

January 7th 6:00pm Town Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Susan Finnegan, Christine Abdelnour-McKenna, Bill Chase, John Snowdon, and Dan LaFluer

6:02 pm Susan called the meeting to order

Committee Organizational business:

Recycling Committee members Victor Kissel and Harry Ackerman attended to present savings from the pay-per-bag system.

December meeting minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Budget Discussion

Recycling committee presentation

Bag sales totaled \$12,685.50 for August 1 through December 31, 2026.

Significant savings were achieved in disposal and trucking costs.

Pickup frequency was reduced. Previously, tonnage was collected weekly regardless of load size.

Open questions include how many residents currently use the recycling center and the average household cost for bags per month.

While total taxpayer savings are not yet fully quantified, overall recycling costs to the town have decreased significantly and revenue has increased.

Bags are currently sold at J&J, Barn and Thistle, and Market Basket. Stocking can be challenging. The committee is exploring sales through Mac's but is awaiting corporate approval.

The town recycling center is primarily volunteer run and they are doing a fantastic job!

The committee discussed the compactor's life expectancy and the possibility of establishing a capital reserve fund in the next budget year.

Savings of \$13,862 over four months is a great marker for the town budget

2025 REVENUES & BUDGET VS ACTUALS

Revenues were up at the end of 2025

Permit fees are up an additional 10000 beyond the initial 16000

The IRS gave us a refund of 3200 from the tax year of 2022

EXPENSES-

4155 The Selectboard is looking to interview and potentially hire a highway department employee with a family, requiring the addition of a family health insurance plan.

4311 ☐ Contract pay increased by 2000 due to projected winter snow costs.

This is the final year of Bill Patnode's plowing contract.

Discussion followed regarding hiring a consultant to evaluate highway department vehicles and equipment to plan for replacements or potential leasing, we are not sure if this is a service that someone offers but would be beneficial for towns like ours.

There is concern that a highway department truck may need replacement sooner rather than later. Susan and Christine noted the town often feels behind on highway equipment needs and that the capital reserve does not keep up.

Christine suggested increasing the annual transfer to the highway equipment capital reserve fund. Dan asked how this would impact the average homeowner with a \$200,000 property. We aren't sure of the answer but that information would be helpful.

The committee discussed reallocating funds from other budget lines for a one-time truck purchase to get ahead of recurring breakdowns. Historically, capital reserve funds have been tapped unexpectedly for urgent repairs or replacements due to the age and heavy use of the fleet. This option will be explored further and discussed at our next meeting but this sounds like a good option.

Susan called the meeting to close at 7:42PM Christine seconded, all in favor of closing the meeting.

Meeting adjourned Next meeting is January 21th 2025 at 6:00 pm

Public hearing February 6th at 6pm

The meeting minutes were taken by Christine Abdelnour-McKenna.