

**TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP III
MINUTES
March 13, 2025**

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

ABSENT: Mark Neumann, Vice-Chairman and Kelly Rome

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Guarco, Board of Finance Chairman; Kimi Cheng, Director of Finance; Mike Walsh, Town Manager; and Ben Perron, Board of Finance

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Regular meeting of the Town of Granby Board of Selectmen (Budget Workshop III) was called to order by First Selectman Mark Fiorentino at 5:06 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Town Manager's Office

Town Manager Mike Walsh provided an overview of the Town Manager's office organization and presented the budget for the department. The budget request contains no requests for capital items or new operating resources.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments

- Settled four collectively bargained labor contracts.
- Reorganized Parks and Recreation and Department of Public Works, promoting five supervisors.
- Helped secure \$2M of state bond funds for the Radio Communications Project.
- Compiled and distributed a \$78 million 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.
- Acquired 87 Simsbury Road, the former West Granby Methodist Church from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.
- Converted the budget process to ClearGov software to improve the process and increase transparency.
- Converted medical coverage for all employees from a Preferred Provider Organization to a High Deductible Health Plan.
- Issued an Ethics Policy and updated the Personnel Rules.
- Changed Stop Loss insurance carrier avoiding \$424,000 in premiums.
- Allocated \$1.6M of ARPA funds to several new projects.

FY26 Goals & Objectives include closely monitoring and administering the following initiatives:

- KCE Battery Farm and Broadleaf Solar Project
- Kearns Senior Housing Development
- Town Center Project and Freshies Property
- Ten-year Capital Improvement Plan

- Solar Options and Building Energy Efficiency
- Organizational Efficiency and Redundancy
- Continuous process analysis
- Agreements with Lost Acres Fire Department, Granby Ambulance Association and GCTV

Human Resources

Director of Human Resources Krista Shaffer provided an overview of the responsibilities of the department and presented the budget. The budget request contains no requests for capital items or new operating resources.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments

- Participated in the negotiation and settlement of four collectively bargained labor contracts.
- Participated in the reorganization of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Public Works, promoting five supervisors.
- Revised and finalized the new Personnel Rules.
- Improved onboarding process including background checks for those in direct contact with children and seniors. Implemented pre-employment medical and drug screening for all new hires.

FY26 Goals and Objectives

- Increase training opportunities for managers and supervisors.
- Transition responsibility for personnel files and benefits administration to Human Resources.
- Improve performance appraisal management.
- Develop trust and transparency with staff.

IT Operations

Mike Walsh presented the technology department organization and the original agreement with the Board of Education to provide support to the Town. The Town Manager and the Superintendent recently updated the agreement to better reflect the time spent by the Director of Technology and the Technology Operations Manager on town projects and support. The headcount and associated costs for the System Administrator are included in the Town budget.

Director of Technology Jon Lambert presented an overview of the department, noteworthy accomplishments from FY25 and goals and objectives for FY26 supported by the budget.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments

- Transitioned technical support for the Town from an outside consultant to the BOE Technology Department, improving system support, customer service and response time.
- Inventoried and documented the Town network, computers, devices, software, and data. Improved and implemented best practices for security, cybersecurity, computers, and data.
- Virtualized and updated application and file servers town wide.
- Replaced outdated phone system, integrated new town system with school phone system for internal direct dial, 911 notification, paging and other modern features.

- Standardized and replaced desktop/laptop computers and monitors town wide.
- Purchased and installed new audio/visual equipment upgrades to facilitate hybrid meetings and events at Town Hall, the Senior Center, and Holcomb Farm.
- Implemented new software for dispatch at the Police Department to communicate with the Fire Department.
- Assisted with Makerspace setup and wiring at Cossitt Library.

FY 26 Goals and Objectives

- Provide a high level of technology support and assist the Town with projects and initiatives.
- Continue to cross train staff and implement redundancy in processes and equipment.
- Complete technology equipment replacement and upgrades including the Municipal Area Network.
- Update all computers to Windows 11 by October 2025.
- Update Disaster Recovery and Incident Response documents.
- Complete A/V projects at Town Hall, the Senior Center, and Holcomb Farm.
- Continue building security and camera system improvements town-wide, complete security camera project at the Police Department.
- Assist with installation of new Police Department radio system.

The Technology Department budget contains a request in the software applications line for an upgrade to the Town's Office 365 email system to better manage phishing threats and other malicious hacking attempts. The budget does not contain any new requests for capital items.

Town Clerk Operations

Town Manager Mike Walsh provided an overview of the responsibilities of the department and presented the budget for the Town Clerk as that position is currently vacant. Jenn Espinal will assume the position of Town Clerk at the end of March.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments

- Purchased a large format printer/scanner/copier using ARPA funds. Large surveys and maps can now be scanned with the new machine and uploaded to RecordHub making them more easily accessible to local attorneys and for title searches. To date, property surveys and maps are electronically archived and indexed from December 1959 to the present.
- Created an electronic vital records index to improve access to the records.
- Created a master list of all records stored in the vault to ensure the retention schedule complies with the State Public Records Administrator.

FY26 Budget Changes

- The new Town Clerk was hired at a lower step than the former Town Clerk resulting in a reduction in Regular Payroll expense.
- Election expenses increased significantly due to unfunded mandates for early voting.
- Renewal of the COTT Systems increased by about 20% which is reflected in the Indexing and Microfilming line. Additional services provided by the new contract include eRecording, online marriage license applications and Property Check, a service to protect against property fraud.

Election Services

Registrars of Voters Karen Antonucci and Laura Wolfe provided an overview of the responsibilities of the department and presented the budget for Election Services. The budget and activities of the department are significantly impacted by changes from the Secretary of State in equipment and systems as well state mandated early voting.

- Early voting is required for 14 days for a general election and seven days for primaries. Registrars, who serve as moderators, are required to work extra hours for office coverage resulting in an increase in the payroll line. Additional training was also required for the volunteers.
- 2024 Early Voting grants offset the costs from the last election season. However, the grant funds are not expected to be available going forward.
- Office and General Supplies increased significantly due to the increase cost of envelopes and labels.
- Polling Place Activity expenses were increased to provide better refreshments with more options for the many volunteers who work the polls for all elections including early voting.
- Machine Maintenance increased significantly due to the new voting machines distributed by the Secretary of State. The Town was allotted ten machines which the registrars feel is more than the town needs, however there was not an option to decline the extra machines. The annual cost to maintain the new machines is about \$300 each. The machines will also require new paper, ink, training, and security protocols.

Finance Management

Director of Finance Kimi Cheng provided an overview of the Finance Department and presented the budget for the department including the Assessor and Revenue Collection departments.

FY25 Noteworthy Accomplishments

- Continued to receive an unmodified audit opinion for the annual audit financial reports and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award.
- Participated in the negotiation and settlement of four union contracts.
- Converted medical coverage for all employees from a Preferred Provider Organization to a High Deductible Health Plan.
- Renewed stop loss insurance with a new vendor to realize a significant savings in premiums.
- Selected and implemented new software for budget preparation and accounts payable.
- Collected 98.93% of taxes levied (\$43.68M) in fiscal year 2024; mailed \$484.5K in supplemental motor vehicle bills; and mailed \$364K in sewer use bills.
- 2023 Grand List: Valued nearly 5,000 parcels valued at \$1.2B; valued 11.8K in motor vehicles valued at \$39.5M. The total added to the Grand List was \$17M resulting in over \$563K in additional taxes.

FY26 Goals and Objectives

- Maintain unmodified audit opinion for the annual audit financial reports and obtain the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Award.

- Complete implementation of Square 9 software to automate the accounts payable process.
- Provide accurate tax bills to all taxpayers and encourage the use of online payment options.
- Change the Local Elderly Ordinance application from annual to bi-annual to align with the state process.
- Complete and sign the annual grand list without requiring an extension.
- Automate process to feed building permits into the CAMA system.

FY26 Budget Changes

- Introduced shared audit fees with the BOE resulting in a decrease in the audit line. In prior years, the town paid 100% of the audit fee.
- Increase GFOA professional development for the Director of Finance.
- Obtain VCS licenses to include all seasonal and part time employees to allow them to punch in and out using the online system.
- Increase annual software fees to support new systems.
- Transferred the cost for developing and printing the Annual Report to the Town Manager's budget.

The Board reviewed the budgets for the departments not included in the previous presentations including Legal Services; Fringe Benefits; Probate; Contingency and Reserve; Boards, Regional Programs and Staff Development; Insurances; Recreation Administration; and Community Support.

Capital

Town Manager Mike Walsh reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan included in the back of the Budget Book noting that this is a preliminary report and needs further work to get to an accurate, working document. A full inventory will be completed, and the report will be further refined to include a replacement timeline, projected cost, and priority. The completed report will be presented to the Board of Selectmen who will review the CIP in detail and then forward it to CPPAC.

Planned capital purchases for FY26 include:

- 10 Wheel Dump Truck
- 6 Wheel Dump Truck
- Lift for Tree Cutting
- Backhoes/Loaders
- Flail Mower
- Road Overlay
- Police Vehicles
- Technology & Equipment
- Contribution to Granby Ambulance Association

The Town Manager and the Director of Finance will identify projects/purchases for the \$305,107 in unallocated funds.

Debt Service

The Debt Service budget includes payments on annual bond maturity and interest costs associated with bonded projects. Details of the debt activity can be found on pages 55-57 in the budget book.

Revenues

Revenue sources for the Town include property tax, intergovernmental revenues, and municipal grants as well as local revenues and fund transfers. Definitions of each category and the revenues budget can be found on pages 14-18 of the budget book.

Other Funds

In addition to the General Fund, the Town maintains a series of funds designated for specific activities and functions which are budgeted separately from the General Fund. The General Fund is recognized as the Town's general operating fund and accounts for all financial resources except those accounted for in such funds. Details on the revenues and expenditures for the Other Funds can be found on pages 69-81 in the budget book.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

5. ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION by M. Chapple, seconded by F. Moffa, the Board voted (3-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Betsy Mazzotta
Recording Secretary