

BOF April 7th, 2025
Special Meeting Minutes

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Minutes of Board of Finance April 7th, 2025, Special Meeting - 04/07/25

Date and time: 04/07/25 5:30 PM to: 04/07/25 8:48 PM

Present: Brooke Stevens, Rec Secretary (* Ms. Stevens was not in attendance), Paul Maxfield, John T. Birmingham, Lauren McNamara, Denise Hall, Chairperson, Scott McAllister, Richard Steel

CC: Dan Cunningham, First Selectman, Kevin Gervais, Finance Director, Jerry Lokken, Parks & Recreation Director, Lisa Timothy, Director of the EL Public Library

Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue
Niantic, CT, 06357.

Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order & Pledge

Note Chair Hall called the April 7th, 2025, Special Meeting of the Board of Finance to order at 5:30 p.m. and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Delegations

Note There was none.

3. New Business- Budget Reviews

Note Ms. Hall said tonight is a continuation of the budget reviews from the previous week where several departmental budgets were discussed, and some changes were made. Not all departments were covered, so the review will continue.

Note Ms. Hall noted that she has revisited the budget, looking for further potential savings in the spirit of shared sacrifice, and has focused on miscellaneous budget line items to see if more reductions can be made and would like to review these items with Mr. Gervais.

Note 1. First Selectman's Budget-

Note The discussion focuses on the \$9,000 budgeted for Veterans Representative expenses, specifically mileage reimbursement for Brian Burridge, who drives veterans to medical appointments.

Note The following key points were highlighted:

*In the current year (2025), \$6,000 was initially proposed but cut to \$2,640, necessitating a budget adjustment.

*Actual spending is around \$500 per month, making \$6,000 an appropriate amount.

*The \$9,000 figure included a buffer for potential increases in the IRS mileage reimbursement rate, which don't seem to be materializing.

*Given that \$5,600 was spent in 2024 and current spending trends similarly, there might be \$2,000-\$3,000 of wiggle room in the \$9,000 budget.

Decision MOTION (1)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the Veteran's Representative expenses line item by \$2,500, to \$6,500.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note 2. Assessor's Budget-

Note The following key points were highlighted:

*The miscellaneous supplies budget increased from \$4,438 in 2024 to an adopted budget of \$8,100.

*The large increase is attributed to JD Power's acquisition of NADA, which changed the pricing from annual book purchases to a per-car lookup fee of 10 cents, plus a \$500 annual fee for online services and 40 cents per non-car lookup.

*\$4,400 has been spent, with \$1,500 in encumbrances, totaling \$5,900.

*This leaves \$1,900 remaining in the \$8,100 budget, indicating that the expenditure is roughly 75% of the budget, tracking as expected.

Note no reduction was made.

Note 3. Tax Collector Budget-

Note The following key point was highlighted:

*If the miscellaneous supplies line has a budget of \$3,000, \$1,144 has been spent so far, and \$770 is encumbered, that leaves \$1,000 remaining in the budget.

Note MOTION (2)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce that \$3,250 by \$250 and bring that figure down to \$3,000.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Note The Board further reviewed the Tax Collector budget.

Decision MOTION (2) Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note 4. Human Resources-

Note A potential \$500 decrease in miscellaneous supplies is considered, bringing the budget back to \$3,000. and some of the following key points were highlighted and discussed:

*There is a remaining balance of \$840, suggesting a \$500 reduction might be feasible.

*The employee background checks line is fully encumbered due to the same vendor being used.

*A reduction of \$250 is proposed, bringing the line down to \$2,250, to share budget cuts.

*The cost per background check is estimated at \$326, and with five anticipated hires requiring checks, the current \$6,850 budget seems appropriate.

Note *A \$350 reduction (eliminating the convention/conference and transportation allowance) is suggested as these are perceived as non-essential. However, concerns are raised about hindering the HR Director's ability to stay current with constantly changing regulations and network with peers.

Note Mr. Cunningham emphasized the changing nature of HR law, the importance of staying current and, and the valuable information the current Director brings back from conferences.

Note MOTION (3)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the employee background checks line by \$250 and the miscellaneous supplies line by \$250.

Mr. McAllister seconded the motion.

Note The Board and Mr. Gervais briefly discussed background checks.

Decision MOTION (3) Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note 5. Town Clerk-

Note The discussion centered on the Town Clerk's budget, specifically the miscellaneous supplies line, which increased from an actual of \$2,239 in 2024 to a proposed \$2,800. A potential \$300 reduction was suggested if the current year's spending hasn't significantly exceeded the budget.

Note *Current year spending shows \$1,500 spent and \$158 encumbered, leaving around \$250. However, encumbrances represent anticipated future spending under blanket purchase orders, not necessarily actual procurement to date.

Note The Board's discussion then shifted to the line item that includes dog licenses and ballots. The potential impact of increased early voting on the number of ballots needed was raised. It was clarified that the Town Clerk, purchases absentee ballots, while the Registrars' office handles ballots for early voting, same-day registration, and election day voting.

Note *The number of absentee ballots needed is uncertain due to the removal of excuse requirements for absentee voting. Additionally, the town needs to switch ballot providers for their new voting machines, and the cost of ballots is expected to increase with either of the two potential vendors.

Note *Given the uncertainties around absentee ballot numbers, the change in vendor, potential turnout increases due to early voting, and the minimum purchase requirements, there's reluctance to reduce the ballot budget. It's also noted that the miscellaneous supplies budget appears to be on track. Therefore, the Board felt it best that no reductions be made to either of these Town Clerk budget lines at this time.

Note 6. IT Budget-

Note The Board and Mr. Gervais discussed the Information Technology (IT) department's miscellaneous supplies budget and some of the following key points were highlighted:

*The miscellaneous supplies budget saw a significant increase from an actual expense of \$2,000 to a proposed \$34,800.

*A reduction of \$4,800 was suggested.

*The large increase is primarily due to a significant increase in the budget for town-wide computer replacements.

Note *Last year \$15,000 was set aside for this, but the IT Director, Dan Cleary, indicated that \$35,000 to \$40,000 annually is needed for a five-year replacement cycle.

*The proposed budget includes \$28,000 for this.

*The increase is a step towards the IT Director's goal, rather than an immediate jump to the full desired amount.

*The potential impact of tariffs on computer component costs is also mentioned as a factor to be considered while others felt that good computer deals can still be found.

Note MOTION (4)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the miscellaneous supplies in the IT budget from \$34,800 by \$4,800, to \$30,000. Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Note Mr. McAllister said he wants to make sure there's no cyber security risk incurred by reducing this line item.

Note Mr. Gervais explained the replacement schedule is focused on acquiring better equipment, not driven by security concerns.

Decision MOTION (4) Vote:
Motion carried, 5-1-0.
Nay- Mr. Steel.

Note Ms. Hall said she'd like to revisit the Registrars of Voters budget, specifically the election day expenses. Previously, a motion was passed to move \$26,400 from this line item to contingency. However, during that conversation, Ms. Sims, one of the Registrars, texted Mr. Gervais with information that suggested the funds would likely be needed. No formal vote was taken to move the money back from contingency. Therefore, she'd like to make a motion to reverse the previous action and restore the \$26,400 from contingency back to the election day expenses line item, bringing the total back to \$53,900.

Note MOTION (5)

Ms. Hall moved to restore the \$26,400 from contingency back to the election day expenses line item, bringing the total back to \$53,900.
Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Note The Board and Mr. Gervais discussed early voting and some of the following key points were highlighted:
*The Registrars of Voters are confident there will be the full 14 days of early voting and that any potential changes to same day voting by the current administration will not be in effect this year.
*For the last municipal elections, the turnout was close to 45%, which is within the average range of 40-45% for municipal elections.

Note *The \$26,000 allocated in the budget is specifically for the anticipated 14 days of early voting for the upcoming municipal election.
*The Government Administration and Elections (GAE) committee opted not to reduce the number of early voting days this year, wanting to study the impact over a full even and odd year election cycle.
*Bills aimed at shortening early voting days did not pass.

Note *The implementation of no-excuse absentee balloting on municipal election turnout is uncertain.

Note *Last year the town did receive an initial \$10,500 grant from the state for early voting setup and an additional grant of around \$5,500 for the general election to help offset early voting costs.
**It is currently uncertain if any similar grant funding will be received for the upcoming elections.

Decision MOTION (5) Vote:
Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Ms. Hall and Mr. Gervais briefly discussed all the town positions that are currently open, the hiring freeze, and how they might do without, given this year's budget constraints.

Note Mr. Steel said he'd like to comment on services to the community again and offered some of the following:

*He's questioning the continued \$2,500 funding for the Main Street organization, given that they previously received a total of \$69,000 in ARPA funding. (\$30,000 under a previous administration and \$39,000 under the current one.)

*The \$30,000 was for a study primarily focused on Niantic.

*The \$39,000 ARPA grant was allocated as follows- \$22,000 to enhance arts in Flanders and Niantic, \$12,000 for streetscape improvements specifically in Flanders, and \$5,000 for signs.

*He hasn't seen evidence of these projects being completed in Flanders and wonders if reports on the use of these grant funds have been received.

Task Mr. Gervais replied that while reports were received from most nonprofits, he isn't sure if one was received from Main Street, and he will follow up.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director

Note Jerry Lokken, Parks & Rec Director, came forward and clarified that the \$2,000 operational funding for Niantic Main Street is separate from the ARPA-funded projects. He emphasized that Niantic Main Street is an annual partner with the town on numerous operational expenses related to various events throughout the year, such as road races, tree lighting, buoys on the bay, and the watering of plants on Main Street by their volunteers.

He wants to ensure a distinction is made between the specific ARPA projects and the ongoing daily operational collaboration between Parks and Recreation and Niantic Main Street.

Note Mr. Maxfield noted that Mr. Steel's point is well taken, the previously mentioned Main Street-related items primarily benefit Niantic. He suggests that moving forward, it would be good to consider initiatives in the northern part of town. He mentioned Roseanne Hardy's new project focuses on the country's 250th anniversary, and an initial contact from Niantic expressed disinterest because it's centered on Flanders. He stressed that East Lyme encompasses more than just Niantic and that recognizing and supporting all parts of town is crucial for building a healthy community.

Note Ms. Hall suggested they continue to review miscellaneous supplies.

Note 7. Zoning Budget-

Note The Board and Mr. Gervais reviewed the Zoning budget and discussed some of the following items:

*Miscellaneous supplies had an actual of \$728 in 2024 and a request for \$1,200.

*\$869 has been spent so far, with \$185 encumbered, leaving \$144.

A review of expenditures shows an annual Adobe subscription and colored zoning maps as potential costs.

*The longevity line is for a bonus based on years of service, applicable to both union and non-union employees.

*The current Zoning Official has been there for nearly four decades.

Note 8. Planning Budget-

Note Some of the following items were discussed:

*Their miscellaneous supplies had a higher actual of \$1,500 in 2024.

*\$1,100 has been spent, leaving \$300.

Expenditures include an annual Zoom subscription (\$17/month) and an Adobe subscription.

*Dues for a planning association are \$470.

*The \$500 budgeted for professional conventions/conferences is fully expended and is now being covered under office supplies (a budget transfer will be done next month to correct this).

Note Mr. McAllister raised a question about the feasibility of using AI-based transcription services to generate meeting minutes instead of paying recording secretary fees, to potentially save money. He added that his workplace uses such software and offered to share the name. Mr. Gervais earmarked this idea for further consideration.

Note MOTION (6)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce miscellaneous supplies by \$200.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Note Mr. Steel asked if the proposed town-wide bulk Adobe licensing by IT would render individual subscriptions redundant and be considerably more cost-effective.

Note Ms. Hall, Mr. Steel and Mr. Gervais discussed how this would be another realized savings of \$250 since the cost for the adobe licensing is already part of the IT budget.

Decision Ms. Hall withdrew her previous motion, and Ms. McNamara withdrew her second.

Decision MOTION (7)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce miscellaneous supplies by \$450.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Task Mr. Steel requested clarification for Wednesday on the Adobe licenses being considered for purchase. He wants to understand the cost differences between shared and dedicated licenses and if there's a minimum number of licenses required to qualify for a bulk discount.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Note 9. Board of Finance Budget-

Note Ms. Hall made a suggestion to eliminate the \$1,000 miscellaneous supplies budget for the Board of Finance, as Mr. Gervais typically handles any related needs. In light of this proposed elimination for the Board of Finance, she will refrain from suggesting a cut to the miscellaneous supplies budget for the Finance Department itself.

Decision MOTION (8)

Ms. Hall moved to eliminate the \$1,000 in miscellaneous supplies in the Board of Finance budget.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-1. Contingency

Note Ms. Hall discussed some of the following with Mr. Gervais, Mr. Cunningham, and the rest of the Board:

Note 1. Coastal Resiliency-

*A proposed \$25,000 addition to the Coastal Resiliency fund is being proposed, but she's considering suggesting that they reduce it by \$15,000 to \$10,000.

*The fund doesn't yet exist formally as it hasn't been approved by ordinance, but the goal is to establish it and transfer \$22,500 (budgeted in the current year) into it.

*The town is working towards this fund for bond rating purposes.

*Other shoreline towns invest significantly more.

*While they have coastal risks (e.g., McCook's Point), the current focus is on consistent, albeit smaller, annual contributions to demonstrate commitment.

Reducing the proposed addition is seen as a potential way to slightly lower the mill rate in a tough budget year.

Note 2. OPEB Trust-

*The unfunded OPEB liability has decreased from \$8.5 million in 2019 to \$3 million currently, largely due to retirements and individuals going on Medicare.

*The proposed \$7,500 contribution is seen more as a startup cost and a symbolic gesture to show the town is addressing this liability for bond rating purposes, rather than significantly reducing the \$3 million.

*Establishing the trust allows for long-term investment strategies (unlike general fund restrictions) to better align assets with liabilities.

*The \$7,500 might also cover legal expenses for establishing the trust.

Decision MOTION (9)

Ms. Hall moved to decrease the coastal resiliency fund proposed budget of 25,000 by \$15,000, to a \$10,000 contribution.

Ms. McNamara seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Decision MOTION (10)

Ms. Hall moved to decrease the OPEB trust contribution by \$2,500 to \$5,000.

Mr. Maxfield seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Ms. Hall asked where they're currently at and Mr. Gervais reported that the current projected mill rate increase is 7.02%, down from the 7.06% at the start of this budget review session. The total budget reduction achieved so far on the town side is \$30,000 (from \$2,270,000 to \$2,244,000). While this is a small percentage decrease (about a tenth of a percent), it's progress.

Mr. Gervais believes that taking out \$50,000 per year would make a significant impact, and Ms. Hall observed that this aligns with her notes.

Note MOTION (11)

Ms. Hall moved to decrease the amount of money set aside in the general contingency fund by \$50,000, bringing the total in that fund down from \$300,000 to \$250,000.

Mr. Maxfield seconded the motion.

Note Mr. Mc Allister acknowledged that there have been a few "black swan" events this year and asked how much of the prior budgeted contingency has already been used due to these events.

Note Mr. Gervais detailed the following:

\$100,000 for additional Public Safety legal costs.

Around \$30,000 for the removal of a hazardous boat.

A payroll disruption related to 2021 health insurance deductions, which cost over \$25,000 for that year alone, with similar issues needing to be addressed for 2022 and 2023, totaling over \$75,000.

Note He noted that unusual expenses seem to occur annually, citing a dock washing up on the beach a couple of years prior (\$10,000) and the boat removal (\$29,875) as examples. Last year, \$25,000 was spent fixing a seawall.

Note The Board discussed the possibility of assessing fees to the owner of the hazardous boat, but it was noted that it was the owner's sole asset. An idea was raised to potentially earmark a portion of mooring permit fees to create a fund for unexpected marine-related expenses in the future.

Decision MOTION (11) Vote:
Motion carried, 4-2-0.

Yay- Ms. Hall, Mr. Maxfield, Mr. Birmingham and Ms. McNamara.

Nay- Mr. Steel and Mr. McAllister.

Note Mr. Steel said he knows they've been cutting and cutting, but he'd like to include a symbolic contribution of \$250 or \$500 to the Open Space Fund, so that they're symbolically building for the quality of life of our citizens.

Decision MOTION (12)

Mr. Steel moved to take \$500 out of operating and transfer it to the open space fund.

Mr. Maxfield seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-1-0.

Nay- Ms. Hall.

Note Ms. Hall said her reasoning is that purchasing land for open space removes it from the tax rolls. She also highlighted the significant investment made just last year in acquiring land at Oswegatchie Hills and Brainard Road.

Note Mr. Steel replied that studies suggest that open space can actually cost the town less than developed property due to the reduced need for services and infrastructure. He argued that the tax revenue from development can be offset by these additional costs. He believes this was demonstrated with the Oswegatchie acquisition, where cost avoidance in areas like public safety and education offset the loss of tax revenue. But given the recent significant investment in open space, he agrees that it's something to keep in mind for future considerations.

Note The Board continued their review of the budget.

3-2. Inland Wetlands

Note No reductions were made.

3-3. Brookside Farm Museum

Note No reductions were made.

3-4. Town Building Committee

Note Mr. Gervais said he doesn't believe any buildings are planned for this year, and that the schools have their own School Building Committee.

Decision MOTION (13)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the Town Building Committee budget from \$249 to a proposed budget of \$1. Ms. McNamara seconded the motion. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-5. Conservation of Natural Resources

Task Mr. Gervais and the Board discussed the Secretary line item. \$1,000 was budgeted for this, but only around \$90 has been spent. Mr. Gervais suspects that the Secretary's salary might be charged to a different account due to multiple individuals potentially doing recording work. It's also noted that only \$88 was spent on this line in 2024, reinforcing the idea of a potential accounting issue, possibly due to staff changes and double counting. This will be a follow-up item for discussion on Wednesday.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Note Ms. Hall asked about the miscellaneous supplies budget. In 2024, the actual spending was \$39. The department requested \$300 for the current budget, which was then reduced to \$150. As of the current time, they have not spent any of the budgeted \$150.

Decision MOTION (14)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the CNRC miscellaneous supplies budget by \$100, to \$50. Ms. McNamara seconded the motion. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-6. Historic Properties Commission

Note Ms. Hall noted she was looking at the service contracts and the actual expense for these contracts was \$1,930, but the budget request is for \$2,400. She proposes reducing the requested amount by \$400, since a budget of \$2,000 should be sufficient to cover the expenses.

Decision MOTION (15)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the service contracts line item in the Historic Properties Commission from \$2400 to \$2000. Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion. Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-7. Public Safety/Emergency

Note Ms. Hall said she had a hard time finding fault with their miscellaneous supplies since it went down 78%.

Note Mr. Steel noted that there seems to be a pretty big jump on the training line, yet no detail is provided.

Task Mr. Gervais said he will check with Ms. Wilson about her training line and ask for clarification about her dues.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Note Mr. Steel noted that Ms. Wilson is currently receiving a stipend in addition to her base salary. He inquired if the department has been operating effectively under her leadership.

Note Mr. Cunningham replied that Ms. Wilson is conducting drills, exercises, and is generally doing a great job. Mr. Steel replied that his hope is that in the future, this stipend might be eliminated, and that the Police Chief can focus solely on police activities.

Task Ms. Hall asked about the miscellaneous supplies budget, which is \$4,300. However, the provided detail only accounts for less than \$1,100 (including a \$195 Adobe subscription and \$800 for supplies). It's noted that this line item was \$18,000 in the past, with the majority of those funds being moved to the IT department for radio and communication-related expenses. The current breakdown of the \$4,300 is unclear, so Mr. Gervais will get more detail, and the Board will also revisit this on Wednesday.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

3-8. Dispatch

Note No reductions were made.

3-9. Police

Task The Board reviewed the Police budget and the discussed the training line item (51800). It was noted that the department requested \$70,000 for this, anticipating the hiring of two additional police officers. Since those positions haven't been added and the Board of Selectmen hasn't reduced this line, it's suggested that it should be decreased.

Mr. Gervais pointed out that upcoming retirements within the police force are coming up, and it's uncertain if lateral hires will continue at the same rate. He will make a note to ask Chief Macek about his training budget.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Note Ms. Hall asked about the Public Relations budget line stating that she knows it covers events like "Night Out." Mr. Gervais replied that \$445 has been spent on it so far.

Note MOTION (16)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the Public Relations line by \$500, to \$3,500.

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Note The Board briefly discussed the "Night Out" event and how it was cancelled this year.

Decision MOTION (17)

Ms. Hall amended her previous motion and moved to reduce the Public Relations line by \$2,000, to \$2,000.

Mr. Steel amended his second.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

3-10. Fire Services

Note Mr. Gervais and the Board discussed the Fire Services staffing and some of the following key points were highlighted:

*Currently, there are 11 firefighters, but two are leaving within the next month, reducing the force to 9.

*To maintain three crews of four firefighters, 12 are needed.

*The budget requests funding for a 12th firefighter starting July 1st, and a 13th firefighter at a later date.

*The long-term goal is to reach 18 firefighters, allowing for two at each of the three fire stations (Niantic, Flanders, and Rocky Neck).

*Currently, Station 2 (Rocky Neck) is primarily covered by EMTs from the East Lyme Ambulance Service, with no dedicated fire response.

Note Discussion ensued about the necessity of the 13th firefighter position and the potential cost savings of eliminating it. This would save \$40,458 in wages initially, but the full cost would be absorbed in the following year's budget.

Note Mr. Gervais shared the following:

*The departure of the two firefighters will exacerbate overtime issues, as the minimum staffing requirement is four firefighters per shift.

*The overtime budget is \$500,000, covering accrued time off (\$200,000), Saturday coverage (double time, \$82,000), and storm/event coverage (\$125,000).

Note *While there's an overtime budget, open shifts due to vacancies increase overtime costs.

*The lost straight-time pay from the vacant positions partially offsets the overtime expense.

*The department is actively trying to fill the vacancies, posting positions on Indeed.com.

*He's concerned about retaining firefighters, as other departments offer better pay and schedules.

Note The Board discussed whether the department could function effectively without the 13th firefighter. The consensus is that 12 firefighters are the immediate priority; maintaining a staff of 12 full-time firefighters is considered crucial to manage overtime costs and prevent burnout.

Note MOTION (18)

Ms. Hall moved to forgo filling the 13th firefighter position for the current year and to amend the budget to remove the corresponding salary and benefit costs.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Note The Board discussed the impact not filling the 13th position might have.

Decision MOTION (18) Vote:

Motion carried, 5-0-1.

Mr. Maxfield abstained from the vote.

3-11. Public Works

Note Ms. Hall explained that the town has lost its Town Engineer; the previous Deputy Public Works Director retired, and the Town Engineer was promoted to that role. The promoted individual still handles engineering duties and oversees the staff Civil Engineer. She suggests not filling that vacant position, which has \$45,000 budgeted for it (intended for funding halfway through the year, similar to the firefighter 13 position).

Note MOTION (19)

Ms. Hall moved to not fill the open engineer position, thereby reducing line item 51618 by \$45,000, and requested that any other expenditures associated with this position be identified for potential further reductions to be considered on Wednesday April 9th, 2025.

Mr. Steel seconded the motion.

Note Mr. Maxfield pointed out that the engineer's role is heavily involved in general contracting many town projects. He questions whether not filling the position would necessitate hiring external project management, potentially negating any cost savings. He suggests this is a question best asked of the Public Works Director or the engineer themselves.

Note Ms. Hall said she will withdraw her motion for now but is hopeful someone can be in attendance on Wednesday to address this topic.

Task Ms. Hall said she was also going to suggest reducing \$3,000 from storm water management, \$3,000 from road signage, and \$24,000 from road maintenance and repair, if Mr. Gervais would like to share that with Public Works as well.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task Mr. Birmingham said he was going to propose a \$5,000 reduction to the landfill groundwater monitoring budget. Mr. Gervais said he would note this item and ask the department about this.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

3-12. Culture & Recreation

Note MOTION (20)

Ms. Hall moved to reduce the library's requested increase of \$1,334,426 by \$26,500.
Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion.

Note Mr. McAllister inquired how she reached that figure and Ms. Hall explained the following:

The reduction brings the proposed budget to \$1,307,926.

This is still an increase from the previous year.

The initial request was \$1,334,426, and after the \$26,500 reduction, the new proposed amount is \$1,307,926.

This new figure represents a 5% increase to the library's budget compared to the adopted budget of \$1,231,860.

The goal is to keep budget increases below 5%.

The actual dollar increase, even with the cut, is approximately \$61,600.

Note Mr. Steel pointed out that the library has had very low increases in past years. He noted that publishing houses have strict and not very generous contracts, contributing to cost increases. The library is also a heavily used community resource that sponsors many events. While he understands the desire for a consistent 5% increase across departments, he feels the library deserves some flexibility due to its past low increases and community value.

Note Ms. McNamara echoed Mr. Steel's sentiment, agreeing with the principle of equity and a budget cut, but questioned the proposed amount.

Note Mr. McAllister asked the Library Director how she would implement a \$26,000 budget reduction if that was the outcome, and Ms. Timothy offered the following response:

*She would first assess the year-end financial situation- she's been holding back on book purchases (excluding e-books.)

*If the cut necessitates further action at the start of the next year, reducing Sunday hours would likely be the first step to cover part of the shortfall, potentially involving half Sundays or every other Sunday.

*The main areas for cuts are materials and operating hours, as most other expenses are contractual.

Note When asked why hours might be cut before materials, the Director explained that reducing materials would be the initial preference if it could cover the entire gap, but if not, Sunday hours are the next most viable option.

For Sunday usage, the library sees anywhere from 70 to 100 visitors in three hours, with up to 300 if there's a children's program. She acknowledged a specific population likely uses the library on Sundays but can't definitively identify them. The decision would require further analysis.

Decision MOTION (20) Vote:

Motion failed, 2-4-0.

Yay- Ms. Hall and Mr. Birmingham.

Nay- Mr. Steel, Mr. McAllister, Mr. Maxfield and Ms. McNamara.

Note MOTION (21)

Mr. McAllister moved to reduce the overall library increase by \$10,000 and expressed hope that this reduction will be achieved by cutting materials rather than reducing operating hours given that the library serves as a crucial community hub, especially on weekends.

Ms. Hall seconded the motion.

Note Ms. Timothy and the Board further reviewed the library budget.

Decision MOTION (21) Vote:

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note (Budget adjustments made so far.)

 [A - Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget Worksheet - BOF Adjustments 04-07-2025.xlsx](#)

4. Public Discussion

Note There was none.

5. Board Comments

Note Mr. McAllister acknowledged Ms. Hall's significant effort and thanked her for stepping forward to suggest those difficult cuts.

6. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (22)

Mr. Birmingham moved to adjourn the BOF April 7th, 2025, Special Meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Mr. Maxfield seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

Task Summary

New Tasks

Task Mr. Gervais replied that while reports were received from most nonprofits, he isn't sure if one was received from Main Street, and he will follow up.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director

Task Mr. Steel requested clarification for Wednesday on the Adobe licenses being considered for purchase. He wants to understand the cost differences between shared and dedicated licenses and if there's a minimum number of licenses required to qualify for a bulk discount.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task Mr. Gervais and the Board discussed the Secretary line item. \$1,000 was budgeted for this, but only around \$90 has been spent. Mr. Gervais suspects that the Secretary's salary might be charged to a different account due to multiple individuals potentially doing recording work. It's also noted that only \$88 was spent on this line in 2024, reinforcing the idea of a potential accounting issue, possibly due to staff changes and double counting. This will be a follow-up item for discussion on Wednesday.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task Mr. Gervais said he will check with Ms. Wilson about her training line and ask for clarification about her dues.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task Ms. Hall asked about the miscellaneous supplies budget, which is \$4,300. However, the provided detail only accounts for less than \$1,100 (including a \$195 Adobe subscription and \$800 for supplies). It's noted that this line item was \$18,000 in the past, with the majority of those funds being moved to the IT department for radio and communication-related expenses. The current breakdown of the \$4,300 is unclear, so Mr. Gervais will get more detail, and the Board will also revisit this on Wednesday.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task The Board reviewed the Police budget and the discussed the training line item (51800). It was noted that the department requested \$70,000 for this, anticipating the hiring of two additional police officers. Since those positions haven't been added and the Board of Selectmen hasn't reduced this line, it's suggested that it should be decreased.

Mr. Gervais pointed out that upcoming retirements within the police force are coming up, and it's uncertain if lateral hires will continue at the same rate. He will make a note to ask Chief Macek about his training budget.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task Ms. Hall said she was also going to suggest reducing \$3,000 from storm water management, \$3,000 from road signage, and \$24,000 from road maintenance and repair, if Mr. Gervais would like to share that with Public Works as well.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25

Task Mr. Birmingham said he was going to propose a \$5,000 reduction to the landfill groundwater monitoring budget. Mr. Gervais said he would notate this item and ask the department about this.

Owned by Kevin Gervais, Finance Director due 04/09/25