



Board of Selectmen
Budget Hearing Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
Mallory Town Hall @ 7:00 PM

Members Present:

Don Lowe (First Selectman), Joel Bruzinski (Selectman), Bob Ostrosky (Selectman), Liz LaVia (Business Manager), Andrea Maloney (Treasurer)

Also Present:

Ashleigh Blake (Executive Director, Sherman Library), Barbara Ireland (Board Member, Sherman Library), Karen Fildes (Assistant Principal, Sherman School), Michelle Sanford (Senior Accountant, Sherman School), Tim Laughlin (Board of Education Member) and members of the public.

Call to Order:

D. Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Presentation of Budget

D. Lowe opened the meeting providing a high-level view of the budget and cost drivers for this cycle. B. Ostrosky pointed out that of the \$1.5M increase, debt accounts for \$1.2M with the remainder of the increase split evenly between the town and school budgets.

Per A. Maloney the grand list grew 1.3%. The decision will need to be made as to how much will be used from the general fund and how much from the bond premium. B. Ostrosky provided additional background on the requirements of the debt service and advised a full revaluation anticipated in 2028 has also factored into the financial modeling.

Discussion shifted to the school budget. D. Lowe and A. Maloney thanked the school for their diligence in working to keep budget increases low. T. Laughlin explained that the school budget is formatted now into cost centers per statutory requirements, which all consider a positive update.

D. Lowe then moved the discussion to the Sherman Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) and Sherman Library budget requests. He explained that the increase for the SVFD budget is predominantly a public safety issue as it is designed to provide 24x7 ambulance coverage for the town. He then stated that he would like to see the library receive their requested increase given

their impact on the community in addition to the fact that they have presented flat or minimally increased budgets over the last several years. A short discussion ensued about whether or not to spread the total increase over a two-year period.

L. LaVia summarized the budget hearing discussion. The proposed budget amounts for the town and school for the fiscal year 2026-2027 are respectively: \$7,934,192 and \$10,095,148 for a total budget figure of \$18,029,340, resulting in a 9.41% increase. With the application of General Fund surplus of \$660,000 and \$500,000 of Bond Premium applied, the result is \$16,869,340. This application represents a 2.37% budget increase year-over-year and equates to a mil rate of 17.41, which is a 4.44% increase year-over-year. Without the two capital projects (school renovation and new senior center) the mil rate was originally anticipated to be 17.08 for the upcoming fiscal year.

The matter of approving the budget to be sent to an adjourned town meeting for discussion prior to referendum will be undertaken at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2026. The adjourned town meeting is scheduled for April 18th.

B. Ostrosky **made a motion** to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Seconded by: J. Bruzinski

Vote For: Unanimous

Minutes respectfully submitted on April 2, 2026 by Christine Aruza