Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Budget Work Session
Meeting – December 9, 2025
Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room
620 Old Homestead Hwy, Swanzey, NH

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair W. William Hutwelker III at 09:57 a.m. at Town Hall, Old Homestead Hwy, Swanzey, NH. Present were Selectmen W. William Hutwelker III, James Tempesta and Mark Labelle. Also present was Town Administrator Lori Rautiola and Administrative Assistant Katie Collins.

OTHERS PRESENT

Theresa Lounder, Chief Gonsalves, Chief Mattson, Deputy Chief Mike Burke, Ashlee Crosby, Josh Whipple and Joe DiRusso

Budget Work Sessions

Theresa Lounder discussed the deferred compensation plan for retirement, noting that only current participants will be included in the budget. She also reviewed the IT support agreement. Discussion followed regarding ambulance service costs, estimated at approximately $140,000, with the intent to gradually reach the full amount by budgeting in thirds or quarters.

Police Department

Police Department Session – 10:05 a.m.
Chief Gonsalves reviewed the Police Department budget and staffing levels. He reported that the department currently has full-time personnel and would like to maintain current staffing levels, with the goal of hiring an additional one to two officers. The department currently has no part-time officers and he is hopeful to add a School Resource Officer (SRO). Overtime expenses have increased; however, Chief Gonsalves noted that overtime costs would decrease if additional officers were hired.

Selectboard Chair Hutwelker suggested considering hiring a mid-year officer. Chief Gonsalves stated that interviews are expected to take place soon. Town Administrator Lori Rautiola noted that the budget reflects only the 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and does not include merit increases. Hutwelker suggested that officers sign contracts and asked if costs could be reduced; brief discussion followed.

Lori suggested reducing the PTO budget line to $85,000. Hutwelker asked whether the phone budget line could be reduced by $100; Chief Gonsalves confirmed that it could. Lori added that the Town recently signed with a new provider, which will lower the phone bill.

Dues and subscriptions were reviewed and reduced from $5,500 to $3,000. Office supplies were reviewed and remained unchanged. The vest program budget was increased to $4,000. Professional development expenses were reviewed and remained unchanged.

Ammunition expenses were reviewed and remained at $7,000. Case expenses remained unchanged. Lori stated she would look into the internet services, noting that the department currently uses two different providers; this line item will remain unchanged pending further investigation. Fuel costs were discussed and will be reduced. Supplies, new equipment, custodial expenses, and vehicle maintenance were reviewed and will remain unchanged.

The Police Department budget work session concluded at 10:42 a.m.

Recreation Department

Recreation Department -10:42 a.m.
Discussion was held regarding department expenditures and upcoming events.

Staffing: The part-time employee position is planned to transition to full-time status in mid-June when summer camp begins. For half of the year, the employee will work 30 hours per week, and for the remaining half, 40 hours per week.

Recruitment: It was noted that more was spent on recruitment last year than budgeted. Recreation Director Ashlee Crosby stated that recruitment expenses will not be needed next year and the budget can be lowered.

Electricity: Hutwelker noted that the electricity line items do not match the figures provided by Theresa. The department will ensure the numbers are reconciled.

Maintenance: The maintenance budget line was reviewed and will remain unchanged.

Lifeguard: The lifeguard budget was briefly discussed and will remain unchanged.

Plumbing: Ashlee noted that the holding tanks at South Road and Richardson Park will need pumping.

Revenue: Revenue was reviewed. Funds sit in the revolving fund, and $14,000 was generated from sponsor donations.

Events: Old Home Day will continue to be managed by the Recreation Department next year. The 250th Town Anniversary was discussed, and it was suggested to form a committee. Hutwelker stated that he knows at least four or five people interested in serving. Hutwelker also asked whether the Old Home Day budget could be reduced; this was briefly discussed.

The Recreation Department budget work session concluded at 10:58 a.m.

Recycling Center

Recycling Center Budget Session – 10:58 a.m.
Josh Whipple reviewed the Recycling Center budget and potential adjustments for the upcoming year:

Glass: The budget can be reduced to $2,200, reflecting anticipated savings next year.

Gas & Vehicle Equipment: This line can be reduced to $100.

Maintenance & Repairs: Proposed reduction of $600.

Mileage: Will remain unchanged.

Supplies: Hutwelker inquired whether the budget needed to increase; Josh stated no adjustment is necessary.

Heat: The budget will remain the same.

Electricity & Heat: Current expenses were over budget; Josh noted that savings are expected next year.

Freight/Transportation: Hutwelker asked why the line was low; discussion followed, noting there are still expenses to be incurred.

Metal Disposal: Hutwelker asked if this line could be reduced; Josh stated it cannot, due to unpredictable costs.

Recycling Center budget work session concluded at 11:15 a.m.

Fire Department

Fire Department Budget Session – 11:15 a.m.

The Fire Department budget was reviewed. Discussion was held regarding full-time salaries, and it was noted that the department will revisit the possibility of hiring an administrative assistant next year for at least 20 hours per week. The part-time salary line was reviewed and will be reduced to $67,000.

Overtime was discussed. Hutwelker asked about its use, and Chief Mattson stated that overtime should not be necessary. The on-call stipend was reviewed, and Hutwelker suggested increasing it to $2,400.

Uniform expenses were reviewed. The current budget is $8,000, with approximately $2,000 spent. Hutwelker asked whether the line could be reduced to $3,000; Mattson confirmed that it could. Service contracts for training were reviewed and reduced to $1,500. Physicals were increased due to a company coming on-site to conduct them. The retention line was reviewed and reduced to $2,500.

Protective clothing expenses were discussed, and Burke recommended keeping this line item unchanged. Hutwelker asked Theresa whether there was a reserve for gear. Theresa stated that the Town has a fire/rescue tools reserve and that she would need to check whether protective gear could be included. Hutwelker asked whether this could be amended, and discussion followed.

Office supplies were reviewed. Hutwelker noted that only 25% of the budget had been used. Burke recommended keeping the line item as budgeted due to upcoming outfitting needs for the new fire station and stated that a list of required items will be provided.

Equipment maintenance and repair was discussed, noting that the line is currently over budget. Burke stated that ladder maintenance accounted for a significant portion of the cost.

Vehicle maintenance was discussed. Burke stated that the ladder truck will continue to be in service. Hutwelker suggested speaking with the Trustees regarding establishing a dedicated fund to address vehicle maintenance costs rather than managing significant year-to-year fluctuations. Hutwelker asked whether the vehicle maintenance line could be reduced from $50,000 to $35,000, with $10,000 placed into an expendable trust. Mattson agreed.

Tires were discussed. Burke noted that tires have a shelf life and require periodic replacement. Hutwelker requested a report on tire replacement to determine whether establishing a separate trust fund would be appropriate.

Dues and subscriptions were reviewed and will remain unchanged. Codes and standards were reviewed and

will remain unchanged. Tools and equipment were discussed. Burke stated that a new hose is needed. Hutwelker asked whether the hose could be purchased in the current year due to remaining funds. Burke stated that he will purchase the hose this year, allowing the tools and equipment line to be reduced to $5,000 for next year.

Training expenses were discussed and reduced to $1,400. Cell phone and internet expenses were reviewed. Lori stated that costs will be reduced due to the removal of one phone line. Hutwelker asked whether radio repair expenses could be reduced to $6,000; Mattson stated that this reduction is not feasible.

Building maintenance was discussed. Burke stated that a new door is needed. DiRusso requested that Burke send an email so the matter can be discussed further regarding replacement. Department supplies were reviewed and will remain unchanged.

IT expenses were discussed and reduced to $10,000. Lori noted that some IT costs will be covered through the Town's IT budget.

The Fire Department budget work session concluded at 12:25 p.m.

Department of Public Works and Wastewater

DiRusso reviewed the Department of Public Works budget and proposed adjustments for the upcoming year. Changes to sewer line maintenance were discussed, noting that flushing wastewater previously covered nearly all of West Swanzey and cleaning in North Swanzey. The prior budget of $15,000 has been reduced to $7,500. Manholes were reviewed, and DiRusso stated that existing infrastructure is adequate.

Full-time salaries and the highway line were level funded. The part-time line decreased due to the elimination of a position. Phones and internet were briefly discussed, with no changes proposed. The increase in the outside labor line was explained by the need to clean catch basins, screen road sand, and perform street sweeping. Heating fuel and building maintenance will remain unchanged. Training expenses can be reduced by half to $750. Gas and diesel costs were reviewed and reduced to $2,500 and $3,500, respectively. Tires, culverts, and repair and maintenance lines were discussed, and DiRusso noted that these items must remain at their current funding levels.

Cemeteries

DiRusso reviewed the Cemeteries budget. He stated that the part-time line needs to be reviewed and noted that the department should only have one part-time employee; this line can be reduced to $20,000. Overtime expenses will remain as budgeted. Property maintenance was reduced due to paving being removed from the budget.

The Cemeteries budget work session concluded at 1:35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Labelle. The motion was seconded by Tempesta without further discussion. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.*** Adjournment occurred at 1:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katie Collins, Administrative Assistant

Approved on December 23, 2025