

DRAFT
DURHAM TOWN COUNCIL
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2025
DURHAM TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Joseph Friedman, Chair Pro Tem Sally Needell, Councilor Wayne Burton, Councilor Darrell Ford, Councilor Carden Welsh, Councilor Heather Grant, Councilor Robin Vogt, Councilor Em Friedrichs (who uses the pronouns ze/zir/zirs/zirself and the title Mx. Friedrichs)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilor Curtis Register

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Administrator Todd Selig, Agricultural Commission Chair Theresa Walker, Trustees of the Trust Fund Chair Ted Howard, Fire Chief Dave Emanuel, Police Chief Rene Kelley, Public Works Director Rich Reine, Business Manager Gail Jablonski, Parks and Recreation Director Rachel Gasowski.

I. Call to Order

Chair Friedman called the meeting to order at 7 P.M.

II. Town Council grants permission for fewer than a majority of Councilors to participate remotely. Not needed at this time. The Council did approve the remote participation of Councilor Friedrichs later in the meeting.

III. Roll Call of Members

Councilor Heather Grant, Councilor Robin Vogt, Chair Joseph Friedman, Chair Pro Tem Sally Needell, Councilor Wayne Burton, Councilor Darrell Ford, Councilor Carden Welsh.

IV. Approval of Agenda

Chair Pro Tem Sally Needell MOVED to approve the agenda. Councilor Welsh SECONDED the motion. The agenda was APPROVED on a show of hands vote of 7-0.

V. Special Announcements - None

VI. Approval of Minutes - Nov. 10 and 17, 2025

Chair Joe Friedman MOVED to approve the minutes for the Town Council meeting of Nov. 10, 2025. Chair Pro Tem Needell SECONDED the motion. The minutes were APPROVED on a unanimous roll call vote of 7-0.

Chair Joe Friedman MOVED to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting of Nov. 17, 2025. Chair Pro Tem Needell SECONDED the motion. The minutes were APPROVED on a unanimous roll call vote of 6-0. Councilor Burton abstained because he was not present at the Nov. 17 meeting.

VII. Report from the UNH Student Senate External Affairs Chair or Designee

UNH Student Senator Deeba Ajamian filled in for External Affairs Chair Caroline Bishop, who could not attend the meeting. She said there will be a new External Affairs Chair next semester because Ms. Bishop will be studying abroad. They will select a new chair this weekend. She said Student Body Vice President Ben Doyle and Ms. Bishop met with Administrator Selig about installing e-scooter signage downtown and they will be contacting the Durham Police Department to work with them on the signage. She said Ms. Bishop will meet with UNH's Off-Campus Engagement Director Jamie Silverstein to discuss the Durham Business Association's thoughts on the Senate's Cat's Cache resolution. Chair Friedman said he and Councilor Register are planning to present the resolution at the next DBA meeting, but it has not set the next meeting yet. There was discussion about e-scooters, their use and solutions to have them ridden and stored properly. Councilor Welsh suggested lights on e-scooters because they are hard to see in the dark. Councilor Burton talked about the academic program availability issue students are facing as funds are cut. She said it is a concern for students. Councilor Burton said the students were heard and the legislators are passing their concerns onto colleagues.

VIII. Public Comments

Josh Meyerowitz, 7 Chesley Drive, spoke on the TooMerfs LLC's timber cutting at Church Hill Woods and questioned if there was more that the town could do in future requests to cut wood. He said this instance was more than just cutting wood and altered the terrain. He noted what was not required to happen such as notifying abutters and other actions, which he thinks maybe the town should consider requiring in the future.

Neil Slepian, 12 Fairchild Drive, spoke in favor of making the Land Stewardship Coordinator position full-time with benefits. He submitted a list of projects the position would help complete. He said two of the top three reasons on Google to visit Durham involve its public lands. He gave examples of how Durham could change if it didn't have a Land Stewardship Coordinator in the future and how it could affect tourism.

Julian Smith, 3 Chesley Drive, thanked Mr. Meyerowitz for his remarks and said the TooMerfs' application was for timber harvest, and he doesn't believe the wood was used for anything. He again expressed his concern about the removal of the Mill Pond Dam, how the area will look after it is removed, and that the cost of cleaning up after the dam removal is not in next year's budget. He suggested the town hold a public meeting to answer some of these questions.

Mike Lehrman, 20 Cedar Point, spoke about some comments made by Councilors in the Nov. 17 Town Council meeting. He said it is an assumption that they're not hearing from residents upset about the increase in the budget and taxes. He said despite the town's and Mr. Selig's efforts to communicate with residents, a lot of people are not informed. He said he feels the town has to start to confront the budget problems it has and there are always ways to be more efficient and cut expenses. He said the Council needs to take on that responsibility. He said Administrator Selig said 40 percent of the town's salary costs are benefits and pension. He said the town should look more closely at

1 contracting services from outside sources so the town doesn't carry that legacy pension
2 cost forward. He also suggested benchmarking some of the town's expenses against
3 towns of similar size. He has compiled a packet to distribute to Councilors. He said the
4 local school district's budget isn't out of line with other towns and only 3 percent above
5 the state median so it's not valid to point to the schools as driving up residents' taxes.
6

7 **Tom Daly, 190 Piscataqua Road**, said he took a deep look at the budget and worked
8 with Ms. Jablonski and Administrator Selig to understand it better. He said key items he
9 noted is that revenue from town operations will shrink by \$240,000 in 2026 and the
10 town's expenses will shrink by \$281,000 in 2026, which seems positive, but he said you
11 need to look at the one-time expenses in 2025 including the \$2.173 million Complete
12 Streets Madbury Road project and Wagon Hill. He said according to his calculation the
13 town's budgeted expenses will actually go up by \$1.89 million. He said to survive in
14 business revenue has to be greater than expenses and that is not the case with the town.
15 Though new, having just moved to Durham in 2024, he said he's already seeing a pattern
16 of limiting business development, weakening revenue from town operations and a steady
17 stream of net new expenses. He questioned if the town is creating a future crisis where
18 Durham is just too expensive and too restrictive to live in.
19

20 **IX. Unanimous Consent Agenda**

- 21
- 22 A. Shall the Town Council authorize the Administrator to sign the town of Durham's second
23 half 2025 Property Tax Warrant and direct the Tax Collector to collect payment of
24 property taxes assessed on April 1, 2025 in the amount of \$21,802,472?
25 B. Shall the Town Council approve and sign the warrant for the Town Election to be held on
26 March 10, 2026?
27 C. Shall the Town Council reschedule the second meeting in March 2026 from March 16 to
28 March 23 due to the Islamic holiday Laylat al Qadr falling on March 16?
29 D. Shall the Town Council approve a Non-Industrial Wastewater Discharge Permit
30 Application that exceeds 5,000 gallons per day and Sewer Extension for Riverwoods
31 Phase 2 (Tax Map 209, Lot 33) as recommended by the UNH/Durham
32 Water/Wastewater/Stormwater Committee?
33

34 Chair Pro Tem Needell asked to pull Item D from the Unanimous Consent Agenda.
35

36 ***Chair Friedman MOVED to approve Items A, B and C of the Unanimous Consent***
37 ***Agenda. Chair Pro Tem Needell SECONDED the motion. Items A, B and C of the***
38 ***Unanimous Consent Agenda PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 7-0.***
39

40 Chair Pro Tem Needell said she had Item D pulled because she will be a future resident
41 of Riverwoods and needs to abstain from voting on that, but she didn't want to abstain
42 from the votes on A, B and C.
43

44 ***Chair Friedman MOVED that Item D be approved. Councilor Ford SECONDED the***
45 ***motion. The motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote of 6-0. Chair Pro Tem***
46 ***Needell abstained.***

1 **X. Committee Appointments - None**

2 Councilor Friedrichs joined the meeting on Zoom.

3
4 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to give permission for a Town Councilor to participate in***
5 ***the meeting remotely on Zoom. Councilor Ford SECONDED the motion.***
6

7 Chair Pro Tem Needell said the Council needs to know why ze needs to participate
8 remotely. Councilor Friedrichs said ze had to participate remotely because ze did not
9 have childcare for the entire meeting. Ze noted zir video is not working, but
10 Administrator Selig said that's only required because it is important to know who is in
11 the room with a Councilor participating remotely. Ze said only zir child is in the room
12 with her. Administrator Selig explained the video requirement is to ensure no one is
13 coercing a Councilor to vote a certain way. ***The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll***
14 ***call vote of 7-0.***
15

16 **XI. Presentation Items**

17
18 **A. Annual report on the Agricultural Commission activities and projects, Chair**
19 **Theresa Walker**

20 She thanked the Council for the opportunity to update them on the commission's
21 activities on behalf of its members. She recalled the origin of the committee 14 years ago
22 and said it is still interested in making sure the town's policies and outreach are focused
23 on the fact that food production is still important in town.
24

25 She said this year the commission held its 12th Farm Day and it was a success.
26

27 With the help of UNH capstone students, the commission surveyed residents asking
28 about their interest in growing food and what knowledge and resources they could share.
29 She explained collaborative food production means sharing yards, knowledge or time to
30 help residents grow food.
31

32 She said alternative member Lee Alexander has been working with Emery Farm on
33 beekeeping and pollination projects. Alternative member Bryan Cassidy has conducted
34 pruning workshops, educating residents on being better food production stewards. She
35 said she and her family have conducted sheep management workshops.
36

37 She said the committee works on how it can support and mentor residents who are
38 interested in producing food in their own backyards, which is important to a sustainable
39 community, and welcomed any suggestions. She said the focus in the coming year is on
40 creating educational opportunities for residents.
41

42 **B. Annual Report on the Trustees of the Trust Fund activities and projects, Chair Ted**
43 **Howard**
44

45 Mr. Howard thanked the town staff for helping the Trustees perform their work, noting
46 specifically Administrative Assistant Karen Edwards, Financial Analyst Deb Ahlstrom,

1 Business Manager Gail Jablonski, Land Stewardship Coordinator Veronique Ludington
2 and Administrator Selig.

3
4 Because of the different times data becomes available, the Trustees can't report calendar
5 year results so reports on the closeout of 2024 and through Sept. 30, 2025. He estimated
6 the Trust Funds made a little less than \$160,000 in income.

7
8 Income and market appreciation were at \$445,000, which represented an 8.6 percent
9 return across all the funds, he said, which are divided between capital reserves, trust
10 funds and the cemetery fund. He said that is the order of their magnitude with the capital
11 reserve fund at \$4.5 million, the trusts at \$1.2 million, and the cemetery fund at \$58,000.

12
13 He said there were significant withdrawals of about \$620,000 and the balance is less than
14 2023 in the benefit stabilization fund, the special education fund and the wastewater
15 capital reserve fund.

16
17 He said the Trustees meet each month and look over the funds entrusted to them. In a
18 year over year comparison, he said by Sept. 30, the funds had gained 6.93% and are at
19 about \$5.9 million. He said October was OK, but November was awful so he is uncertain
20 how the year will end up. He said more detail will be provided in the financial section of
21 the town's annual report, which will include this year-end information.

22
23 He said the Trustees continue to be part of the Land Stewardship Subcommittee, working
24 on the management of the Doe Farm and the trust associated with it. He said a highlight
25 this year was developing a forest management plan with Reino Forestry Associates,
26 which will be posted online soon. A major section of that plan addresses climate change
27 and how to mitigate it. Two grants for this were obtained by the Land Stewardship
28 Coordinator and are a testament to the value added by that position and its ability to
29 generate funds.

30
31 He said a formal invasive species monitoring program was developed and the town has
32 been historically certified by the American Tree Farm as practicing sustainable forestry.
33 It will seek recertification in the coming year. He said the Trustees have historically met
34 on the fourth Friday of each month at 8:30 a.m., but with DCAT's Craig Stevens going to
35 part-time and the need for video recording of the meetings, they have moved to the fourth
36 Tuesday and invited the public to attend. He also said the Trustees are working on
37 moving to more digital documentation. He said the state attorney general does an
38 investment policy review and they are preparing that to submit in January.

39
40 He said the Trustees added alternate James Bubar this year and he and alternate Victor
41 Sosa participate in discussions, but do not vote unless a trustee is absent. The cemetery
42 committee includes trustees and three Councilors under the leadership of Tom
43 Bebbington, oversees the sales of the burial plots and works with DPW to keep the
44 cemetery maintained. He noted the process for honoring veterans on memorial plaques is
45 being reviewed and this will be presented to the Council when ready for review.

46

1 He said in the coming year, the Trustees will continue to monitor the funds and get the
2 best possible return in a safe manner.

3
4 Chair Friedman said it seems like 8.6% return is a very good return on the trust funds this
5 year. Mr. Howard said it is a bit lower this year because interest rates have come down so
6 yields on bonds and fixed income instruments have come down, and noted the fourth
7 quarter's volatility and inflation concerns that may affect the year-end return.

8
9 Councilor Ford asked about the \$620,000 that was taken out and Mr. Howard said it was
10 \$250,000 from the benefits stabilization fund, \$250,000 from the special education trust
11 fund and \$120,650.76 from the Wastewater Sewer Capital Reserve fund.

12
13 Councilor Friedrichs asked if the benefits stabilization fund has anything to do with the
14 state pension fund, and Administrator Selig said it does not.

15
16 **C. Presentation by UNH students Elizabeth DelGiudice, Jordan Stanley, Reese**
17 **Levesque and Josephine Ginivisian on the results of the Composting Challenge**

18
19 The students introduced themselves and their majors and thanked their mentors Julie
20 Kelley and Nell Neil of the Integrated Waste Management Advisory Committee as well
21 as the town and Councilors. They said the five-week Challenge was to introduce
22 composting to residents and that IWMAC has been running it since 2020.

23
24 They said the Challenge wanted to gauge the willingness of residents and what motivates
25 them to participate, to explain the composting process, to reduce greenhouse gas
26 emissions and costs to the town and taxpayers by reducing landfill waste, to reduce
27 pressure on communities with landfills or incinerators and to make people conscious of
28 food waste. They said the state's goal is to reduce the weight of solid waste disposed by
29 25 percent by 2030, and by 45 percent by 2050.

30
31 They said 24 percent of landfill waste is food waste and 43 percent of that is from
32 households. They noted 50 percent of waste in landfills in the state is from out of state,
33 and the state is starting to reach capacity.

34
35 They showed a slide of waste management hierarchy with source reduction being the
36 most preferred and landfilling as the least preferred, with composting in the middle as a
37 solution.

38
39 They said 21 households participated, six councilors and the town administrator, all
40 receiving a starter kit, weighing their food waste every Saturday, and asked not to change
41 cooking or habits during the challenge. They composted in their backyard, dropped it off
42 at the transfer station or paid themselves for curbside pickup through Mr. Fox.

43
44 The three main results they were looking for during the Challenge is how much waste can
45 composting divert, what are the impacts, and what are some of the barriers to

1 composting. They also wanted to learn from towns similar in size to Durham who have
2 curbside compost pickup already.

3
4 They did three different surveys of participants to learn their experience before
5 composting, their waste weights, their feelings during the Challenge, difficulties and what
6 was going well, and if residents planned on continuing to compost.

7
8 They reported that during the Challenge's five weeks, 21 households, totaling 62 people,
9 produced 975 pounds solid waste and 752 pounds of organic waste. Over one year that
10 would be 7,768 pounds of organic waste, .2 tons of methane would not be produced and
11 \$343 would be saved. Over one year for the entire Durham population, that would be
12 1.94 million pounds of organic waste, 42.7 tons of methane would not be produced, and
13 \$85,754 would be saved.

14
15 They found 95% plan to continue, 90% would recommend composting to friends and
16 family, 16% percent rated composting's difficulty above 5 on a 1 to 10 scale. Overall,
17 they found 49% rated composting a 10 out of 10.

18
19 In looking at Keene's composting initiative with Black Earth, it has diverted 400,000
20 pounds from the landfill. They reviewed models for funding curbside composting pickup.

21
22 After studying the Challenge, they recommended creating an additional drop-off location
23 in the community and/or expanding transfer station open hours; educating residents on
24 how to correctly reduce food waste and compost; continuing the Challenge each year;
25 and considering a pilot pickup program with a local commercial service.

26
27 The conclusions of their study include organic waste increases methane which increases
28 climate change; start with eliminating food waste; small household changes have big
29 impact; and there has been overwhelming support of composting and the Challenge over
30 the semester. They thanked Ms. Kelley and Ms. Neil, and the Challenge's participants.

31
32 Councilor Welsh asked why does methane occur when food waste is in a landfill, but not
33 when it's composted? The students said backyard composting has more airflow, is of
34 lower volume and dispersed, breaks down differently and is repurposed as fertilizer.

35
36 Councilor Ford explained in a landfill food waste decomposes anaerobically, which is in
37 the absence of oxygen, and creates methane. In a backyard, it decomposes aerobically, or
38 in the presence of oxygen, and does not create methane.

39
40 Chair Friedman asked that the report be made available on the town website and thanked
41 them for their presentation and for their work on the Challenge.

42
43 **D. Presentation by UNH student Sadie Dyer on the progress of creating a**
44 **Sustainability Newsletter**

45 Ms. Dyer said she's been interning for the town under IWMAC under the mentorship of
46 Julie Kelley and Nell Neil.

1
2 She said the proposed Sustainability Newsletter will raise awareness in the community
3 about the sustainable initiatives each committee and commission are working on and it
4 hopes to get younger residents and families involved in the town's efforts. She said it
5 would be a quarterly email newsletter that briefly highlights the sustainable actions taking
6 place in town. She said it would start with the town's boards and committees, and expand
7 to include efforts at UNH, local schools and businesses. She said it would be posted on
8 the town website under Sustainable Durham.

9
10 She said they hope to distribute fliers with a QR code to bring residents to a sign-up page
11 to receive an email with the latest newsletter, to post blurbs on Facebook and Instagram,
12 and to include sign-up information in Friday Updates, but are open to all suggestions.

13
14 She said they've asked for a short, 100-word to 200-word summary from each committee
15 and commission about its sustainability efforts and have gotten interest from Parks and
16 Recreation, Agricultural, Land Stewardship, Conservation, IWMAC and the community
17 garden committees. The first edition would be published in late January or early February
18 with a second edition coming in May. She said she has decided to make it her capstone
19 project and work on it until she graduates in May.

20
21 Councilor Welsh asked its purpose and Ms. Dyer responded it is to raise awareness and
22 focus on younger families who are busy and involve them in efforts, and give a brief look
23 at what's going on and opportunities to get involved. Councilor Needell suggested the
24 Swap Shop would also like to contribute to the newsletter.

25
26 Councilors thanked Ms. Dyer for her work and presentation.

27
28 Councilors took a two-minute recess.

29
30 **XII. Unfinished Business**

31 **Continued Discussion and Deliberation of the Administrator's proposed FY 2026**
32 **Operating, Capital and Special Fund Budgets, and the 2026-2035 Capital**
33 **Improvement Plan**

34
35 Chair Friedman said Chair Pro Tem Needell would make initial remarks and then each
36 Councilor will make their remarks about the budget and amendments to consider..

37
38 *Chair Pro Tem Needell MOVED the Town Council approve the FY 2026 Operating,*
39 *Capital and Special Fund budgets, and the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan as*
40 *presented on Oct. 31, 2025. Chair Friedman SECONDED the motion.*

41
42 Councilor Ford proposed moving the Madbury Road project Phase 5, the multi-use path,
43 to 2027. The town is waiting for funding so probably will not be built until 2028.

44 *Councilor Ford MOVED to amend the Capital Improvement Plan moving Phase 5 of*
45 *the Madbury Road project to the 2027 CIP. Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion.*
46

1 Councilors noted its cost is \$1.82 million. Councilor Burton said he went to see Ms.
2 Jablonski to make sure this won't affect the project's completion, and the resurfacing of
3 the next part of Madbury Road, and he said it won't affect it. Ms. Jablonski and Public
4 Works Director Rich Reine agreed, but Mr. Reine explained the path is in design now
5 and the town will know in June or July of 2026 if it will receive funding or not, and if so,
6 20 percent of the cost would be required at that point.

7
8 Administrator Selig explained the town is bonding the full amount, but potentially the
9 town could bond \$364,000 with the residual coming from the grant. If the town gets the
10 grant, it's ready to go, and if not, the town won't have enough money for it. He explained
11 the 20% from the town demonstrates to the state the town is committed.

12
13 ***Councilor Ford AMENDED his amendment as Administrator Selig suggested. Chair***
14 ***Pro Tem Needell SECONDED his amending it. The amendment PASSED on a***
15 ***unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.***

16
17 ***Councilor Ford MOVED to amend the Capital Improvement Plan to move the***
18 ***Woodridge Park courts resurfacing to 2027.***

19
20 He said he had visited the Woodbridge tennis and pickleball courts and observed they are
21 definitely in need of work, but only Court 2 is dangerous or unusable. The others are
22 being used now. He suggested moving the resurfacing project from the CIP in 2026 and
23 put \$5,000 in the budget for remedial action. He hopes the town can do it in 2027. He
24 said residents can use the high school or UNH courts in summer. Parks and Recreation
25 Director Rachel Gasowski said the high school courts don't have pickleball lines, which
26 the Woodridge courts do have. He asked that the town get two estimates for the work
27 next summer in preparation for the next budget discussion.

28
29 ***Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion. The amendment PASSED on a unanimous***
30 ***roll call vote of 8-0.***

31
32 Councilor Welsh pointed out the town's budget as presented represents a 40.3 percent
33 increase in town taxes in three years so he feels the Council needs to be as aggressive as
34 possible in cutting expenses.

35
36 Councilors discussed how to proceed on the amendments it already supports, but needs to
37 vote on.

38
39 Administrator Selig read the list of \$124,715 in reductions including IWMAC's \$5,000
40 pilot composting program; Fire Department's education training and seminars reduced by
41 \$2,000; Fire Department phone/fax lines, \$12,000; part-time wages fire suppression,
42 \$23,240; OT wages fire suppression \$23,000, noting Councilor Welsh had recommended
43 going further; OT wages fire training and safety, \$4,000; vacation time buyout for
44 employee who will likely retire in 2026, an addition to budget but will be charged to the
45 benefit stabilization fund so won't hit tax rate, \$36,300; Medicare general government,
46 \$800; retirement general government, \$11,600; \$1,000 reduction from planning

1 department travel and mileage; part-time wages police department, \$5800 (part-time
2 wages; delaying the police department's CALEA hire until Sept. 1); social security,
3 police \$300, Medicare, police, \$90; education and training, police, \$5,000, maybe further;
4 telephone fax lines, police \$29,280; police radios, \$4500; cleaning Wagon Hill, \$15,000,
5 reduced to once a week; DPW's second bid on curbside pickup from Casella saves
6 \$41,205.

7
8 Administrator Selig reported some revenue enhancements that are changes to the budget
9 as presented on Oct. 31. The Fire Department cost is shared with UNH who pays 50
10 percent so when the town reduces fire expenses, it reduces revenue from UNH, which
11 comes to \$33,000 in revenue. The Town Clerk is increasing fees for marriage ceremonies
12 with the town's Justices of the Peace, which will bring in \$2,500. There's also the
13 transfer in from the Capital Reserve Fund of \$47,000 to offset retirement costs. The
14 Business Office is contracting with Madbury to share the town's financial analyst Deb
15 Ahlstrom and Madbury will reimburse the town \$58,000. That totals to a \$74,500 change
16 in revenue.

17
18 The cutting of expenses and additional revenue comes to \$199,250. The impact on the tax
19 rate drops to 17.19 percent change, which Administrator Selig said still is not great.

20
21 ***Chair Pro Tem Needell MOVED to approve amending the FY 2026 town budget as***
22 ***presented Oct. 31 to reflect these changes made by Town Administrator Selig and Ms.***
23 ***Jablonski. Councilor Welsh SECONDED the motion.***

24
25 Councilor Burton asked if the town's safety services would be impaired at all by these
26 cuts. Administrator Selig said these changes would not cause any significant problems
27 and are reasonable.

28
29 ***The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.***

30
31 Councilor Welsh proposed cutting the contingency fund from \$100,000 to \$50,000. He
32 said the run rate is low and even at \$50,000 it would be the highest since 2022.
33 Administrator Selig said that is doable, and that the town strives to budget realistically,
34 but it's hard to predict what might be needed. Councilors discussed how if it ever comes
35 up short in the face of an emergency, the issue comes back to the Council to decide.
36 Councilor Welsh also pointed out how department heads have some flexibility to move
37 money around in an emergency and pull from another area of their funding if needed..

38
39 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to cut the Council contingency fund by \$50,000. Chair***
40 ***Friedman SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call***
41 ***vote of 8-0.***

42
43 Councilor Welsh asked Fire Chief Dave Emanuel if the OT budget could be reduced
44 since two firefighters were added this year. Councilors and the Chief discussed the new
45 six-person shifts and how they work, and two long-term injuries the department is

1 managing. Administrator Selig noted whatever isn't used washes into the Capital Reserve
2 Fund, which is being depleted.

3
4 Councilor Welsh asked if \$15,000 could be cut from the training and safety line and
5 Chief Emanuel said the department will work with whatever it needs to. He reminded the
6 department often uses training money to cover OT.

7
8 Councilors discussed the increase of calls because of more or expanded 55 and over
9 developments. Administrator Selig said he has set up a meeting with Riverwoods
10 officials about the number of calls generated by residents there and if there's any process
11 that can be used to vet the calls.

12
13 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to reduce budgeted OT for fire suppression to \$460,000.***
14 ***Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a 6-2 roll call vote.***

15
16 ***Councilor Welsh - aye; Councilor Ford - aye; Councilor Burton - aye; Chair Pro Tem***
17 ***Needell - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Councilor Vogt - nay; Councilor Grant - aye;***
18 ***Councilor Friedrichs aye.***

19
20 Councilor Welsh proposed not making the land stewardship coordinator full-time because
21 the budget situation is dire and the town should wait for more valuation to support it.

22
23 Councilor Grant proposed the position could be funded with the money the Conservation
24 Commission holds. Administrator Selig said it would deplete that fund quickly and
25 recommended against it. Councilors discussed the Conservation Commission funding
26 from the land use change tax, which varies and is unpredictable. Councilor Needell noted
27 the coordinator has taken on some of the work the Commission and others used to do.
28 Councilors discussed the need to take care of the lands, that the state of them is good, and
29 the risk of less getting done if the coordinator works just compensated hours.

30
31 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to amend the budget to keep the coordinator at part-time at***
32 ***a cost of \$46,000. Chair Friedman SECONDED the motion. The motion FAILED on a***
33 ***roll call vote of 2-6.***

34
35 ***Councilor Grant - nay; Councilor Vogt - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Chair Pro Tem***
36 ***Needell - nay; Councilor Burton - nay; Councilor Ford - nay; Councilor Welsh - aye;***
37 ***Councilor Friedrichs - nay.***

38
39 Councilor Welsh proposed reducing the police education and training line item of
40 \$45,000 by \$4,000. He said it's running at \$24,000 now and is still the highest the town
41 has budgeted for after the cut. Administrator Selig said there was some money budgeted
42 to replace uniforms for the honor guard that could be shifted to offset the reduction.

43
44 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to reduce the police education and training line item to***
45 ***\$40,000. Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a***
46 ***unanimous vote of 8-0.***

Councilor Welsh proposed removing the police dog program, saying he felt it was a slap in the face to town residents struggling to pay taxes to give the dog \$5,000. Councilors discussed how the program was a passion of police staff and popular with residents, that the initiative was started and funded by an individual officer and could be funded by private donations or other sources. Administrator Selig said after the police department advocated for the program, he had given permission to acquire the dog and he felt that nixing the funding would deflate morale greatly for not much gain and unnecessarily.

Councilor Welsh MOVED to not fund the police dog for a savings of \$5,000. Councilor Friedrichs SECONDED the motion. The motion FAILED on a roll call vote of 5-3.

Councilor Grant - nay; Councilor Vogt - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Chair Pro Tem Needell - nay; Councilor Burton - nay; Councilor Ford - nay; Councilor Welsh - aye; Councilor Friedrichs - aye.

Councilor Grant MOVED to cut the dog program to \$2,500. Councilor Ford SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a roll call vote of 5-3.

Councilor Welsh - aye; Councilor Ford - aye; Councilor Burton - nay; Chair Pro Tem Needell - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Councilor Vogt - nay; Councilor Grant - aye; Councilor Friedrichs - aye.

Councilor Welsh MOVED to remove \$2,000 from the moderator's budget. He said the remaining \$16,000 is the highest budgeted ever, and even though there's three elections next year, he has volunteered at elections and feels that is enough, the voting booths are fine and doesn't think the town needs to provide food for volunteers. Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion.

Councilor Vogt asked if the voting booth upgrade was to increase accessibility. Administrator Selig said some booths are already accessible, but there are old ones that need fixed, are heavy to transport and often repaired on site. He has been replacing a few each year, though none were replaced last year because of budget constraints. He strongly recommended providing food for volunteers.

Councilor Friedrichs proposed reducing the moderator's budget by \$5,000 and not buying any new booths. Councilor Friedrichs AMENDED Councilor Welsh's motion to make it \$5,000 instead of \$2,000. Councilor Welsh SECONDED the amendment. The motion PASSED on a roll call vote of 6-2.

Councilor Grant - aye; Councilor Vogt - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Chair Pro Tem Needell - nay; Councilor Burton - aye; Councilor Ford - aye, Councilor Welsh - aye; Councilor Friedrichs - aye.

Councilor Welsh MOVED to cut \$1,000 from the Parks and Recreation staff development line. Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion. Councilor Needell asked

1 what the money is used for and Administrator Selig said it was for two staff members to
2 attend an annual statewide conference. ***The motion PASSED on a 5-3 roll call vote.***

3
4 ***Councilor Grant - aye; Councilor Vogt - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Chair Pro Tem***
5 ***Needell - nay; Councilor Burton - nay; Councilor Ford - aye; Councilor Welsh - aye;***
6 ***Councilor Friedrichs - aye.***

7
8 Councilor Grant proposed reducing the fire department remodeling request from
9 \$500,000 to \$400,000. Chief Emanuel said he has reached out to the UNH project
10 manager for revised numbers, but hasn't received them yet, and \$500,000 was the
11 minimum estimate for the renovation while the space is still being used and he said some
12 components had already been funded.

13
14 ***Councilor Grant MOVED to cut the fire department building improvement line by***
15 ***\$100,000 to \$400, 000. Councilor Friedrichs SECONDED the motion.***

16
17 Discussion occurred about how the project could be stretched into the following year and
18 how the UNH process is moving slowly so it could run over into 2027 anyway and be
19 reconsidered then.

20
21 ***The motion PASSED by a roll call vote of 5-3.***

22
23 ***Council Welsh - aye; Councilor Ford - aye; Councilor Burton - nay; Chair Pro Tem***
24 ***Needell - nay; Chair Friedman - aye; Council Vogt - nay, Councilor Grant - aye;***
25 ***Councilor Friedrichs - aye.***

26
27 ***Councilor Grant MOVED to reduce the Historic District/Heritage Commission***
28 ***contracted services from \$4,000 to \$2,000. Councilor Ford SECONDED the motion.***
29 Administrator Selig said the reduction would be reasonable. ***The motion PASSED on a***
30 ***roll call vote of 7-1.***

31
32 ***Councilor Welsh - aye; Councilor Ford - aye; Councilor Burton - no; Chair Pro Tem***
33 ***Sally Needell - aye; Chair Friedman - aye; Councilor Vogt - aye; Councilor Grant -***
34 ***aye; Councilor Friedrichs - aye.***

35
36 ***Councilor Grant MOVED to cut \$200,000 from the Department of Public Works road***
37 ***resurfacing program reducing it from \$533,500 to \$333,500.*** Administrator Selig said
38 you can reduce it, but roads will fall behind and doesn't recommend it. ***Councilor***
39 ***Friedrichs SECONDED the motion.*** Councilor Ford said he opposed the motion for the
40 reason Administrator Selig gave that once you start getting behind, there's more to fix,
41 it's more expensive and it's much cheaper to keep up with the maintenance as you go
42 along. Councilor Welsh said it would make sense to defer it if they knew there'd be more
43 money next year, but that is not the case.

44
45 ***The motion FAILED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.***
46

1 Councilor Grant asked Administrator Selig to confirm that the request for two firefighters
2 had already been removed and that he did not recommend the fire department's request.

3
4 Councilor Grant noted the contingencies and the wage increases and asked if the
5 contingency is a worst case scenario where every demand is met or is it moderated, and if
6 the town doesn't use the full amount where would it come back to. Administrator Selig
7 said the amount is what a reasonable compromise on the contracts would look like. If it
8 comes in under the amount, he said, they will. If not, they won't agree or would come
9 back to the Council for a decision. Reducing those amounts further makes it more
10 difficult to reach an agreement, he said.

11
12 Councilor Grant said she thinks if the contracts come in below that the money saved
13 should come back to offset revenue problems in the following year.

14
15 Councilors Vogt, Friedman, Needell and Burton said they had no budget amendments to
16 propose.

17
18 Councilor Needell pointed out there are nine minutes left in the meeting.

19
20 Councilor Friedrichs noted the federal cost of living adjustment for the past year is 2.5
21 percent. ***Ze MOVED to reduce the budget's 3% COLA adjustment to make it 2.5% to***
22 ***save \$130,000 across the board for full-time employees and \$13,000 for part-time***
23 ***employees.***

24
25 Administrator Selig said when he checked it at the end of August the figure for the
26 Boston-New England regional area was 3.2 percent.

27
28 ***Councilor Welsh SECONDED the motion.***

29
30 Administrator Selig noted the challenge with collective bargaining and said the long-term
31 agreements they negotiate sometimes allow employees to fall behind in salary relative to
32 the market if inflation rises during the period of the agreement. He said he doesn't
33 recommend the motion because it makes hiring more difficult.

34
35 Ms. Jablonski said the 3% budgeted is for non-unionized town staff only not the
36 unionized employees so the savings would not be as great as the amount Councilor
37 Friedrichs mentioned.

38
39 ***The motion FAILED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.***

40
41 ***Councilor Vogt MOVED to extend the meeting to 11 p.m. Councilor Welsh***
42 ***SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a roll call vote of 7-1.***

43
44 ***Councilor Grant - aye, Councilor Vogt - aye, Chair Friedman - aye, Chair Pro Tem***
45 ***Needell - aye, Councilor Burton - aye, Councilor Ford - nay, Councilor Welsh - aye,***
46 ***Councilor Friedrichs - aye.***

1
2 ***Councilor Friedrichs MOVED to cut the part-time position in the Planning***
3 ***Department to save \$6,100.*** She noted the town is not growing, that multiple staff attend
4 committee meetings unnecessarily and the need to use staff time better, perhaps reducing
5 the hours the office is open to the public so employees can get more done.
6

7 Ms. Jablonski said that cost is spread across three departments that the part-time
8 employee works for so the total is \$18,300.
9

10 ***Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion.***
11

12 Administrator Selig explained how the part-time temporary intern position came to be,
13 including how busy the three offices are, that an audit of the assessing office found some
14 records were not being managed according to new standards and the part-timer was going
15 to work on that project. Reducing hours to the public or overtime for the full-time
16 assistant to cover the workload was discussed.
17

18 ***The motion FAILED on a roll call vote of 6-2.***
19

20 ***Chair Pro Tem Needell - no; Councilor Burton - nay; Councilor Ford - nay; Councilor***
21 ***Welsh - aye; Councilor Grant - nay; Councilor Vogt - nay; Chair Friedman - nay;***
22 ***Councilor Friedrichs - aye.***
23

24 ***Councilor Welsh MOVED to amend Friedrichs' amendment and cut the part-time***
25 ***hours by 50 percent, saving \$9,150 over the three departments. Councilor Grant***
26 ***SECONDED the motion.***
27

28 Councilor Burton noted the town has a town manager and the Council is getting into
29 micromanaging.
30

31 ***The motion FAILED on a tied roll call vote of 4-4.***
32

33 ***Councilor Grant - aye, Councilor Vogt - nay; Chair Friedman - nay; Chair Pro Tem***
34 ***Needell - nay; Councilor Burton - nay; Councilor Ford - aye; Councilor Welsh - aye;***
35 ***Councilor Friedrichs - aye.***
36

37 ***Councilor Friedrichs MOVED that the four budget additions negotiated by the***
38 ***overlays be reduced by 20 percent for a total of \$360,000 in savings. Councilor Grant***
39 ***SECONDED the motion.***
40

41 Administrator Selig said these are the funds to cover potential abatements, how if they
42 are not in budget, they will be charged to the undesignated fund balance and how not
43 having the money makes it more difficult to come to an agreement with parties. He said
44 these are the best estimates they could make of what it will cost and if they don't get fully
45 used, the money goes into the reserve. He said this would impact the budget, but not the
46 tax rate. Councilor Friedrichs said if the town comes up short, it can come back to the

Council for a new amount. Administrator Selig said that is difficult because that amount exceeds the allowed budget adjustment and would require another Public Hearing.

The motion FAILED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.

Councilor Friedrichs MOVED to remove the part-time CALEA assistant position for a savings of \$22,000. The position oversees the accreditation application process for the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies. Administrator Selig said the certification is important and most towns have a full- or part-time person. Councilor Welsh pointed out that position was going to help with the parking permit program. Councilor Friedrichs said ze'd rather the parking program be up and producing revenue and then add staff. Councilor Grant pointed out the position's start has been delayed to Sept. 1 so it's one quarter of the salary for 2026. ***No one SECONDED the motion.***

Councilor Friedrichs said to meet the Council's budget goals it has to identify an additional \$1,530,000 in cuts. That's after the additional cuts recommended by Administrator Selig, ze said, and they've only cut about \$400,000 so the Council is still \$1,100,000 over the Council goal.

Councilor Grant asked if there is anything in DPW that could be saved such as if the town only plowed downtown sidewalks and most homeowners are responsible for clearing their home's sidewalks. Administrator Selig said that because schoolchildren use many of the residential sidewalks to walk to school, he would not recommend reducing sidewalk plowing. He said it wouldn't be a reduction in staffing, only of a service.

The Council discussed meeting for a budget workshop on Monday, Dec. 8 and decided that was a good idea. Administrator Selig said he would incorporate the amendments approved into the budget and have it for Dec. 8. Chair Friedman said the Council would put off the budget vote until the Dec. 8 meeting.

XIII. Councilor and Town Administrator Roundtable - Delayed until Dec. 8 meeting.

XIV. New Business - None

XV. Nonpublic Session (if required)

XVI. Adjourn (NLT 10:30 PM)

Councilor Ford MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Grant SECONDED the motion. The motion PASSED on a unanimous roll call vote of 8-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.

- Jane Murphy, Minutes Taker