

2026-01-12 Board of Selectmen Minutes

Town of Canterbury, NH
Board of Selectmen
Date: 2026 January 12
Location: Meeting House

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

Town Administrator: Ken Folsom

Others Present: Kal McKay (Admin Assistant), Mary Hauptman (Accounting Clerk)

1. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.
2. Administration
 - a. Beth made a motion to sign the Accounts Payable Manifest in the amount of \$1,275. Scott seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.
 - b. Scott signed check for HVAC for the Sam Lake House Garage.
3. 2026 Budget
 - a. Library Budget
 - i. Ken explained how the bookkeeping for the Library works. The budget that is approved at Town Meeting shows how much the Library Trustees and the Town each agree to contribute to the expenses. Throughout the year, expenses are put to either Trust lines or Town lines in the general ledger. Half way through the year, the Library Trustees pay the Town half of what they committed to in the Town Report. At the end of the year the Library and the Town balance the books to see how much of the budget was actually spent and who owes what to whom.
 - ii. Kal and Mary explained that the balancing at the end of the year has been using the wrong formula. When the original calculation for 2025 was done, the wrong amount was calculated. When the correct formula is used, there is still more owed to the Town from the Library.
 - iii. It looks like this issue has never been noticed before because of how the budget was organized and because the amount the calculation has been off was always fairly small. In 2025, the Library overspent their budget, so it was more obvious that there was an error.
 - iv. Kal presented a new way to organize the budget lines so that this calculation error won't happen again. This will combine the lines in the general ledger so that expenses are no longer classified as Trust or Town. The Library section of the budget will be reduced to one line in the Town Report so that only the portion to be raised by taxes is counted towards the operating budget. The actual budget for the Library will be on a separate page and show the expenses from the Library Trustees' perspective. This will make it easier to see what was actually spent for each expense type. The contribution from the Town will show as an offset to the Library Trustees' budget.
 - v. The Selectboard agreed on the new format and to ask for the additional money for 2025.
 - vi. The Selectboard discussed what the bottom line budget for the Library should be. At the 12/15 meeting, they agreed to \$265K without including the healthcare cost increases. Since then the healthcare cost increases have been determined to be \$35K. So the Selectboard decided to budget \$300K for the Library.
 - vii. The Selectboard and Ken will attend the Library Trustees' meeting tonight to discuss.
 - b. Police Dept. Budget
 - i. The Selectboard discussed the wage step program proposed by Chief Crotty.

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- ii. Calvin wanted more time to evaluate the step program and get more information about what coverage is currently needed for the town.
 - iii. Beth agreed that waiting until next year to implement the program would allow more time to think and ensure the Selectboard make a budget-conscious decision.
 - iv. Scott spoke about how poaching has made hiring and retaining more difficult. He wanted more information about the job description for Sergeant and how that position would work with the existing Lieutenant.
 - v. The Selectboard discussed the idea of doing a COLA raise for 2026 and implementing the step program after further consideration in 2027.
 - vi. There was discussion about the MRI (NH Municipal Resources Inc.) report from 2005 and the MCSO (NH Municipal and County Sheriff's Office) report from 2015 which both studied what hours and staffing the Canterbury PD needed to provide adequate coverage for the town. Since Michael Labrecque became Police Chief in 2016, the PD staffing has been trying to meet the goals from the 2015 report.
 - vii. Ken and Scott felt that the report doesn't yet need to be redone since the population level hasn't changed significantly since 2015 and current staffing appears to be working.
 - viii. The Selectboard discussed if the current vacancy in the PD needs to be filled or if the current staffing of 3 full-time and 1 part-time officers was enough. If the 4th full-time position was cut, that would save roughly \$100K and there would be enough money to give the remaining officers raises/retention bonuses.
 - ix. There was discussion about if the 4th full-time officer could be a 2nd part-timer instead. That would be cheaper, but part-timers are still hard to find and there are reliability/scheduling problems when the officer is beholden to wherever they work full-time. The PD was lucky for many years to have Michael Labrecque and Michael Crockwell who were retired and able to prioritize their part-time work in Canterbury.
 - x. The Selectboard decided to ask the Chief to do a limited study to update the 2015 report and determine if the current hours and 4 full-timer staffing was still needed.
 - xi. There was discussion about using a retention bonus to entice the current officers to stay for another year while the step program is evaluated. Using a bonus plus 3.5% COLA would make the officers "whole" without memorializing the increased wages.
 - xii. The Selectboard decided to do a bonus of 10% of the officer's annualized 2025 wages plus \$1K. This would spend about half of the money saved by removing the 4th full-timer from the budget and pay more than if the step program was implemented this year.
- c. Extrication Equipment Warrant Article
- i. This morning Chief Gamache spoke with Ken about buying new extrication equipment (aka jaws of life). Currently the Fire Dept. uses equipment powered by a gas engine. This is not super convenient because it has hoses that go between the generator and the equipment.
 - ii. Chief Gamache would like to buy battery-powered equipment instead. This would cost \$50K. \$40K could come from the Firefighting Equipment CRF and \$10K would have to be raised by taxes.
 - iii. The Selectboard agreed to include it on the warrant.
- d. Diesel Pump Totalizer
- i. The diesel pump totalizer at the Municipal Complex hasn't been working for many months. This has made bookkeeping very difficult. We can use the security cameras to see who was there, but without the totalizer, we can't tell how much fuel they took. The Selectboard previously discussed implementing a card reader system, but that would cost \$16K.
 - ii. Ken was able to find an almost exact replacement pump for \$2,343. An electrician would be needed to install it. If the Selectboard agree, Ken thinks this could be absorbed in the 2026 budget on the maintenance line.

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- e. 2025 Actual Expenses
 - i. The bottom line of the budget makes it look like the operating budget in 2025 was overspent. In reality, it was underspent, but large grants like the ARPA and SB401 money had to be included as both an expense and an offset.
 - ii. This has never happened before so Ken asked the auditors what to do. The auditor said this isn't a problem since the offsets will be entered into one of the MS forms sent to the DRA and that will show the budget was not actually overspent.
4. The Selectboard discussed several options for the 2025 Town Report dedication. They decided on a person and Beth will do the write-up.
5. Unused PTO
 - a. The Town's Personnel Policy allows accrual of 2 years worth of vacation time. If someone doesn't use their vacation time, they lose the unused hours.
 - b. This year there are 6 people who are going to lose time: Ken, Transfer Station Manager David Bowles, Accounting Clerk Mark Hauptman, Road Agent John O'Connor, Town Clerk-Tax Collector Sam Papps. Since Ken is on the list, he did not feel comfortable making any decisions about this.
 - c. Beth asked Ken to calculate the value of the lost hours using their 2025 pay rates. In total, the lost time was worth ~\$10K.
 - d. Beth is concerned that the people who are on the list didn't take vacation because we were understaffed in 2025 and if they had taken PTO, their jobs wouldn't have gotten done.
 - e. The Selectboard decided to do a one-time repayment to the named employees for their unused PTO. They noted this does not change the personnel policy and they will not be doing it again next year. This expense will be included in the 2026 budget since the 2025 books are closed.
6. CD Investments
 - a. Mary and Ken met with TD Bank about the CD investments to see what to do next.
 - b. They decided to do another round of laddered CDs: one for 1 month, one for 2 months, and one for 3 months.
 - c. The bond sale is this week, but the money won't be needed until the fire engine is delivered in May/June. This money could also be put into a CD to gain a little interest before it has to be spent.
7. Adjournment
 - a. Scott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:33 p.m. Beth seconded. All in favor by roll call, motion carried.

Minutes submitted by Kal McKay, Administrative Assistant