

**TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP I
MINUTES
March 6, 2025**

PRESENT: Mark Fiorentino, First Selectman; Margaret Chapple, Frederick Moffa and Kelly Rome

ABSENT: Mark Neumann, Vice- Chairman

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Guarco, Board of Finance Chairman; Kimi Cheng, Director of Finance; Mike Walsh, Town Manager; Kevin Hobson, Board of Finance Vice-Chairman; William Kennedy, Board of Finance; and Ben Perron, Board of Finance

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular meeting of the Town of Granby Board of Selectmen (Budget Workshop I) was called to order by First Selectman Mark Fiorentino at 5:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Lost Acres Fire Department

Town Manager Mike Walsh presented an overview on the history of the Lost Acres Fire Department and the budget calculation. The Town appropriates money annually based on a percentage of one mill to the LAFD in support of their operations and capital needs. The LAFD rate is currently at 0.278%. The Town plans to update its operating agreement with the fire department to:

- Ensure the funding is adequate to support the operation.
- Ensure LAFD capital needs are adequate.
- Recognize the radios and other equipment purchased by the Town.
- Memorialize/recognize the volunteer efforts of the LAFD.

Chief John Horr, Jr. added the following highlights for the year:

- The chief reviewed the method used to purchase, maintain, and replace the department vehicles. The department will begin the process to replace the LA2 Engine at a cost of about \$1M to \$1.2M. The lead time on the delivery is between two and three years. If better pricing can be realized, the LA7 Rescue Truck will also be replaced.
- The department has about \$1,000,000 set aside to purchase the engine and will investigate borrowing and other financing options for the rescue truck.
- The annual allocation from the Town is used for operations, capital, and firefighter stipends. Any remaining funds are put away for future capital purchases. Currently, LAFD is saving about \$150,000 per year.
- The department continually tries to find ways to control operating costs. LAFD partners with the Town to purchase fuel and insure its vehicles through the Town's CIRMA policy.

- LAFD received a grant of just over \$250,000 from AFG to replace its aging self-contained breathing apparatuses.
- The stipend program for firefighters has been very effective in recruiting and retaining personnel. The department currently has over 40 firefighters, which is the highest it has been in many years. The stipends are paid by LAFD out of the funds allocated by the Town.

Granby Ambulance Association

Town Manager Mike Walsh introduced the Granby Ambulance Association (GAA) presentation and highlighted the constant financial pressure on GAA due to capital needs including the need for a new ambulance every three to four years. There are also operational pressures due to the rise in the cost to provide care, increased staffing issues, the rise in call volume and lower Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements. The Town Manager is in support of developing a sustainable agreement between the GAA and the Town that is in the best interest of both parties.

Carol Brennen and Lorri DiBattisto presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history and organization of the Granby Ambulance Association, as well as metrics and financials highlighting the following:

- GAA is requesting an increase from the Town of Granby to support the service provided to the Town. Granby contributes less than other towns based on population and use.
- GAA participates in many Granby events and programs including the AED project, Radio Communication Project, school preparedness, First Responder Camp, Trunk or Treat and Touch a Truck.
- Operations include providing maintenance and upkeep on vehicles and stations; personnel expenses including benefits, uniforms, and training; and the purchase and replacement of supplies and equipment.
- In the past, 95% of the staff were volunteers, now 95% are paid.
- Medicaid or Medicare, which make up about 66% of the calls to GAA, pay about 40% of authorized charges resulting in only 45% of income from those two agencies. GAA loses money on every call involving Medicaid and Medicare. Private insurance and private pay rates are better, but it is not enough to make up the difference.
- Concerns going forward include the potential loss of the chief of service volunteer, increased labor costs, impact on income due to reduction in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, erosion of endowment fund, replacement of vehicles and equipment, population growth in Granby, and increased call volume.
- The Town has committed \$92,260 towards the purchase of a new ambulance which is scheduled to be delivered in October.

First Selectman Mark Fiorentino added that the Town understands the value of a community-based ambulance service and that in addition to the annual budget allocation, Granby also supports GAA through capital contributions for the purchase of ambulances and investment in the radio communication project. Going forward, Board of Selectmen members Kelly Rome, Fred Moffa and Town Manager Mike Walsh will work on a formal agreement with GAA that is acceptable to both the Town and GAA and fair to all stakeholders.

Public Comment

Kim Becker, 149 Loomis Street, North Granby spoke in support of the Granby Ambulance Association and appreciated the Town's willingness to work together to ensure this vital service continues in Granby.

Steve Wortley, 15 Granville Road, North Granby in support of increased financial support from the Town of Granby for the Granby Ambulance Association.

Community Development

Director of Community Development Abigail Kenyon presented an overview of the Community Development department including Building Inspection, Fire Prevention and Emergency Management.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments

- This year, 1,088 building permits and 19 new house permits were issued with a construction value of \$49,315,070. Permit fees collected totaled \$734,396.
- CERT was activated for various activities in Town including the Granby Road Race, Holcomb Farm Hoedown, Bradley International Airport Triennial Mass Casualty Drill and the elections.
- The Fire Marshal issued 38 Burn Permits, conducted 130 fire code inspections and eight fire investigations.

FY26 Goals & Objectives

- Work will begin in the spring to update the Plan of Conservation and Development for 2026 as required by state statute every ten years.
- The department will continue to review zoning regulations with the Planning & Zoning Commission and propose updates for consideration.
- The Town hired a consultant to develop the Granby Center Master Plan, and the department will continue to oversee the process and the implementation.
- The Building Department will update resource materials for the public based on current building code requirements and zoning regulations as well as expand the department page on the Town website to provide more information and resources for residents.
- The director will monitor and provide plan review and input on projects including the Kearns School housing development and the Broadleaf Solar project.

FY26 Budget Changes:

- The Community Development department no longer requires temporary or part-time support staff, and that expense was removed from the budget.
- ARPA funds were used for the Building Department software Municipality through the end of 2026. Therefore, the cost is not in the FY 2025-26 budget.
- The Fire Marshal budget proposes an increase in the hours for more fire investigation and backup coverage for the deputy fire marshal.
- The wages for the Emergency Management Director are offset by the Emergency Management Performance grant from the state. The budget includes the net expense.

Health Services

Jennifer Kertanis, Director of the Farmington Valley Health District (FVHD), which serves as the municipal health department for the Town of Granby presented an overview of the organization and the services delivered to the Town. The FVHD provides highly skilled, experienced health professionals to prevent disease, promote health and protect against public health threats. The Town supports the FVHD through a municipal per capita charge of \$7.50 for a total FY 2025-26 contribution of \$84,368.

Police Department Administration, Operations and Communications

Chief Sansom presented an overview of the Police Department organization and budget highlighting the following.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments:

- Hired and trained two full-time dispatchers and two certified patrol officers.
- Initiated new community outreach programs.
- Built Continuity of Operations Plan.
- Transitioned to the State of Connecticut Accreditation platform.
- Secured a more accessible gun range for training mandates.
- Acquired a new supervisor vehicle, ballistic shields and helmets.
- Trained new firearms instructor/armorer.
- Developed Personnel Order policy.
- Upgraded town hall campus security cameras.
- Implemented Cert-Assist, a training tracking program.
- Evaluated capital improvement needs.

FY26 Goals and Objectives:

- Complete State Tier Accreditation for the department.
- Review and update General Orders.
- Increase community outreach programs and visibility in the community.
- Finish capital improvement projects including updates to the evidence room.
- Increase police visibility in traffic enforcement and increase pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety.
- Complete firearms upgrade.
- Solidify training partners for officer recertification and mandated training.
- Maintain state of Connecticut First Responder License.
- Implement a new communications training platform for mandated compliance.

FY26 Budget Changes:

- POSTC Training: Mandated training will be conducted through approved law enforcement instructors/entities which will incur costs. The West Hartford Police Department no longer offers free training.
- Professional Development: IACP Conference attendance and membership for the police chief and captain.
- Create a Lead Dispatcher position by contractual agreement.
- Increase operational and administrative uniform allowance.
- Hire one new police officer to increase coverage on day and evening shifts.
- Increase Supervisor Overtime budget to fill vacant supervisor shifts to foster accountability and limit liability.

- Increase Vehicle Maintenance budget to properly maintain and care for fleet.
- Reduce overtime expense with addition of new officer.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no further public comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION by K. Rome, seconded by M. Chapple, the Board voted (4-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betsy Mazzotta
Recording Secretary