



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 15, 2025
Whipple Memorial Town Hall
6:00 PM

Budget Committee Members Present: Charles Kelsey (Chair), Chris Lorio (Vice Chair), Lou Botta, Kim Ilg, Karen Epstein, Megan Brown, John Tilley, Richard Anderson, Board of Selectmen
Representative Absent: Cynthia Ruis, Lyndsey Lund Harkins

Town Staff Members Present: Ashley Seybold, Town Administrator; Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

Also Present: New London Resident(s): John Ellis

Chair Kelsey called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

1. Agenda Recap

- **Agenda:**

- Approval of minutes from the last meeting (October 1, 2025)
- Board of Selectmen update from Richard Anderson
- Discussion of meeting schedule and potential adjustments
- High-level review of the MS535 from Lynn Lewis
- Discussion on department area meetings and reports
- Public input
- Action items and meeting evaluation

2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the October 1, 2025, were presented reflecting adjustments. Motion to accept the minutes was made and seconded. **IT WAS MOVED** (Lou Botta) **AND SECONDED** (John Tilley) to approve the Minutes of October 1, 2025. **The Motion was Approved Unanimously.**

3. Board of Selectmen Update: Richard Anderson

- Department of Public Works (DPW) Building /Complex status: Three proposals received for the design of a new DPW building. Sam Clarke and Adam Ricker will review, evaluate, and score the proposals. The Board of Selectmen is expected to discuss and potentially make recommendations at its next meeting on Thursday, October 23, 2025. The design will include the feasibility of a dual-purpose site for the Police and Public Works Departments.
- Elkins Beach: Putnam Kidder to complete the installation of a new swing set at Elkins Beach.
- Fire Department Association: Fundraising effort has enabled the purchase of a shed for equipment storage, at no cost to the town. Concerns were raised about the fire department needing to fundraise for things that should be covered by the town budget. The shed is 12ft by 16ft in size.

4. Budget Committee Meeting Schedule Discussion: A Proposal was made to consolidate some meetings to accommodate members with significant work and other schedule challenges.

- Schedule Adjustments were discussed and accepted as follows:
 - October 29th: Combine Library, Police, and Dispatch.
 - November 5th: No meeting.
 - November 12th: Fire Department and Emergency Management.
 - November 19th: Committees and Associations.
 - December 3rd: Department of Public Works and Town Administration.
 - December 10th: No meeting.
 - December 17th: Revenues Cap, Reserves, Debt Obligations

The remainder of the schedule, as previously published, remained unchanged. Ashley Seybold made the committee aware of additional key dates and deadlines as follows: February 6, 2026, the Last day for giving notice; February 13, 2026, public hearing on the annual budget. [RSA 32:5, I – 7 days before budget hearing]; February 13, 2026, Last day to hold at least one public hearing on annual budget (can hold supplemental public hearings after 2/13, provided the first public hearing is on or before 2/13). [RSA 32:5, I & V – 25 days before town meeting]; February 16, 2026, Last day for Board of Selectmen to publish notice of time, place, and subject of public hearing on bond/note issue over \$100,000. [RSA 33:8-a, I -7 days before February 23, 2026]. February 18, 2026, is the Last day for the Budget Committee to submit two copies of the annual budget to the Board of Selectmen for posting with the warrant. [RSA 32:16, IV- at least 20 days before the town meeting].

Action Item: Charles Kelsey agreed to update the schedule and share it with Ashley Seybold for her review. Once completed, the schedule will be distributed to all members.

5. MS535 Review: Lynn Lewis provided the following information regarding the Fiscal Year End MS535 report filed by the auditors with the NH Department of Revenue Administration (DRA):

- MS535 is a document filed with the DRA that represents a snapshot of the town's finances at the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2025).
- The unspent appropriation balance was \$14,000. This balance was achieved by a spending freeze initiated in May by Lynn Lewis across all departments. No services were materially or adversely affected. However, this was the reason the study on the Department of Public Works building was delayed .
- The change in the Unreserved Fund Balance was approximately 6 % of the General Fund Expenditures. The Board of Selectmen has used the Unreserved Fund Balance to “buy down” the annual tax rate, which, if done, will cause the percentage to drop near the low range of the recommended range of 5% - 17%.
- Lou Botta conveyed the need to consider that a municipality maintain funding reserves for unforeseen events to be able to finance a part of the non-federal share of disaster response and recovery. Under current law, Stafford Act, [P.L. 93-288](#), as amended, states that municipalities and other eligible entities are normally responsible for no less than 25% of the costs of disaster response and recovery. While during overwhelming federal disasters the President has authorized 90% and in some cases 100% of the federal share, we can expect

these cases to diminish. Under RSA 21-P:37-d, the State of New Hampshire may consider a municipality's application for an amount not to exceed 50% of the non-federal share of projects eligible for costs relating to public assistance disaster grants and hazard mitigation grants. While there is no question that local first responders will work as needed to meet the demand for emergency services, an important question is whether these services will be covered by federal or state assistance, requiring the town to absorb a significant financial liability. Municipalities should plan for the financial impact of major disasters.

- Karen Epstein asked about the variance between certain numbers and indicated that she would follow up for clarification with Lynn outside the meeting.

6. Department Area Reports Update: Reports completed or near completion for various departments include: The Water Precinct, Planning & Zoning, Police & Dispatch, Fire Department, Library, Recreation, and DPW. The remaining discussions and reports include Town Administration and Finance, which John Tilley and Charlie Kelsey have planned to complete. The reports will be cataloged and maintained on the town website under Budget Committee Meeting Materials. It is expected that all reports will be completed and distributed no later than October 29, 2025, which is the date for the first budget review meeting. Department area reports will be distributed via email prior to the relevant budget review meetings; reports will not be discussed at a separate session as previously planned. Committee members will read the reports and bring forward any additional questions for the department/area budget review discussion. These questions will be shared in advance with the department head to allow them adequate time to prepare a response. Kelsey commented that the process has been very helpful and informative, with a positive give-and-take exchange.

7. Public Comments & Input: John Ellis raised questions regarding Unreserved Funds and how it relates to the unassigned fund balance; whether the Board of Selectmen can decrease the tax burden by law; the Capital account summary for 2027 and if those amounts or any other amounts be moved to other accounts; whether individuals who aren't here tonight could listen into these meetings on Zoom; If a member of the public could email questions (or concerns) to the budget committee. These questions were answered as follows: The Board of Selectmen has the discretion to use the Fund Balance to offset the tax rate, and the NH DRA recommends that the Fund Balance as a percentage of the General Fund Expenditures remain in a range of 5%-17%. The Capital Expenditure Forecast reflected in the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan assigns cost estimates for specific capital needs. These are reflected in the Capital Reserve Account schedule to inform the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee in their respective allocation to Capital Reserves, the Operating Budget, or Bonded Debt Financing (handled by warrant articles). Charles Kelsey provided his email address for citizens to use if they wished to communicate with the Budget Committee. That email address is cpkelsey1@gmail.com.

8. Other Topics: Steve Wright of the Citizens Advisory Committee has asked Charles Kelsey to present on the budget committee's process at their next meeting on November 1, 2025. Kelsey asked the committee for their guidance and opinion about the scope and purpose of such a presentation. An Email was received from a citizen expressing a position on a particular department/budget item, and Kelsey asked for the committee's guidance on how to handle such items. It was agreed that a response acknowledging the receipt to the sender and encouraging them to attend a meeting to express their views (input) directly to the entire committee.

9. Action Items:

- Chair to revise the meeting schedule and send it to Ashley for review, then distribute it to the committee and post it on the website.
- Members working on reports to complete and distribute them before the October 29th budget meeting date.
- Ashley Seybold to send the list of department numbers to aid in navigating the budget worksheets.

10. Meeting Evaluation: To continuously improve the effectiveness of the committee's meeting process, Charles Kelsey asked members to provide a numeric rating along with feedback on what was done well and what could be improved going forward. Numeric ratings ranged between 8 and 9 on a 1-10 scale. Positive comments were made on good meeting organization, succinctness, and a more complete discussion on topics among the members. Areas for improvement included timely information distribution, focus during budget item discussions, and facilitating document access during meetings.

11. Adjournment: IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Karen Epstein) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.
Respectfully submitted,

Charles Kelsey, Chair

Note: RSA 91-A:2, II provides that "*Minutes of all such meetings, including nonpublic sessions, shall include the names of members, persons appearing before the public bodies, and a brief description of the subject matter discussed and final decisions.*" A video of the entire meeting may be available for viewing on the town website, [New London.NH.gov](http://NewLondon.NH.gov), if more than the brief description contained in these meeting minutes is desired.