Okay. So sorry. Okay. I can recap that if you would like.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah. Go ahead.

Deb Stoddard: Okay. So, in 2028, there will be three elections. The first is the presidential primary in January, February timeframe of 28. March election will be the town election will be in March. And then the state primary is predominantly been in September but it's being, the state moved it up to June for 2028. So, we will have three elections in 2028 as well. The, based on the numbers for my staffing, that adjusted to, I'm going to need 94 workers for the presidential primary instead of 79. 87 in the March election and 87 in the state primary. The reason being is the presidential primary is going to have, we have two wards and two shifts per ward. I need to have at least 19 staff members for each ward of ballot clerks in order to cover, the state requires you have two representatives, a Rep and a Dem for every poll pad. We also for the primary have to have a change back table. So, I'm able to reduce the poll pad now count from four to three for the town election and the primary in order to compensate for the number. But for the presidential, I need to have all four poll pads, manned, staffed, doubly. I need to have also ballot clerks that can help with absentee ballots, because the town staff that does it currently won't be able to keep up all day. And I have four supervisors, a minimum for each shift, for each poll place. So, it's unfortunately increases my number on staffing. But it only went from $26,062 to $26,940 for total of mine. So, I was able to actually reduce the grand total there, because it's based on half shifts or half days, which is 7.5 hours instead of 15 for the total, if that makes any sense.

Roy Sorenson: All right, so this number here, $31,995.

Deb Stoddard: Is actually going to be less.

Roy Sorenson: What was that number?

Deb Stoddard: That's $26,940.

Roy Sorenson: Okay. You got that, Jim?

Deb Stoddard: That's for salary and benefits. Grand total, um.

Chairman Dumont: Real quick, on your breakdown, so obviously you gave us the total workers. The assistant moderators and assistant supervisors, that will stay the same for each election. It's the ballot clerks that's going to be adjusting.

Deb Stoddard: The assistant moderators, definitely, yes. Okay. That will be Paul Inderbitzen and one clerk at Alvirne and one assistant moderator from Memorial that assists me and they are on full shift all day. Absentee ballot clerks for the presidential will be five. And then I'll have actually ten total for Supervisors of the Checklist, assistant supervisors.

Chairman Dumont: At each election?

Deb Stoddard: At each election, yes.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Deb Stoddard: That's for the first election. The second two elections are equal. And I will only have four each supervisor ballot clerks for each ward instead of five. But I'll still have the three assistant moderators and then the additional ballot clerks for absentee on the first election.

Chairman Dumont: Do you have a copy of the paper that can be given to Mr. Sorenson? Or do you already have a copy?

Roy Sorenson: I have it, but I have to put my email in.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Deb Stoddard: I've submitted it to Representative.

Chairman Dumont: That's all right, I have it and I'm writing it down as I go. I just want to make sure I'm not mixing anything up and when we get it to the Budget Committee, I just want to make sure that everything is accurately reflected. Okay.

Roy Sorenson: The big thing is to make sure the grant total number is true.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. Yep.

Roy Sorenson: So, $26,940 would be your grant total?

Deb Stoddard: For salary and benefits.

Roy Sorenson: Not including other, which is fine?

Deb Stoddard: Correct.

Roy Sorenson: Yep. Okay.

Deb Stoddard: And I have a concern about the police overtime budget. My experience in the last two elections is that the police have not assisted in at all in the election, manning the station, manning their position, or having somebody on staff. They've done drive-bys, but I have had nobody actually on present on either ward for the election. So, I believe I have a little wiggle room on this. I have not altered my number, but I may in going forward, unless I can get the police to actually show up. It would be really -- I'm hoping that they will do it for the general election in November, and the presidential in February or March, whatever it winds up being. That's going to be highly attended and somewhat hostile, usually, for voters. And so having that police presence would be really ideal. I've been told by the police chief that they're not -- they aren't capable or equipped to handle staffing us. Go ahead.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Real quick. Thank you. I actually spoke with Chief Cayot on voting day, and he asked how everything was going. And I'd say I saw a rotation from the squads come through about four or five times, and then he showed up and I spoke with him, and he spoke to that fact that this is a relatively -- in the grand scheme of things, there's a relatively low chance of much happening. Like I said, the presidential one is going to be more volatile, and I was pretty sure we can confirm that with him, that he said that when the presidential one comes, they will be there the whole time. But we can double check with them.

Deb Stoddard: Yeah. I would appreciate that.

Selectman Allan: I had a similar conversation with him, and he said for the presidential, that shouldn't be an issue.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah.

Deb Stoddard: I just have a concern that my budget is $4,000 for people who don't show up.

Chairman Dumont: No, that's fair. I think there's a couple of things that we need to look at, and we'll discuss further, but point taken.

Deb Stoddard: Okay. The other item that changed on this is printing per ballots is going to increase for ‘28 because of the presidential. I did do like an average for, right, it's at 12. No, actually, what you have up is accurate to what I have on mine. The meals, though, will increase back up to $48.50. All right.

Roy Sorenson: So, you want to change that number?

Deb Stoddard: Yes, because I ...

Roy Sorenson: Because of the type of election?

Deb Stoddard: Well, that and the number of staffing is actually 80 total for the day and not 42.

Chairman Dumont: So, it's just zero. All right.

Deb Stoddard: The reason my equipment programming went up is because LHS notified me that they will increase their tabulating maintenance fee, and so that was taken into account.

Chairman Dumont: When we . . . there was no contract when we purchased that, or was it just the first year for maintenance?

Deb Stoddard: I believe that it was just the first year, and then its maintenance increases based on volume and equipment aging.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Roy Sorenson: It's got to be calibrated every year.

Chairman Dumont: No, I know. Yeah, I just remember when we were going through that, I couldn't remember if it was . . .

Selectman Vurgaropulos: If it was like a five-year, contractual.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, contractual amount or if it was just the first year, but okay.

Roy Sorenson: Did you get that second one, Jim?

Chairman Dumont: Any questions or comments? Do you have anything else for us?

Deb Stoddard: That was the only change on those. I did want to just give you a quick recap of Tuesday's election, if that's okay. Yeah, go ahead. Kind of save the round trip, if you will. Out of the 15,017 registered voters, 3,669 showed up to vote, which is equivalent to about 24 percent turnout, which is very disappointing, honestly. That included either new registrations, absentees, or already registered voters. Some issues we had were with electioneering staff, as Dillon had helped to intervene with. Undeclared voters had an issue where they felt that they should take one ballot each because they are undeclared and shouldn't have to designate a party. That was kind of fun and entertaining. And they were actually pretty belligerent with our staff, ballot staff, which was also very unexpected. We also had ballot clerks that signed up that never showed up, which makes our job a lot harder because then we're shuffling people around and trying to meet the needs of our voters. So that was kind of unexpected. The only equipment issue we had was when a voter wrote in a candidate and if the name had a tag, like I'll use Jakoby as an example, if the Y went into the line below it, it overvoted it. So, we had a lot of either spoiled ballots or people having to do hand counts, which increased our time at the end of the day. So, I'm anticipating to do a PSA closer to November to make sure that this doesn't happen in the November election because, well, quite frankly, I got home at 3:30 a.m. in the morning and it could have been a lot easier. Otherwise, the day went really well. We were actually done manning all the ballot counting and getting ready to do the tallying at about midnight. So that was a really big change for us. So otherwise, it turned out to be a very good day.

Chairman Dumont: On your end, do you think, because I'm sure the PSA will help, but ultimately I think people will be reluctant to change their handwriting. Is there anything that can be done on your end with maybe, and I know it's kind of regulated by the state too, but on the ballot itself maybe increasing the amount of room there or is there anything that can be changed on the voting machines?

Deb Stoddard: It will depend on the size of the ballot and how many candidates are on it because they can get very long. That's an option. Also, I could post signage that please print in block letters or something like that. That might help. Otherwise, people are going to be people, right? Well, I didn't overvote. Well, yeah, you did. So that's frustrating. We appeased the voters at least at Ward 1 when I was doing it. I appeased the voters as much as possible and said, you know, you don't have to go redo your ballot. We can hand count it for you. And that seemed to smooth some feathers. They didn't have to start all over again. Some were adamant they had to do it, which is fine. We did use the AV equipment at both locations. That turned out no problem at all, which was nice to have that feature for all of our blind and hard of visual impaired people. So overall, no, it was a very well-attended event for people that showed up.

Chairman Dumont: All right. And I apologize one more time. How many total voters did you have out?

Deb Stoddard: We had 3,669.

Chairman Dumont: Fantastic. Any questions from anybody? Selectman Jakoby.

Roy Sorenson: Selectman Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby: I am all set. Thank you very much. That was very good.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Roy Sorenson: Thank you.

ASSESSING

Roy Sorenson: All right. Now, if he's truly a team player, we'll see if he lets Fire go beforehand.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I think he should hang out all the way to IT.

Roy Sorenson: All right. Now we'll call up the Chief Assessor. So, we'll go to assessing, which is 5400, a little bit past the moderator. And then I'm going to ask Jim to stick around. I do have one item in legal to look at that he's going to cover or assist me with as well.

Jim Michaud: Good evening, Board members and the public. You will see in the assessing budget on page that the assessing budget is fairly flat, right? So, except for our out-of-the-budget request on 5410-252, our non-operating budget is a 0% increase. The salary and benefits, that's about 4%. And, you know, this is a budget that's going to get us from next July through the following June, so it puts us through the reevaluation year of next year. But we don't have anything extra in our budget for that, because we've already covered that under the capital reserve account. And I'm going to stop before I go out of the budget to see if there's any questions on the main budget. So, assuming no questions, as the Board knows, for this year that line was cut by $32,500, and now I'm asking the Board to restore that same amount of $32,500. So that would take it from $75,000, which is current, up to $107,500. And I've included an outside-the-budget request form relative to that. And, you know, we had appeals this year from BAE, Life is Good, former Onsemi facility, 55 Exec Drive, Bluebird Storage, and others as well. That's about $129 million in assessed value. That represents about $2.2 million in taxes. My opinion is a risk-avoidance strategy tells me we need to have the funds available in case we end up going to trial on appeals like these, especially when we have so little left over at the end of the fiscal year in terms of the entire municipal budget. Additional item to consider is that in the $75,000 that we currently have, more than one-third of it is going to an annual contract for our public utility who also values the telecommunications and is also going to contract for the Target facility annually. So, we're not having a whole lot left over after that. And easily one case could be $7,500 or more in appraisal costs and depositions. We've been fortunate. We haven't had any serious cases outside of public utility in quite a few years. How long is that going to continue? I don't know. If there's any concern that maybe it shouldn't be in 5410-252, maybe it should be under the Town Administrator, under the legal department's budget. As long as we find a place where this money can reside in case we are going to go to court on these, that would be my risk-avoidance strategy. We can certainly not add it in. And, you know, everything's a risk, right? Everything's a balanced risk. But I'm just, you know, I'm looking at the reevaluation coming up and we're going to have elevated appeals coming out of that. So that's my basic justification for the outside-the-budget request. And that's all I have as far as my main budget.

Chairman Dumont: All right, questions or comments from anybody? I know the legal fees was a talking point last year, among many other things. I do have one question, but it might be the first. The service recognition for $2,250. What exactly is that? I'm sorry, the service recognition for $2,250.

Jim Michaud: So that is part of the- 5410-220. That is part of the salary discussion, I believe, that the Board had in regards to my position.

Chairman Dumont: Yep.

Jim Michaud: That is a new line.

Roy Sorenson: Are you in salary benefits?

Chairman Dumont: Yes.

Roy Sorenson: All right, let me just take a look at that.

Chairman Dumont: No, I believe he's correct, but I just wanted to make sure that I was understood, that that's what it was.

Roy Sorenson: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. That is correct. All right. So, there's no question on his budget. How does the Board feel about legal? And if this is something that you want to add in, do you believe it should live here or where Mr. Sorenson has legal fees for under our office?

Roy Sorenson: There is a line, do you want me to jump to that?

Chairman Dumont: Go ahead.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yes, I don't think it makes a difference, but I do like the idea of having all of our legals, no matter where they are, if they work for the town, kind of in one thing. That's just my opinion. You kind of see it all right there, but I think it works both ways.

Selectman Jakoby: I would agree with Selectman Vurgaropulos that I like the idea of putting it in one place so that we can monitor overall legal fees. I think one of the things that Mr. Sorenson had said many times was, like, how can we look at the bigger picture of this area, you know, in different ways? I apologize for interrupting. Sorry.

Chairman Dumont: No, that's perfectly fine. One thing I do want to add to that, and I don't necessarily disagree. It would be nice to see one legal number. However, being devil's advocate a little bit, each department has their own professional services line, and it might get lost in there exactly, you know, how that's getting spent. You might have a closer, detailed look if it is department by department. So, six in one hand, half a dozen in the other for me, but I tend to think that I think I'm leaning towards the more detailed look. That's kind of where I'm at right now. The $32,000, if we weren't in a re-evaluation year, I'd probably feel differently, but I do think that erring on the side of caution as we're going through that, I could see more abatements being filed, obviously. We'll be bringing up the assessment ratio back up to 100. There will be some significant changes on that end, and with surprises, I would imagine, comes more abatements.

Roy Sorenson: All right. So, you're okay with that line at 75 there? You want to …

Chairman Dumont: What are you …

Roy Sorenson: I'm on legal now. That's what I'm looking at, because there's also going to add here – Jimmy, you want to just explain that similar to the value defense again? This is under legal.

Jim Michaud: Okay. So, we'll leave that $32,500 over to the side for a minute. Mm-hmm.

And I did ask the Town Administrator to increase $5,200 to 78. I'm not sure what page that is, page 58. And that is because we have an Eversource court case on transmission value. It's about $81 million in value. We have one year that's already at Superior Court. That's for 2024. We're going to end up with another year there for 2025, and they're likely going to appeal our 26th number as well. So, we'll have about three years there. And unlike the distribution utility case, when we had 30-plus communities in our transmission case with our valuation lawyers at Donahue, Tucker, Cindella, they only have five clients that they expect to be splitting the economies of scale on this case. So before, you know, we'd get a bill for $32,000. Our share was like $327. Now we're going to be looking at really elevated costs to defend this case. And I'm sure Eversource also knows that, and it might be a little bit of a squeeze put on to see how much communities are willing to pay to defend this in court. It is important for us to defend the value and defend the approach. If there was a reasonable way to settle these things, we would have already settled it. The courts will still demand that we engage in some settlement. Eversource traditionally has not given great settlement terms, and I don't expect that to change. So, we're looking at probably $50,000 or so in order to our costs to help defend this case. We expect it to occur in the fiscal year that we're discussing now, and I've confirmed that with Chris Bolt, with Donahue, Tucker, Cindella. So, we don't get these all the time, but when we get them, it is important, I think, for us to stand up and defend on these. And we may not have all five clients sharing this, right? They probably have about 17 communities out there, but only five are under the umbrella of Donahue, Tucker, Cindella. So that's the reason why you see this significant increase in line 278 from $16,000 to 75. About 50 of that is what assessing is recommending. So those are two different things, right? 252 assessing, 278 legal. Where the assessing money ends up is a question, and where the value defense ends up is a question.

Chairman Dumont: What are your thoughts on it? Because to me, it seems a little weird to have the two separated.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, you can put that assessing line here, but they're separated here, right? Because, as you mentioned, they're two separate things.

Chairman Dumont: Well, would it be better to have that value defense that he's talking about under the assessing department with his professional services?

Roy Sorenson: This one here?

Chairman Dumont; Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: You could go either way. I mean, I think they should be together, but preferably, I mean, most of the time, he'll review them anyways, and then I ultimately sign off on them, but.

Chairman Dumont: Only an idea. Where do you think would be the cleaner way?

Roy Sorenson: What do you recommend after your 30-plus years of service to this town? This could be a big moment for you, Jim.

Jim Michaud: Sure. I think that the elected official point of view would be that because of the legal aspect of this, that it would probably be better off under legal.

Roy Sorenson: All right. So, we can, I guess we're fine with the two amounts. Is there discussion there?

Chairman Dumont: It seemed like there was a consensus. Everyone? Oh, Heidi has her hand up. Go ahead Selectman Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, I just, so I think, you know, I think this makes a lot of sense, and I think we have to make sure that, you know, we have contingencies. There's some predictability here that I appreciate Jim bringing forward. To the point of whether everything should be in one place in legal or across the board, I keep thinking and hoping that, you know, in some ways it doesn't matter where it is because with new software we'll be able to cross-reference all the legal into a report, I'm hoping. Right, Mr. Sorenson?

Roy Sorenson: Yes.

Selectman Jakoby: And all of the professional services into a report. So, where it works for the town, the new software, we're hoping, will be able to let us pull that information out, to Chairman Dumont's point, keeping the detail but being able to grab those numbers differently. We still have a couple of years doing it this way.

Roy Sorenson: Sorry, go ahead, Laurie.

Laurie May: Just one question. In the legal that we're discussing from assessing, are they actually lawyers?

Jim Michaud: Donahue, Tucker, Cindella is a law firm, but George E. Sansoucy would be our evaluation appraiser, and they are not lawyers, so they're certified appraisers.

Laurie May: So, my thought with that is reconciliation on the 1099s. Lawyers get a specific 1099. When you're trying to reconcile that line to the 1099s, it wouldn't match because there's something else in legal.

Jim Michaud: But also I think Sansoucy also receives a 1099.

Laurie May: Correct, but a different type of 1099.

Chairman Dumont: For that portion of the, what does that make up for that $32,000? How does that split out?

Jim Michaud: So, we would be having a court-ready appraisal done up. We would have deposition costs. We would have court preparation costs. Those are all, if I understand your question, those are all under the appraisal end.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah.

Jim Michaud: And we're paying, too, right? Paying the lawyer, we're paying the appraiser.

Chairman Dumont: Right. I didn't know if you had a figured number, if you were going to say, okay, $16,000 is what you're figuring on one end and $16,000 for the other, or if you're just kind of budgeting the $32,000 for overall costs.

Jim Michaud: Right. So, I'm looking at $50,000 for Donny Tucker Cindella, and I'm looking probably in that $20,000 to $25,000 range or so for the appraiser. I'm also trying to allocate that it's not the only property we have in town that could be appealed. The only significant property in town that would be appealed.

Roy Sorenson: I can work through the details of where these may go as long as you're okay with the value of each, and we can bring this back at the next meeting just for a quick review again.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, I think that would be appropriate, and quite frankly, even an email I think would be more than fine just to say this is where we ended up putting them. But it's up to you if you want to do it in the meeting format.

Roy Sorenson: We can redo the pages. It doesn't really matter.

Chairman Dumont: But to your point, I think it seems as though the consensus is everyone's okay with the numbers. All right. Any other questions or comments? Anything else for us?

Jim Michaud: Am I correct that warrant articles have a different night?

Roy Sorenson: Yes, different night. I did include the ones you gave me. So, yeah, you're good there. The only thing is, I mean, there's the IT under assessing as well. Most of those questions might go to Doug, though, if there's any, or any department for that matter.

Jim Michaud: I'd like to think I have a fairly good explanation of the increases there.

Chairman Dumont: Do you have increases there?

Jim Michaud: I do.

Chairman Dumont: You have the maintenance.

Jim Michaud: Our contract for our software, and also for the web hosting of the information. It's contractual. I already know the numbers coming in for January 1, 2027. I don't know what January 1, 2028 is.

Roy Sorenson: It's a good example, actually, so that's good. It's all contractual.

Chairman Dumont: I'm good. Everybody else good? All right. Thank you, Mr. Michaud.

Roy Sorenson: Thank you.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you, sir.

Chairman Dumont: All right.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Roy Sorenson: All right. We are going to jump into, let's go back to BOS 5100. BOS 5100, Board of Selectmen. A little bit of change here. We talked a little bit about it's going to be more towards the front of your book. All right. So, we will jump to page four. You kind of see some totals there. All we did was equalize out association dues fees. You can see that, that's 10% there. Equipment rental, that's just a copy that we got. It wasn't applicable in 27, that's when we received it, that's the actual cost. So that's why you see that there on 221. We're just reflecting that now. Printings down. Paper, I should have mentioned this. As you saw, you might have seen the paper line in assessing. It was zeroed out, and most of the town hall departments will be zeroed out. We'll be purchasing most of the paper through the administration office for town hall, less the development services area. Any questions? Printing, we dropped by $1,000. I think we're saving money on how we minimize the town report we did last year. We'll continue to do that to just keep in there what we need. We'll fine tune that a little bit as well.

Chairman Dumont: Real quick back on paper, not that big, but just for my own clarification, is what was added in here an equal amount that was deducted from the other departments? Did you have any increase at all?

Roy Sorenson: No. It might be a minor increase, but not significantly so. I don't have the numbers. I can get them for you.

Chairman Dumont: I'll work through it. I was just curious. Selectman Allan, did I see your hand up?

Selectman Allan: No.

Chairman Dumont: Okay, sorry. I thought I saw something out of the corner of my eye. Selectman Jakoby, did you have anything on that?

Selectman Jakoby: No. I am all set. Looks good.

LEGAL

Roy Sorenson: All right. Back to legal real quick. I basically kept our legal fees in place. We've been doing pretty good there. Labor issues, collective bargaining, we do have a contract coming up next year. It'll be supervisor's group. Our wages went up a little bit in this area, so I kind of moved those up a little bit and the chief assessor just spoke to you about value defense.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Moving on.

WELFARE

Roy Sorenson: Welfare, zero percent, same as last year.

Chairman Dumont: Yep.

IT

Roy Sorenson: And then just IT, minimal increase there just to match the cost of doing business, software subscriptions, things of that nature.

Chairman Dumont: Got me excited. First it says minus 100 percent.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, you know what, because that's wrong actually. I've got to fix that page. Thank you. Yeah, we didn't do our formulas there, so we've got to fix them.

Chairman Dumont: That's all right.

Roy Sorenson: Those aren't true. Good trick though. I like that.

Chairman Dumont: Still minor changes.

FACILITIES

Roy Sorenson: Yeah. Next section is the new sections, facilities. So, there's three facilities, and this is all dynamic as well. We have Oakwood in here, we have Town Hall, and we have the Hills Memorial Library. So, Oakwood, we just equalized again, and we're still playing catch-up with some of the utilities here. You can look at your actuals, you'll see it. Now, some of this may not even be needed, depending on what happens with the food pantry. Nonetheless, we still have the budget for it because it's still our building and we're still utilizing it. But you can see some of these increases are based off of actuals, and that's all we did there was try to just get them back up where they should be.

Chairman Dumont: Geez, we don't get a break on water and sewer?

Roy Sorenson: Huh?

Chairman Dumont: We don't get a break on water and sewer?

TOWN HALL

Roy Sorenson: No, no. I think we might, right? All right. Everyone's good to be able to go to Town Hall?

Chairman Dumont: Mm-hmm.

Roy Sorenson: All right, so Town Hall does have an out-of-budget request. And so, what you'll see is the utilities are the major changes. The next biggest one is line 252, which is Professional Services, and this is for card readers for this building, which means you'll be given a fob or a card, and after hours the building locks automatically. Provided you have your card reader with you, you'll hit the card reader. It lets you into the building. It's logging who's coming and going, as well as it shuts the doors automatically. Right now, everything's just keyed. It's all by key. We'll have some folks in finance working late, and sometimes that door doesn't get locked. So, 4:30 p.m., that door's still open, 5 o'clock, they're down in the basement. People can walk in and out and things of that nature. We've also had other times where we've had budget committee members waiting for a door to be opened because someone's not here yet, and they're standing out there, and they're calling. I've even had our administrative assistant, Eve, come run. She lives right around the corner. People calling her to come down to let them in the building. It just makes sense. PD has this right now. DPW has it.

Chairman Dumont: This also addresses some concerns that was in our audit, correct?

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, 100%, yeah. So, it's just this building here. There's a quote in your packet for that as well.

Chairman Dumont: So, in the building maintenance section, we have the annual chair lift. It does not work correctly.

Roy Sorenson: The one on the planning board side still has to get inspected.

Chairman Dumont: So that's just for the inspection of that one?

Roy Sorenson: Well, I mean, it's all this stuff. I don't know what the answer is.

Chairman Dumont: No, I'm just wondering, yeah, for that. But that's, I guess, what's being budgeted for. We're not budgeting a replacement.

Roy Sorenson: No, no, no.

Chairman Dumont: That was a conversation.

Roy Sorenson: Nope.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, I think there'll be some changes. I mean, we're going to get to the Hills next. But between this building and the Hills, I owe the Board a strategic plan on those two buildings, which will be coming forward probably later this month or the first meeting in October. That will change some things around here. Nonetheless, I still think the security on the doors makes sense. By the way, the Hills actually has it in place right now.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, no, and I agree 100% with that. And I guess it would be determined on the strategic plan. But I know that we were looking at doing some ADA compliance, but that could change depending on that plan. So, I guess we'll wait on that. But I just wanted to make sure if we're going to try to do something, figure it in now.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Selectman Jakoby: Can I just?

Chairman Dumont: Hi. Yep, go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: I just wanted to say that I think it's critical, and the public really needs to know this, that that FOB system goes in. You know, I know that there are some people that when they come to meetings, they come in and then they lock the door because they're extra early. So, I think that's excellent. Thank you for getting all of that information and putting it here. And I think it's really reasonable.

Roy Sorenson: Any other questions there on town hall?

Chairman Dumont: Nope.

Roy Sorenson: All right, Hills Memorial Library, new addition to the budget. Basically, we pushed over what the Rogers had in there. I did crank up the building maintenance line, though, as you can see, because I'm envisioning. And, Mr. Chair, you may say, well, that's the same verbiage you had on the other one. And you would be correct if you made that statement.

Chairman Dumont: It's a lovely cut and paste.

Roy Sorenson: So, it's just going to be a matter of us trying to understand what our exact needs are out there. So, I basically put that in. There's a slight cushion for us if we need it. Because the building is going to be used more, right? That's the intention of it. So, the 100 minimum use, 1,500, I don't think that's a heavy ask.

Chairman Dumont: No, and I would agree. I think that this Board, we've had numerous discussions around that building and what it needs. It is a historical building. And in my opinion, it's a nice asset to the community. So, we've got to make sure that we take care of it. All right. So, I'm good with that.

Roy Sorenson: Selectman Jakoby, are you OK with that?

Selectman Jakoby: Yes, I'm very happy to see this here and how it's put together. I'm very happy with it. Thank you.

FINANCE

Roy Sorenson: All right. All right, next page, 5300, is going to be finance. With that, I'll actually turn it over to our Finance Director, Laurie May.

Laurie May: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present tonight, present the FY28 budget. I also want to take just a minute to thank you for something that you voted on during this year. So last year about this time, I had approached the Board proposing a restructuring of the finance department. And I just appreciate that you approved that. Due to the restructuring, it was substantially less difficult to find the right replacement when we had turnover again in the department. It made it so much easier. So thank you. So overall, on the operating budget, the finance budget is level funded, with the exception of items such as postage and contracts, which were just increases beyond my control. But during my time, I've been here about a year and a half now. And last year when I was doing the budget and I approached the Board, I thought I hadn't been here for very long, so I really didn't know what everyone did and how, you know, what I needed. Now during my time here, I've realized that we do need a succession plan and we need to implement more training. So, one of the goals I identified last year during the budget process, and in an effort to achieve that, I've reallocated some of the costs from the finance administration budget to the finance accounting budget in the FY28 budget. The town accountant currently is in the process of completing the NHGFOA accounting certificate program. I think it will be done probably this month or next month. And so, in FY27, he's scheduled to attend the State Bureau of Education Training Supervisory Academy, and that's going to be in preparation of attending their certified public manager program for FY28. You'll see that that is one of the out-of-budget items that I included in there, everything that he'll gain from that, taking that program. It's a 12-month program. It's going to start about August of ‘27, and it covers a variety of topics, leadership in public organizations, organizational behavior, strategic thinking, employment law, managing in a union environment, and public finance and budget. So, all of these things he and the town will greatly benefit from that information. So that's one of the out-of-budget items that I've requested. I'm also seeking a larger copier for the finance department. We currently have just one small scanner printer, and periodically it doesn't scan multiple pages. A lot of times you'll put something in there to copy and you'll have lines in it. It's not a matter of just simply cleaning the glass. There's something more to it. But with this proposed software, a lot of what we're seeing is you can scan something, and with AI it will automatically import that in. It will give you the invoice on the screen without someone having to enter it manually. You just have to verify that the information is correct. It will save the scan in the system. Currently it takes me about 27 seconds to scan one page. Imagine standing there for 27 seconds when you're scanning one page. We have multiple pages to scan. The other day I was up at Roy's office and I scanned one page. It took seven seconds, fast. The out-of-budget request that I'm requesting is approximately the same rate that Roy's copier costs. Same thing, a little bit smaller.

Chairman Dumont: Maybe we should just give you Roy's copier.

Laurie May: Then you wouldn't get this.

Chairman Dumont: I know, I know.

Laurie May: Plus, part of the cost of the copier would be shared with water because they would print their water bills on that. Then back to the accounting software, we will be bringing forward a warrant article for that.

Chairman Dumont: Real quick back on the copier. Is the total amount $2,400 or is it $2,400 coming out of your department and then another amount coming out of water? How does that break out?

Roy Sorenson: I think the way we did it is we put the base amount here. We'll actually see what the lease agreement ends up being. Then at that point we'll make the split.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you.

Laurie May: Let's see. Also, during last year's budget, I had discussed at that point I was just trying to keep things flat because I really didn't know what we were going to need. Through my time working with the various people in the department, seeing what they did, the reorganization, seeing where we're lacking, I really feel that we could use a little additional staffing. Before I even took the position with Hudson, I was in a discussion with the auditors at a conference and I just asked about the staffing and they had thought that we were understaffed.

Roy Sorenson: Hardly anyone in finance when you got here.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: It's probably harder to rebuild the department.

Laurie May: We've done a great job. You guys have done great. I think we could really benefit from just having a part-time person that would just help an accounting clerk that can just assist in various tasks. The menial tasks that year end putting stuff in boxes. Our employees at the rate where they're being paid are better using their minds more than just doing those menial tasks. A lot of what I anticipate this person doing is reconciliation. We've got more than 2,000 accounts. That person would be spending a lot of time doing the reconciliation of those active accounts, especially where we're moving to a new ERP, doing the parallel and making sure that both systems are correct and accurate and the same. That's a lot of reconciliation, and if anything goes wrong or gets miss-posted, trying to find that is going to be really difficult. So having someone designated to do that would be very helpful.

Chairman Dumont: Selectman Vurgaropulos, do you have a question on that?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I do, sorry. So, the way you're describing it, don't let me squash it. I just want to get more information for myself. You're basically hiring part-time help, but what happens when that part-time help is not needed anymore? Will you have a home for them?

Laurie May: I'm sorry, say that again?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: What happens when they're done reconciling to migrate to the new ERP?

Laurie May: There's always reconciliation. There is always a ton of reconciliation.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay, I just wanted to make sure because the way I was hearing it was like we were just doing the reconciliation while we migrated to the new software, and I get that, I understand that, but will we have a home for them after?

Laurie May: Oh, yeah, there's going to be plenty to do. So, the whole general finance department could benefit from this person.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Laurie May: Each person at different times of the year, they could be helpful.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay, thank you.

Roy Sorenson: So, it's non-benefited, 29.5 hours a week. So those are the three big things within finance. The ERP or financial software will be most likely a warrant article. We still have some work to do there. We don't have any pricing yet on it. Well, we have the pricing, we just haven't exposed it or revealed it yet because we're not done with our reviews, demonstrations, which will be taking place over the next three weeks.

Chairman Dumont: All right, so does anybody have any questions on the out-of-budget expenses that they want to roll in? I mean, other than that, I would agree. I think she's pretty flat.

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, it looked good to me.

Chairman Dumont: All right, so that would be the copier. I just want to make sure the copier at $2,400, the training at $2,320. I'm going to mess the number up on the book.

Roy Sorenson: It's whatever's on the sheet. This is why we need a reconciled person because I think my math doesn't add up.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Did you hire him to help you sell this?

Roy Sorenson: The summary sheet's wrong. The numbers are off.

Chairman Dumont: Oh, okay.

Roy Sorenson: It's actually less. It's whatever's on Laurie's request.

Laurie May: So, $2,400 for the copier.

Chairman Dumont: $2,320 for the training. Yeah, okay, now that's what I have. And then $4,708 for the part-time.

Laurie May: Right.

Chairman Dumont: And that's figured on a salary for that 29 1⁄2 hours?

Laurie May: Plus taxes.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah. Okay.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I do have one question. Go ahead. Mr. Sorenson, our printer program, we pay $2,400 every year for every printer?

Roy Sorenson: I don't have the answer to that. I can get it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: It just seems a little steep. This looks like a full purchase price, and it's checked reoccurring.

Roy Sorenson: No, these are like the ones that are up in my office.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Again, we're on the lease program.

Roy Sorenson: Correct.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: We're renting them. I get that. But we're not renting them for $2,400 a piece, are we?

Roy Sorenson: I don't have the answer because I don't oversee that. I can get you that. Did you get that price?

Laurie May: I believe we are because I think you pay $2,400 currently.

Roy Sorenson: Did you get a quote for that?

Laurie May: No. We may be looking at moving vendors for that. Hopefully, we can save money. We have an issue with a lot of things with the current vendor. That contract is up October of 27, I believe.

Roy Sorenson: We'll look into it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay. You see what I'm saying? It just looks like a full purchase price rather than it. I was expecting to see the recurring fee be like the annual maintenance fee plus the rental fee. Now, $2,400 for a new purchase.

Roy Sorenson: You get the copies included in it, right? Yeah. You don't get charged for your copies because they give you color copies.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Oh, yeah. The accounts get charged, right?

Roy Sorenson: No. They don't. The account is part of that lease.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay. Maybe that's why it's so high.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, and the ink. It's all the maintenance and the ink.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Roy Sorenson: I can figure out what the contract says.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I was just interested because I figured the ink wouldn't be actually part of the actual printer program. It would be part of the supplies and stuff, but I could be wrong. I don't know the details of it, so that's all.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, we'll find out the details for you.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: All right. Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: All right. So, everyone is good with the budget as proposed with those additional expenses?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Laurie May: Do we want to go over revenues real quick? Yeah.

Roy Sorenson: Yes, thank you. So now we're going to jump around. We're going to go back to the beginning of the book and find your GF revenue tab. This is just going to be for the general fund. It's right in the front. We get a lot of work in here. Do you want to walk through it, Laurie? Do you want me to go through it?

Laurie May: So, actually Roy and I worked looking at FY26 revenues. We looked back three years, four years, just tried to really look at each revenue and try to put together the FY28 revenue budget. We noticed, and in speaking with buildings and developmental services, it sounds like the building in general is decreasing. So, a lot of the revenues here and inspection fees and things like that, excavation permits, construction inspection fees, we tried to be conservative because we really don't know, especially going so far out. We did receive – we haven't received meals and rooms yet, but we have gotten the highway block grant for this coming year, so we put that number in there. It's a decreased sum.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, we kind of trued that one up. I think the number that we have, the 25, that had to be Target, right? It was just astronomical. But subsequent after that, we kind of came back down to earth a little bit to balance it, 375 to 300. Motor vehicles has kind of been something that has been targeted to be raised over the last two, three years. We left it at 65. I think we should kind of leave it there. We did well at the end. We cleared 7 million, but I don't know. The cars come from Canada. How many cars come from Canada? So we kind of just trued up the numbers. Obviously, there's some other items in here that we had to clean up because we won't be receiving that revenue anymore. I got rid of some old accounts that we're not receiving revenue on anymore. As an example, Hudson Cable franchise fees, we're no longer receiving money there. So, things like that. I think in the end, we're right where we should be if you look at the trend of what we were. I mean, we do have a higher use of fund balance, which can be another discussion. We don't have the results yet from the audit, but we finished out pretty good the last couple of years. Although last year was tight, we did use a little extra in fund balance as well.

Chairman Dumont: And you said we have not received the meals and rooms yet?

Roy Sorenson: Well, we did. We didn't receive the estimate.

Chairman Dumont: Ok.

Roy Sorenson: Well, for ‘26, it was $258,847.

Chairman Dumont: Right, right. That's what, yeah. There should be a slight increase for this coming year as well.

Roy Sorenson: Well, we brought it up, though. So we went from 22 to 24.

Chairman Dumont: Right. I'm saying it should be an increase over that actual of 26.

Roy Sorenson: How much do you think, though? I mean, I wouldn't.

Chairman Dumont: No, I think you're right. I think be conservative with it, but I would expect it to be higher than that 26 actual. The percentage is probably the same from 25 to 26, and it should carry forward that way.

Roy Sorenson: Block grant's been not really doing what we've had it budgeted at. We've been in the mid-600s, and it's just really been close to the mid-500s.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, yeah.

Roy Sorenson: Ambulance net revenues are up because of the new fees. Obviously, Litchfield's not in there anymore.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions on revenue? Anybody?

Selectman Jakoby: I think it looks good. I think it's a nice approach. Thank you.

Roy Sorenson: All right, so do you want to move this one tonight, have them take a formal motion on it, or do you want to wait until the very end? For the revenues? Yeah, because this is a significant item. You can do a vote on this tonight.

Chairman Dumont: No, I agree. My only thing with that is normally we – I guess if you guys already followed up with the departments, but normally we hear the other departments speak to some of them.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, we can wait. It's fine. That's a good point. We'll wait until the end. That's fine.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. All right. Thank you very much, appreciate it.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you, Laurie.

Laurie May: You're welcome.

Chairman Dumont: All right, who do you want to roll into next?

NON-DEPARTMENTAL

Roy Sorenson: I'm going to go through them real quick, and then we'll get to IT. So, let's go down to – we're going to go to the back of the book. We're going to go to non-departmental 5900. All right, so I'll kind of work off the cover sheet. The big one is going to be insurance. We did the estimate here. As I said, I missed this one in the presentation. A workers' comp, we did very well. We actually got a return. What was the return we got on that, Laurie? We got a pretty good rebate last year. Now, property and liability is going in the other direction. But what we did is we tried to equalize this amongst where it should be going more appropriately than it was in the past, and you can see that breakout. So, in the end – and again, the property and liability and workers' comp is an estimate at this point, so these numbers will change. It is down 3.4 percent only because we sent some of the property and liability into other areas of the budget. And again, those numbers will change because we don't have the premiums yet. We'll probably get those in October. Community grants, just a flat line. Same grants as last year, 0 percent there. The list is provided on page 6. Patriotic purposes, same thing, 0 percent. 7100, same as last year. Other expenses, 0, same as last year. Expenses remaining in the same spot. Hydrant rental I raised based off of actuals, and this is just an equalizer. Again, if you look at the page 11, you'll see that we finished the year at 300. So, I just brought up the 300. I think it makes sense versus what we had in the past. Now, some of that could be related to billing, maybe too, as well, when they do the billing for that, Jim, because of the fiscal year. I don't know, but... Anyways, I brought the 300 to match where we finished the actual fiscal year. All right, solid waste is a big talking point. I did work with Jay Twardosky on this, and I'm just going to talk about it tonight, but I think we get back into this when DPW presents. We have one year left on the contract, and the solid waste and recycling market is very volatile, to say the least. We did get what we believe is maybe a one-year extension price. We're going to have to obviously go out to bid, and you can see that it's a 10% increase versus what we paid in 27. So, it went from $2.73 million to roughly $3 million. That's probably a conservative number, as well. Jay will have more details on it, but this will be the big driver within this section of the budget. Actually, this is a major driver in the budget itself. Any questions here?

Chairman Dumont: No, I think, obviously, just working towards a plan to try to bring those costs down, and going out to bid is one of them. I mean, it is what it is for now.

Roy Sorenson: Again, Jay will speak more to this on Tuesday night. We good?

Chairman Dumont: The only thing that I want to roll back to, normally it's a talking point, so I want to make sure we don't skip right over it, is community grants. Myself, quite frankly, as I was looking through this, with things being a little lean, I didn't know if we should take more of a Hudson approach to where some of this money was going, but I don't have any answers for you here on that tonight, so I guess I would leave it alone, but I wanted to bring that up to the Board to see what their thoughts were.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Trying to find the list again.

Chairman Dumont: Page 6.

Selectman Vurgaropulos; What's your question, sir?

Chairman Dumont: Basically, my feelings was that there's money that's getting put towards other communities that I'm not sure, and I can't stress that enough, that I'm not sure the exact benefit that the Hudson taxpayer receives from it, and I didn't know if we should be looking at more of an approach to say that what we're donating to has an actual benefit to the Hudson residents. Go ahead, Selectman Jakoby.

Selectman Jakoby: I'm sorry. I wanted to say that this was also a concern of mine in previous years. I think it's a good idea to look more closely at it, and I think your framework is appropriate.

Chairman Dumont: I appreciate that. I can try to do some digging. I'm not ready to make any changes here tonight, but I just wanted to raise it to the Board.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Which areas in general? I know you're going to come forward with it, but anyone in particular that stands out to you?

Chairman Dumont: Well, one that stands out to me, Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter. That's a bigger ticket item. One that I think is a little deceiving just because it says Nashua in it, but Nashua Transit, Hudson residents do receive a benefit from that for pickups and drop-offs for senior citizens within Hudson. So that one we've talked about in the past. So, I'm not looking to gut this by any means. I think I just want to be more prudent in where the money's going to make sure that if it's Hudson taxpayer paying for it, I think that they should be eligible for a benefit.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: They should be getting a piece of the pie.

Chairman Dumont: Well, not necessarily a piece of the pie, but I just want to make sure that they're not excluded from it. I mean, there's people from all different walks of life that utilize these services, and I just want to make sure that Hudson's eligible for them.

Selectman Allan: So just a question. You brought up being Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter. Is that something we would look to reallocate towards our own food pantry?

Chairman Dumont: I was thinking that, or possibly I know even VFW or the Hudson Post. But yeah, something that the organizations provide a direct give back to Hudson residents.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yes. I agree with that. I look forward to reading it.

Selectman Allan: Yeah.

Chairman Dumont: All right. That's all I had on that.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Roy Sorenson: All right, we are going to jump to information technology. Doug Bosteels. Go back to the front almost. Right after finance.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: This is the easy bit.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, 5330.

Doug Bosteels: Evening, folks.

Chairman Dumont: Good evening, sir.

Doug Bosteels: Thank you for your time. So, I guess we can just jump right in, huh?

Roy Sorenson: Take it away.

Doug Bosteels: So, tried to keep most of this pretty flat. With IT, it's kind of hard to do. With contracts, software and hardware increases. So, I can go over some of the line items that have increased. 237. This is an increase of about $1,000 for the KnowBe4 software. This is the software that we use to keep people informed of cybersecurity issues and whatnot in training for our users. Line items, 269, software maintenance.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah, but you moved that, right?

Doug Bosteels: 215, we moved into 269.

Roy Sorenson: So, the $37,752 that you see here, zeroed out. That's now down here.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I just got a quick question. Selectman Allan wasn't here last year. Roy, can you just go over what the letters mean?

Roy Sorenson: C is contractual, meaning it can increase based off of whatever type of deal you have. He lives in the software world where it's constantly increasing. N means new, something that's been added. And what's the replace? Did you move anything else into this?

Doug Bosteels: Just 215. All right, so 215 moved into 269.

Roy Sorenson: Oh, okay, but you adjusted the Muni. The MuniSmart is still in here.

Doug Bosteels: Yes.

Roy Sorenson: Now that could change.

Doug Bosteels: Yes. But not knowing what was going to be going on, I had to show that we might have to spend that money anyway. A lot of the increases in this budget were for cybersecurity prevention. I'm not sure if you realize, but a lot of cybersecurity events have been happening around us lately. I don't want that to happen here. So, we've upped our antivirus software. We actually just today moved it to the cloud where the company will be monitoring our antivirus for us. So, they have access to monitor all of our systems, and they'll be notified if there's something that happens, and they'll notify us right away, and they have the ability to come in and shut things off on the network and do that type of thing. It's just more security for us. So, we wanted that route. So, that was an expense. So, that's why you see the antivirus software has gone up there.

Roy Sorenson: And then the phones went in here.

Doug Bosteels: The phones went in there, yes. And then we did also the Barracuda email archiver. We actually added inbound and outbound messages to that so that they also get looked at and are less phishing attempts and that type of spam coming in. So, we've done that. We're just trying to lock things down a little bit. I don't want to be, you know, Merrimack where they got hit. Milford just got hit with an email virus. So, we're really trying to just lock things down. So that's basically what you see in this budget is just upgrades to our cyber security awareness and protection. And I believe that's pretty much most of the 411 computer equipment. You'll see a decrease there. If you remember last budget, I put in for an out-of-budget request to replace our network storage. I was given $40,000, so that will come out of the budget for 2018. That's pretty much it.

Chairman Dumont: Questions or comments? Everybody's all set? All right. Thank you very much, sir.

Doug Bosteels: Thank you.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Appreciate your time. Thank you, sir.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Roy Sorenson: All right. Chief Tice is here with his business manager, Erika LaRivera. Why don't you guys come on up? So, Fire is kind of right in the middle, 5700.

Chief Tice: Good evening, everybody. I'm happy to be here to present the fire department budget for FY28. There is a lot of work that goes into this, so I appreciate all the administrative staff and their work, especially Erika, who has the pleasure of being here with us tonight. As we talked in the beginning, our proposed operating budget was a 0% increase, aside from contractual contracts, personnel costs, and utilities as requested by the board. You'll see we've moved money around within the budget from lines that, over the past few years, we haven't spent as much money into the lines that we anticipate spending more money in to balance that out. In past years, we've brought forth some projects that didn't get approved. We did not bring them forward this year because we knew we had to be lean, and I really wanted to focus on our priorities, so it's not that we're blowing those projects off. We just knew where we were, where we needed to be with the budget, and felt that those didn't meet our priorities. So, I look forward to answering any and all of your questions tonight.

Roy Sorenson: So, we're in administration right now, 5710. Good place to start, I guess.

Chairman Dumont: Publications and subscriptions. That's the major increase with the... 215?

Roy Sorenson: 215

Chairman Dumont: Sorry, I apologize.

Chief Tice: We added ChatGPT to that line.

Chairman Dumont: For me, that's always going to be odd that we're relying on that. All right. The bulk of that, so that looks like about, what, $1,300 difference. That's a subscription for that, or?

Erika LaRiviere: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: What was that again?

Erika LaRiviere: So, that's $1,200, and then we also did move a couple of items that were on one of the IT lines. So, as you saw in Doug's presentation, the bulk of the software that we have to have, we can't operate without the software, was all under, I believe, those 269 lines. We did move a couple of things that we do utilize, like we have SurveyMonkey. I have Canva. We did move a couple of those under this publications and subscriptions lines. So that's where the difference in the cost came.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. And then moving on to 236 and 237, training and educational reimbursement. Was that just a swap from one to the other, it looks like?

Chief Tice: Yes, so what we're doing is probably trying to better define that. So, in any of the lines when we talk about the training, which is 237, that is a department training program. And then if we're talking about sending people to training or educational reimbursement, we put all that individual training into 236. So that way they're better defined.

Chairman Dumont: Any questions so far? I'm going to roll into facilities.

Roy Sorenson: I messed up. This page should be before that page.

Chairman Dumont: Which one is that?

Roy Sorenson: This one. Sorry. I'll fix that.

Chairman Dumont: Do you want to stay in facilities or do you want to go somewhere else?

Roy Sorenson: No, no, it's fine. I'll stay there. I thought I was missing a page, but I'm not. It's here. This one should be in front.

Chairman Dumont: Oh, I see, I see. So, I guess just hit a couple of the major ones to get some detail to it. So, 203 and 204. You should explain, I guess, the increases on those two.

Chief Tice: Yes. So, we increased based on usage for FY28, so some things such as overhead door repairs and replacement of equipment, washers, dryers, kitchen appliances, those types of things. So that's money moved around from other lines that we didn't anticipate as much expense.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Chief Tice: That's 203 and you're looking at 204. Yes. The anticipated cost for PM agreements for HVAC and heating systems throughout the facilities has seen an increase. So, again, we moved some money around to cover that.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Questions from anybody? Keep moving? So next up will be communications. Any major changes?

Chief Tice: Some lines we moved some money around from lines that we hadn't spent as much in the past to cover some anticipated expenses that are coming up.

Roy Sorenson: Down 5.7 on this one.

Chairman Dumont: Yes. Looks good.

Roy Sorenson: Big one.

Chairman Dumont: Suppression. All right. We just have a couple questions and we'll jump right into it. So, the four open firefighter positions.

Chief Tice: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: What is the plan with those now that we have some changes, obviously, in revenue, Litchfield contract?

Chief Tice: What are your thoughts? So, admittedly, we will see some decrease in call volume that will afford some better coverage in the north end. But this was the second of a three-year plan trying to go to 14, so this would take us from 12 a shift to 13 a shift. And that's what they were in the budget for. I believe there's still a need for these positions. And I look at our risks and I look at the expectations of the department and I look at what the added staffing, the cost versus the benefit. I think these go to maintaining or getting to a reasonable level of public safety while trying to be reasonable to the taxpayer. Some of the specific things that this position will help cover, you know, at our staffing level, every person that you put into the operations has a big impact, you know, in the amount that can get done. When you look at the critical tasks that need to be done on an incident, the more people that you can put into or onto those critical tasks to get them done will get them done much faster. I can tell you on any emergency scene, but there have been studies done on structure fires in particular that show true data on the difference between a two-person crew, three-person crew, and four-person crew when getting tasks completed, and there's some dramatic improvements as you add staffing. Having one more person will help fill some of the gaps we have now during peak times, whether it's getting a truck out the door that otherwise wouldn't get out because it wouldn't be covered, covering other openings as we get busy. One thing that happens is sometimes we need to take somebody off a fire truck and put them on an ambulance for extra staffing. We need to send extra people to the hospital because of a critical patient. That person will then be able to cover that opening on that fire truck to keep that crew better staffed. There's times such as today, we were having a busy time. We couldn't get the ladder out the door for a fire call. We had an ambulance responding. I believe I heard part of the radio conversation. They were responding back from the hospital in the ambulance to get to the station here to jump on the ladder truck, having another person that could have gotten that truck to the scene. At least they can get the truck to the scene. They can meet up with other crews and become a crew to work at the scene. Same thing could happen with the tanker, the squad truck at Central Station. As we're busy, they would be able to get those pieces out and join up with other people at the scene to be an operating crew and get the tools and equipment where they need to be. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to in those situations with our staffing level where we are now.

Chairman Dumont: I did see some of those posts. I think it was roughly midday about everybody being out. One question I know we've talked about before. I don't want to raise it because you brought it to my mind about the ambulance coming back from the hospital. Thoughts on splitting the ambulance service to a third party to handle transport only and hopefully reduce your guys' time sitting and waiting at the hospital?

Chief Tice: It will reduce the time, but it does reduce the available time. The only way to save money is to get rid of firefighters to do that.

Chairman Dumont: I'm more or less looking at if you have more available, obviously if they're not tied up at the hospital waiting there, those call times come or those response times get a little bit better. More guys are available to each individual call at that point, which then obviously hopefully satisfies some of that safety concern. I'll get right to it and be blunt about it. I'm wondering about these four positions if it's worthwhile to hold off on them instead of hiring immediately. I'm not talking about eliminating them, but just justifying the need for them as this Litchfield contract is going away and if there would be any benefit to offsetting some of that safety concern with a third-party transport only.

Chief Tice: I think to address part of your comment, that's exactly why I was looking to go to 14. I know we're not talking about 14 this year. We decided we're not moving on without this year, but that was the intention of trying to get to a second ambulance so we could stop running the crew at the Robinson Road station and the Lowell Road station on the ambulance as primary help because they're gone from their stations for a considerable amount of time on ambulance calls, therefore they're not in their district protecting their district. To do that with a third party ambulance, if you're looking to save money or balance out financially, you would have to then get rid of firefighters because we'd have to reduce our staff, reduce our payroll in order to make up for that because we wouldn't be doing the transport, so then we wouldn't be generating the EMS revenue, the ambulance billing. The benefit of having dual-role firefighter and EMS personnel is when they're not on ambulance calls, we can use them on fire calls. We can use them. They do everything. Our people are able to do everything.

Chairman Dumont: Yeah, no, and I don't take that lightly at all. I know you guys are multifaceted. They're able to do just about everything. I know a majority of what they do is ambulance, and I appreciate that because that's a huge toll. I was just looking more at the timing of it and trying to get them freed up a little bit more. I wasn't looking at reducing your filled positions by any means. I just figured that adding these positions obviously was going to be a cost, and if there was a way to offset that somehow by reducing time that the guys were out of the station. And correct me if I'm wrong. This is not my field. I'm not riding that ambulance, so I don't know how much time that would actually save, but from the point that the patient is stabilized and you're actually transporting them to the hospital and then sitting waiting at the waiting room for that person to be checked in, and I'm assuming paperwork and everything is involved, and then getting back to the station, I was wondering or trying to find a way to cut that out.

Chief Tice: Having a third-party ambulance service would reduce that time that those crews are committed to that call because they could handle them as a first responder, you know, responding to the scene, helping to stabilize the patient. They'd be put in a private ambulance, and that private ambulance would transport to the hospital. The cost of that is going to be the lost ambulance revenue and the cost of the contract because no ambulance services are going to come and do that for free.

Chairman Dumont: Sure. And I guess so there's nothing that you can bill for even responding to the scene and stabilizing that patient. It is just simply the ride alone that allows you to bill for that.

Chief Tice: The only thing we can bill for is the loaded miles. So, it's a flat rate. How the billing works depends on the level of call. So, you have a basic call. You have a Level 1 advanced level call. You have a Level 2 advanced level call. So, we can charge different rates for that, but that's only for the transporting ambulance or the transporting unit can bill for that.

Chairman Dumont: And to go a little further than that, the revenue that's coming in, the loss of that wouldn't justify the decrease in those four additional firefighters. I mean, if it's a loss of, you know, those four firefighters roughly with total wages and benefits or salaries and benefits, at least from what's in here, it's coming in a little over $500,000, maybe close to $600,000. If the ambulance billing that we're losing is only $250,000, there's still a...

Chief Tice: No, no, no. It's much more than $250,000.

Chairman Dumont: No, and that's what I'm asking. I'm just throwing out numbers here. So, I guess what would that billing be? Do you have an idea as to significantly more than that, than those additional wages?

Chief Tice: This is very rough based on a short period of time. You know, I looked at what our billing revenue is, and I don't know what you came up with, Jim, and I discussed this the other day and kind of so I understood the – made sure I understood the reconciliation. If I looked at the last six months of 2025 versus the first six months of 2026, there was a considerable increase in our billing. So how it works, how our revenue works, and please correct me if I misstate this, but every month Comstar sends us a report of what we billed for that month. What we actually collect for that month runs several months behind. But if I look at what the allowable billing is, and I factored in bad debt because it's what we billed out, it's not what we actually collected, so there is write-offs every month. I looked at, based on our current percentage, what we would be paying Comstar, who does our billing service for us, and then I looked at the past history of what percentage the Litchfield billing was and subtracted that out, and I estimate we would still be over $700,000 a year.

Chairman Dumont: Total collected funds after everything is paid?

Chief Tice: Yes.

Chairman Dumont: Not including the bad debt?

Chief Tice: That factored in the bad debt. That subtracted out the bad debt.

Chairman Dumont: It did subtract out the bad debt.

Chief Tice: Subtracted out the bad debt and subtracted out the billing for Comstar, their fee.

Chairman Dumont: So, by going to that third-party transport service, that $700,000 revenue is completely gone?

Chief Tice: Gone, is gone, plus that's half of the revenue because the other half goes in the revolving fund. Right. If we got rid of our ambulances, yes, we would see an expense reduction in that, but we wouldn't lose all that expense because some of that goes to training, and it goes to medical supplies, which are still going to carry medical supplies.

We're still going to have to train our people, so we couldn't get rid of those expenses altogether. There would also be a fee for the ambulance service to come in just like a retainer.

Chairman Dumont: And there's no version of a hybrid program working with public and private service to try to, I guess, find a balance between the two.

Chief Tice: The private service is looking to make a profit.

Chairman Dumont: I know no matter what, the private is always going to look to make a profit. I get that. What I'm trying to see is if there's any benefit to a hybrid service that I guess would try to offset some of our costs here or time that is alluding to safety issues.

Chief Tice: I think if you're looking at a system like a Manchester, Nashua, where the fire department responds, they help provide care to the patient, and the ambulance comes and does the transport, there is no billing mechanism for the fire end of it. The ambulance service gets all the billing.

Chairman Dumont: And then final one that I know that I've talked to you about, but I want to bring it up here with the board. Putting that aside, is there any benefit to utilizing or holding off on two of those positions? Utilizing two, you'd have obviously still 12 people per shift, and then you'd have an additional two members that would fill in on somebody who calls out either using earned time, sick time, whatever, to try to offset some overtime issues that we've had in the past. So, you'd still have the same staffing you'd have today. That 13th person would kind of be a floater.

Chief Tice: So, if we were going to do that across all four shifts, we would still need to fill all four of those positions? So, what you're saying is we would have 13 a shift, but we would drop to 12 before we covered with overtime?

Chairman Dumont: Well, yes, yeah, technically. I think you'd have 12 per shift, where two of those may have 13 if everybody was there. But I would hazard a guess that a decent amount of time, somebody would be out, and that 13th would fill in for them.

Chief Tice: Okay, so you're talking about putting a 13th position on two of the four shifts?

Chairman Dumont: Correct. So, on those two shifts, there would be an overtime savings with one person out. Most of the time, we would still be at 12. Rarely, we would be at 13, so we'd see very little benefit of that staffing, and I don't believe that those positions would save enough overtime to justify the base pay.

Chairman Dumont: Selectman Allan?

Selectman Allan: Selectman Jakoby has her hand raised.

Chairman Dumont: Thank you. It's behind me, so sorry, Selectman Jakoby. Go ahead.

Selectman Jakoby: That's okay. I had a couple of questions along these same lines. So, for every call that you miss, you miss that revenue for an ambulance service. That means another town might be responding, correct?

Chief Tice: Correct, correct. Whoever does the transport is going to get the billing. So, if it's AMR, Windham, Londonderry, whoever comes in and has to do a transport, they're going to bill for that call, not us.

Selectman Jakoby: Right. And we're still offering mutual aid to communities around us, and we would get bills and we would get the revenue for any of those.

Chief Tice: Correct. Same thing. When we respond to any of those communities and we transport, we bill for that.

Selectman Jakoby: So, the way I thought of this was a little different than Chairman Dumont. I thought of it as we're able to respond to more, so our revenue will increase. It's just another way of looking at it. Even with Litchfield not having that, I'm sorry, wrong town, not having the additional contract, I thought I had looked at some statistics on the number of calls or the number of times we needed mutual aid and that revenue that we missed out on because we didn't have the coverage. Just another way to look at it. Thank you.

Chief Tice: There is – that is true. If we can't respond to our own ambulance call and we have to call mutual aid, that is lost revenue or an opportunity to have revenue that we would miss. And if we respond to mutual aid, that is an opportunity for us to gain revenue. I think the numbers are not great enough to look at that to justify the expense of personnel. I think when you're looking at that, especially how much mutual aid we call in or don't call in because we work very hard to cover our calls and the way that we operate, we are very flexible. And that's – all three stations are covering an ambulance. If they're in quarters, they're covering an ambulance.

Chairman Dumont: I would also add that obviously if you're not able to respond, it's because you're on another call, so it would just be a wash. You're collecting – you may not be picking up revenue from that one, but you are from the other one. And these four firefighters aren't going to add another ambulance. They're going to add another staff to that. So, if it's out, it's out. You're not able to collect that other – pick up that additional call.

Chief Tice: Correct. Correct.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. All right. I think I beat that horse enough, but any other questions? All right. Is there any other major – I know that that was on personnel. Was there any other major increases to that section on suppression?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: There was small engine repair, small fleet repair, is that what it's called?

Chairman Dumont: 275.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: 275, yeah. I just had a question about that. So, 275.

Chairman Dumont: Page 19.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Well, yeah, page 19 for that one, but page 14 for the whole thing.

Roy Sorenson: You're looking at the – oh, okay.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: So, it looks like 25 actuals were called $10,000, 26 was called $14,000, and for whatever reason we only approved $4,300 this year. I know that – so did you just take the approach of averaging that out across the two previous years, not last year? Is that how you got to that number? Or do you anticipate some repairs coming up?

Chief Tice: We did it based on historical, what we've been spending. So, we moved money from other lines that we hadn't been using as much into that line.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay. Thank you.

Chief Tice: Was there another line? That was 275. Was there another line you had a question on?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, that was the one I had been looking at the last two minutes.

Chairman Dumont: He tuned me out the last two minutes. Did you hear that?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: No, I heard everything there.

Chairman Dumont: I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. All right. So same thing in 276. Those are just replacements, I take it, for that. That's why the increase.

Chief Tice: Yeah, we're seeing an increase in those repairs. So, again, we moved money from other lines into this line to cover it.

Chairman Dumont: Okay.

Roy Sorenson: Two D-ducts, though, on the next page.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Any other questions on that one? Rolling to Inspectional Services, I guess.

Roy Sorenson: No, we'll go there. I just want to bring it to the Board's attention.

Chairman Dumont: Yep, go ahead.

Roy Sorenson: This number here, that's one of the truck payments, which that comes off, right? We're not paying that?

Chief Tice: Correct.

Roy Sorenson: So, the thinking behind the warrant article vehicle for $1.5 M would be that once you push that lease or whatever we do, bond it or whatever it might be, into the budget, I mean, it's not going to happen for '28. Well, it might. But, anyways, you would have $57k. And what's the next one? Actually, these two come off, too, Erica?

Chief Tice: Yeah, so these would be FY28 would be the last payments on the ladder truck and the pump release. They're year 10 of 10.

Roy Sorenson: So, the point is there's three truck payments that will all come due and close out. I don't know what that total is, but it's $170k. What's that? Roughly $220,000 right there.

Chief Tice: Yeah, it's about $231,421.

Roy Sorenson: So, if we work that truck into a lease back into the budget like the town traditionally does, that's where your cost is?

Chairman Dumont: Mm-hmm.

Roy Sorenson: So, there's still a cost, but.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: If we do it right, it'll still be a savings.

Roy Sorenson: Yeah.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Ultimately.

Roy Sorenson: I mean, it's still an impact, but. Correct.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, we're still going to feel it's going to be there, but you're making one bill for the three bills that there were, and then whatever's left over is our recovery.

Roy Sorenson: But it's better than taking that new payment coming in and still having those other three there. So, we need to keep that in mind.

Chief Tice: Yeah, and this is what I've been waiting for. I've been trying to keep that line level, so I waited until now to try to approach this just for that purpose. So, we didn't increase that line. We just rolled one into the …

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, you spoke about this a few times. Yeah. About how you were going to do this, and now it's here, so we're seeing.

Chief Tice: It's here, and we're talking about it now because the lead time for an engine is two to three years. So, I'm hoping to be able to order it knowing that these payments, you know, this is going to free up.

Roy Sorenson: Okay. So, it could be a way to do it.

Chairman Dumont: All right. Sounds good. Any questions or comments on that? Inspectional Services.

Roy Sorenson: Minus 8.7%.

Chairman Dumont: What's that?

Roy Sorenson: Minus 8.7% overall.

Chairman Dumont: All right. No questions or comments. I haven't seen any. Emergency management. All that stuff got moved before. So, all those got moved to a different section, correct, last year?

Chief Tice: So, we have, a few years ago, trying to balance the budget, one of the zero funding years, we took the funding out of this line. Basically, if we needed it, we just have to cover it through other lines. So, the one thing you see is the contract for the town-wide radio system. It's, you know, for maintenance.

Chairman Dumont: Going to IT. Same thing with everybody else, for maintenance, so. Yeah. Okay.

Roy Sorenson: That line moved in here.

Chairman Dumont: Yep. Questions or comments from the Board? All right.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I've got one.

Chairman Dumont: Sorry, go ahead.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yes. So, is the fire department not on printer lease?

Chief Tice: What is it?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Printer lease, leasing program?

Chief Tice: No, that's covered under.

Erika LaRiviere: That's under 5710, our copier lease.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay. No, thank you for that. I was just, this goes back to an early discussion.

Roy Sorenson: What are yours in 5710?

Erika LaRiviere: So, we're at 3555, but we do, that covers four copiers.

Roy Sorenson: So, roughly $1,000.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: So, this goes back to what I was asking earlier, because it has the line item for the ink.

Erika LaRiviere: Yeah, it covers a certain amount of copies.

Roy Sorenson: What's the ink? Is it ink line item?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: 303, printer cartridges.

Erika LaRiviere: So, that one, so that one's smaller. We also have, like, a smaller desk jet, and then there's.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Not on contract?

Erika LaRiviere: Right, not on contract. Okay. So, we do have a couple of smaller printers for other offices that aren't.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Okay.

Erika LaRiviere: Right near the big one, so.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Gotcha.

Erika LaRiviere: That we do some ink for.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Thank you.

Erika LaRiviere: Mm-hmm.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: I got nothing else.

Roy Sorenson: Selectman Jakoby, are you good?

Selectman Jakoby: Yes, I'm good, thank you.

Chairman Dumont: All right, I think that takes care of that.

Roy Sorenson: Anything else? How's the recreation while you're here?

Chief Tice: No, I just want to make sure I answered everybody's questions and covered everything. Last time, I tried to run out a little early, so I just want to make sure that.

Chairman Dumont: No, you did, and I appreciate you walking me through a couple of those things. They're questions that I had, questions that I've been asked, and I'm sure there'll be more of them, obviously, as you make your way through.

Chief Tice: Absolutely.

Chairman Dumont: Okay. Thank you.

Chief Tice: Thank you.

Chairman Dumont: You said you wanted to get into, you don't have recreation on for tonight.

Roy Sorenson; No, we're done.

Chairman Dumont: You threw a curveball at me there.

Roy Sorenson: I said I don't see it on the schedule. No, I'll leave that up to Chrissy to handle that.

Chairman Dumont: All right, so with that Board, any final comments, anything, any changes? We've added in some funds. Basically taking the budgets pretty much just the way that they were written up here tonight.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Yeah, I think it was a pretty clean night for the start. Selectman Jakoby, did you have anything?

Selectman Jakoby: Yeah, I just want to say thank you to the staff and everybody who put this together. I think my quietness represents a clear understanding of what's happening. It's not going to make our decisions any easier, but I just really appreciate all the hard work.

Chairman Dumont: I agree. I think they did a good job. I just hope Elvis knows that we already gave away all the money, so he's not going to get any of it.

Roy Sorenson: They should put him on the last night.

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Oh, yeah, he should have his own day by himself.

Chairman Dumont: And hopefully he's watching. I doubt it, but all right, nope. With that, then, I believe that would be in order.

Chairman Dumont: Do we have any discussion? All those in favor? We do. Actually, we do need to do a roll call. And I may have messed up on that in the very beginning, so I apologize. So, with that, would you please call the roll?

Lorrie Weissgarber: Selectman Vurgaropulos?

Selectman Vurgaropulos: Aye.

Lorrie Weissgarber: Selectman Allan?

Selectman Allan: Aye.

Lorrie Weissgarber: Selectman Jakoby?

Selectman Jakoby: Aye.

Lorrie Weissgarber: Chairman Dumont?

Chairman Dumont: Aye.

Lorrie Weissgarber: All in favor, none opposed, motion carries.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Selectman Vurgaropulos made a motion, seconded by Selectman Allan to adjourn at 9:51 p.m. A roll call vote was taken, motion carried, 4-0.

Recorded by HCTV and transcribed by Lorrie Weissgarber, Executive Assistant.

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Dillon Dumont, Chairman

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Bob Guessferd, Vice-Chairman

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Xen Vurgaropulos, Selectman

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Heidi Jakoby, Selectman

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Kimberly Allan, Selectman