

2025-11-24 Board of Selectmen Minutes

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2025 November 24
Location: Sam Lake House

Selectmen: Scott Doherty (Chair), Beth Blair, Calvin Todd

Town Administrator: Ken Folsom

Others Present: Kal McKay (Admin Assistant), Edgar Rivera (Libertad Press NE)

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.
2. Administration
 - a. The Selectboard discussed scheduling for a walkthrough of the Transfer Station. They decided on 12/3 at 1 p.m.
 - b. Scott made a motion to accept terms of the Highway Safety Grant as presented in the amount of \$8,500 and further to authorize Town Administrator Ken Folsom to sign all documents related to the grant. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - c. Beth made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$12,009.12. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
3. 2026 Budget
 - a. Copies of the latest draft of the 2026 Budget, a wage proposal from Chief Crotty, and the latest list of town-owned vehicles was distributed.
 - b. There was discussion about potential warrant articles.
 - i. Ruth Heath of the Energy Committee may need a warrant article for the C-PACER program she is looking into. If it requires a zoning amendment, it will have different deadlines than the others from the Selectboard.
 - ii. There aren't any questions currently on:
 1. Slide-in water tank for the Highway, \$18K, no tax impact (Highway equipment CRF)
 2. Replace T1, \$250K, no tax impact (Highway equipment and truck CRFs)
 3. Fire Dept. Rescue 1 replace with Command Car and get new Command Car, \$100K, no tax impact (Rescue Truck CRF)
 4. PD replace 2018 cruiser. CIP says 2 cruisers in 2026, but there is enough surplus money this year to buy 1. \$67K but likely trade in value.
 5. Copier for town offices, \$2,500.
 - iii. There are outstanding questions on:
 1. Waste oil burner for Highway, \$20K
 2. Used packer to replace old one at Transfer Station, \$150K
 3. Replace storage trailer at Transfer Station with new containers
 4. Replace pickup truck at Highway.
 1. This truck can no longer pass inspection. It was originally given to Highway by PD.
 2. It is used extensively to run errands and pull mowers around. They would like a replacement, but it is a nice to have, not drastically needed.
 3. A new-to-us F250 could be obtained for \$50K.
 4. There was discussion about shuffling the cars around between departments. Maybe one of the old PD cruisers could be used for this.
 5. Lease bathroom trailer for the Transfer Station.
 1. We don't have estimates for it yet.

2025-11-24 Board of Selectmen Minutes

2. Scott spoke with Transfer Station Manager David Bowles and David is not in favor of the trailer. Ken also spoke with David and got the same answer. He appreciates the sentiment, but doesn't think it is necessary.
 3. The Selectboard will still get prices for this, but will not pursue it.
 6. The Capital Reserve Fund contribution warrant article will be going up.
 1. Building Maintenance CRF going from \$5K to \$10K since buildings are aging.
 2. We need to start funding the next fire engine at \$50K per year.
 3. The Selectboard need to decide what to do about the Transfer Station and begin saving for those projects.
- c. There was discussion about the list of vehicles.
- i. Sterling Packer 1999
 1. 32K miles and 24K hours. The hopper has rotted through again so it needs plating (done this once before). The turbo charger is making noise and may need replacement.
 2. Ken has found used ones from \$126K to \$150K.
 3. Converting the hydraulics to electric is very doable, but would cost \$20K.
 - ii. Spreaders
 1. T2 and T3 2020 Spreaders are in fair condition. The floors are getting thin so we have a couple more years at most.
 2. T7 Spreader is in poor condition. We think the chain is locked up and not sure if it is fixable.
 3. We don't know the cost of a new full-size spreader. It is \$7K for a small one.
 - iii. The Selectboard discussed building a shed for the spreaders both to protect the equipment and make it easier/safer to put them on the trucks.
 1. We have 3 large spreaders, not sure if we would want to include the smaller ones too.
 2. It is a little late for this year's budget, but Ken could get quotes.
 3. The building would be about 80 ft by 20/16 ft, no sides, just a roof to hang equipment from and keep things from falling on top.
- d. There was discussion about wages.
- i. Ken provided an updated wage survey.
 1. Some lines are FY 2023 or 2024.
 2. Chichester is on here, but they have been in turmoil over the Town Admin salary.
 3. If the Road Agent salary is translated to hourly it is \$35.13. If you include the 8.5 avg overtime per week it drops to \$28.99.
 4. Canterbury is a little low in some lines and in the middle on others.
 5. CPI this year looks to be ~3%. This budget has a 4% COLA placeholder. The Selectboard agreed to 4% COLA to help retention.
 - ii. The Selectboard reviewed the 2026 wage proposal from Chief Crotty for the Police Dept.
 1. This brings up wages to be on par with towns of similar sizes and adds a step system.
 2. The 2026 increase would be 14.9% for Dumas (\$27.95 to \$32.11), 11.8% for Dupuis (\$32.70 to \$34), 19.7% for Westgate (\$30.24 to \$36.21), and 3% for Sepessy (\$21.84 to \$22.50).
 3. Calvin was skeptical about the increases. He felt those were dramatic raises and wanted to know what the Town would get in return.
 4. Ken explained that Chief Crotty has proposed this for recruitment and retention. There has been a vacancy in the Dept. for a year and due to our wages being lower than other towns, we have been unable to hire someone.
 5. There was a discussion about the different jobs within the PD, what they do, what levels are needed, and what level the vacancy would be hired at.

2025-11-24 Board of Selectmen Minutes

6. The Selectboard decided to invite Chief Crotty in to the next regular Selectboard meeting so they could talk through their questions with him.
 7. The Selectboard decided that Deanna Sepessy should at least have the same COLA as everyone else, so her pay should be bumped 4% instead of 3%.
- iii. The Selectboard discussed the 2026 budget and wages for the Library.
1. The proposed budget from the Library Trustees increases wages from \$155,356 to \$170,302 (+9.6%), the overall Library budget from \$257,971 to \$275,756 (+6.9%), and the contribution from the trust funds from \$9K to \$23,946.
 2. Ken created a wage and operating budget comparison for the Library using the same towns we use to compare all of the other departments. (Andover, Chichester, Dunbarton, New Hampton, and Webster) This comparison shows that Canterbury spends an average of \$200K more on their Library operating budget than those towns.
 3. The Selectboard has the authority to reduce the bottom line of the Library budget, but cannot dictate how the money is spent.
 4. The Selectboard decided to invite the Library Trustees in to the next regular Selectboard meeting so they could talk through the same questions as they had for the PD.
- iv. The Selectboard will begin the 12/1 meeting at 4 p.m. to allow time to meet with Chief Crotty and the Library Trustees.
- e. There was discussion about the operating budget.
- i. Ken reviewed each line that went up or down and explained why.
 - ii. General Government is up 6.5% (\$56,045 increase).
 - iii. The Police Department wages are up 18.9% (\$50,337 increase).
 1. There was some discussion about PD staffing and if the currently vacant position actually needs to be filled.
 2. In 2016, the Sheriff's Dept. made recommendations about what coverage was needed for the Town and our Police Chiefs have been trying to staff to that level. The Sheriff's Dept. likely wouldn't do that for us again, but we could do a similar assessment ourselves, though likely not fast enough for this budget cycle.
 3. Currently the State doesn't charge us for coverage outside of our normal hours, but they will begin to do so when the municipality reaches a population of 3000 people (currently ~2500). The State is currently 70-80 troopers short staffed and are not willing to take on policing for any additional towns. Leaving coverage to the State is also an issue because there are no guarantees about response time and availability.
 - iv. The overall PD budget is up 12.2% (\$71,146), most of that is wages. Dispatch is up \$5K.
 - v. Ken is looking into creating a special fund for PD off duty details. A lot of towns do this and it makes budgeting easier since you can never really know how much to expect in a year. Money received for these details would go into the account and the Town would use that money to pay wages and buy equipment for the PD.
 - vi. Fire Dept. wages are up a little. Chief Gamache determines per diem rates based on the market. The overall FD budget is up 3.9% (\$11,792).
 - vii. Highway wages are up 11.2% (\$25,350) to try and achieve full staffing. The health insurance rate will depend on if we are able to fill the vacancies. The overall Highways & Streets budget is up 5.1% (\$47,515).
 - viii. The C&D and Co-op fees per ton are both going up. The overall Solid Waste budget is up 9.8% (\$17,013).
 - ix. The CCPC budgets were cut due to the reduced activity of the Committee.
 - x. We don't have the numbers from Penacook Rescue Squad yet, but we put a 7% placeholder for now. Last year they took \$60K from their capital reserves to cover payroll, but that was a one-time deal.

2025-11-24 Board of Selectmen Minutes

- xi. The 4th of July cost (4583.2) is up \$2K. Originally JPI Pyrotechnics told us that it would be \$25K to get the fireworks done on the 4th of July (rather than the week before or after), but they watched the Selectboard meeting where the Board discussed what to do and were moved by Calvin's words. They contacted us to offer to do it on the 4th for \$10K instead.
 - xii. Overall the operating budget is up ~8.4% (\$292K).
 - f. The Selectboard discussed if it would be possible/reasonable to not fill the vacancies at the Transfer Station and Police Department and just raise wages to try to retain those we have. For the PD, it came back to wanting to discuss their concerns with Chief Crotty.
 - g. Last year the Budget Committee asked the Selectboard to not go above a 4% overall increase. Scott felt cutting to 4% was doable for this year as well.
 - h. There was discussion about the issues with the fire engine costs and supply chain. There is currently a congressional investigation into the issue.
 - i. The School District will be posting their budget development meeting videos. Calvin will be going to their first meeting in Canterbury next month.
4. Adjournment
- a. Scott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Next Meeting: 2025 December 1, 5:00 p.m. at the Meeting House

Minutes submitted by Kal McKay, Administrative Assistant