

**Town of Sullivan, NH**  
**Budget Committee**  
**Approved Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, January 5, 2026**  
**Sullivan Town Hall**

Board members present: Mike Blanchard, Gary Patnode, Bradford Smith, BJ Wahl;

Board Representatives: Dave Jakway, Selectmen; Virginia DeAngelis, Selectmen alternate, Paul Bolduc, Selectmen Alternate; Melinda Sherpa, School Board Representative

Departments: Chris Pratt, Library; Dave Jakway, Planning; Chip Woodbury, Conservation; Bonnie Blanchard, Recreation and Cemeteries, Todd Smith, Highway

Public: None

Staff: Kathleen Rowe, Secretary

CALL TO ORDER: Gary Patnode, Chairman pro temp, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN: On nomination by Dave Jakway, Gary Patnode respectfully declined, noting as this may be his last year on the board, he prefers to see a chairman who will provide continuity on the committee for the foreseeable future.

On nomination and motion by BJ Wahl, seconded by Mike Blanchard, Brad Smith was unanimously voted chairman for the 2026 Budget Committee. Chairman Smith opened the public meeting at 6:04PM

#### 1. BUDGET REVIEW

A. Library: \$24,885.97, (+626.97)

Chris Pratt presented. Wages have increased (\$477.36) reflecting the proposed 2.8% COL increase for 2026. Books remains the same at \$1000; Chris explained this line also includes electronic resources and reference materials. Maintenance increased to \$400 (previously \$200) as costs for fire extinguisher certifications and basic maintenance have increased. The Library does cover extraneous costs over budgeted amounts when able to do so. Telephone increased \$100; Chris noted that this includes \$250/month for Southwest Mutual Aid for the dedicated security line. Propane has decreased by \$100 (new contract) and electricity has decreased by \$50.

B. Planning: \$12,315 (-\$1,217); Dave Jakway presented, noting that he does so in the stead of a Planning Board chair, due to be elected at the meeting of 1/7/2025. When asked by Chairman Smith, Dave confirmed that the budget presented was written by the former planning board chair, Wendy Pelletier.

Principal changes are in decreased hours (Planning Clerk) and small decrease in telephone charges. Printing and publishing was increased by \$300 due to increasing costs for newspaper notices and pricing for ink supplies. Chairman Smith asked about the current workload; Dave noted that a planning board member would need to speak to this. He also noted that land use laws passed in 2025 as regards ADU's may add to the workload in the future.

There is no Capital Reserve request for Planning.

C. Conservation: \$2,879 (+\$234)

Chip Woodbury presented, noting first that the Conservation Commission has a full Board membership for 2026. He is hopeful that this will provide new ideas for community education programs and other opportunities to expand the Commission's purpose.

As waste disposal charges have increased across the board at the Keene Recycling Center, the 2026 budget for the City of Keene hazardous waste disposal program is the only budget increase this year (\$234). It was agreed that this is a worthwhile program, keeping hazardous waste out of regular trash, the general landscape and water sources.

Youth education programs from the Harris Center have been well-received by parents, teachers and students at the Nelson and Harrisville Schools. The portion the Town expends (\$600) augments school funding.

Chip noted that the Town clean-up program was very well-attended in 2025.

D. Recreation: \$2,000 (+1000) Bonnie Blanchard presented. This year, \$832 was spent on the Christmas tree lighting, better than half for the lift to place the new lights necessary after high winds and storms during 2025. The event is welcomed by Town residents and in the future, the hosting group would like to expand events into the (warm) firehouse.

The additional \$1000 is requested for a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration being planned for Sullivan to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Paul Bolduc explained that the event is in a very early planning stage, currently including a reading of the Declaration by a number of residents, possibly a parade and more to be considered as time and funds allow. Chairman Smith recounted the same type of a town-wide event in Jaffrey, where 20-30 individuals read separate parts of the Declaration. Virginia feels that support would be strong for a town-wide gathering of residents which would also serve as a time to introduce recent newcomers to the town and townspeople.

E. Cemeteries: \$9,300 (no change). Bonnie Blanchard presented. This year's budget will continue to include \$2000 for more tree work in all cemeteries. Bonnie explained that only a small portion of the supplies line was used, but the committee is requesting the same amount this year to use for headstone cleaning and resetting. The line item for patriotic supplies remains at \$900 to include flags and markers for graves.

Gary asked if wood from tree cutting was available to residents; Todd noted that trees taken down in the cemetery were left in the adjoining woods (with permissions) and while there may be some wood suitable for burning, the majority is from diseased trees and soft pine. He also explained that the Town Barn area has little room for storing wood.

There is no Capital Reserve request for Cemeteries.

F. Highway: Todd Smith, Road Agent, presented the 2025 Highway budget.

4311: Administration: \$191,186 (+\$7,033)

Personnel costs include an increase in medical insurance, workmen's compensation, 2.8% COL increase recommended by the Selectmen and a reallocation of Workmen's Compensation costs.

4312: Operating Budget: \$191398 (+10,588)

Utilities and administrative budget lines remain consistent with the last 3 years.

Major expenses:

390: Contract Services: \$10,000 - Roadside tree work and mowing throughout the Town

430: Building Maintenance: \$3,200 (\$-6,800) Commercial heating unit installed in 2025; 2026 work will include improved shelter for new trucks

636: Diesel \$10575 (+ \$2165) reflects additional diesel for new equipment

692: Cold Patch \$8,500 (no change) shim material/hot-top and smaller road repairs as needed.

694: Gravel, 696 Salt, 698 Sand: Consistent with 2025 budget (\$19,000, \$36,000, \$20,570 respectively)

740: New Equipment \$12,000 (+11,450) sand/salt spreader for one new truck

4999: Special Projects: \$110,000 (+45,000) Apple Hill resurfacing (overlay, not complete reconstruction) below and beyond paving done in 2022 on lower (Old Apple Hill Road) and upper (end of new pavement to Nelson town line) road areas. This addresses concern that the longer a number of the roads in Sullivan do not receive an overlay layer, the sooner they will need to be totally reconstructed.

Capital Reserves:

Highway Major Equipment: \$35,000 (no change) - Department requests \$50,000, Selectmen recommend \$35,000. Funding per the Highway Major Equipment Committee recommendations in order to have funds to replace vehicles on a recommended schedule.

Reconstruction/resurfacing: \$10,000 for minor roadway repairs as necessary

Town Bridges: \$0 – Todd voiced concern that Town may not have the 25% matching funds needed for FEMA funding in the event of a catastrophic loss. Dave noted that the Town currently has approximately \$70,000 available in deferred NHDOT funding and the available Capital reserve fund. There are no redlined bridges in Sullivan at this time.

Chairman Smith requested an update on equipment purchased and 2025 and equipment to be retired. Todd explained that the Town has purchased two large military cargo trucks which will be outfitted as dedicated winter maintenance vehicles. One of the trucks may be completed for service by the end of 2026; if funds allow, the second build would begin for completion in 2027.

These all-wheel drive trucks are not emissions-based as are the newer vehicles; everything on them is repairable. Many towns are experiencing serious problems with newer emissions-based transmissions and engines; the Terrastar has experienced extensive and costly repairs in 2024-2025 and is likely the next vehicle to be retired.

The Highway Department and Selectmen are taking quotes for the build-out work on the new vehicles and look to the installers for guidance on the most effective builds for these vehicles.

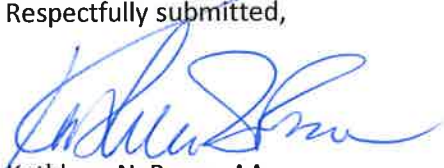
3. OTHER BUSINESS:

- Next meeting of the Budget Committee will be 1/12/2025 at 6:00 PM, Sullivan Town Hall to discuss Fire & Rescue, OEM and the Selectmen's budgets.
- AA noted that the Board needs one more member to be complete.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:15PM made by BJ Wahl, seconded by Gary Patnode, all aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen N. Rowe, AA  
Secretary