



MINUTES TOWN FINANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday – May 14, 2026

Hybrid

5:00 P.M.

Item 1. Call to Order. L. Cain – Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Item 2. Those Present. Finance Committee members present: Councilors Larry Cain – Chair, Jonathan Anderson and Karin Shupe. Others present: Thomas J. Hall, Town Manager, Liam Gallagher, Assistant Town Manager, Norman Kildow, Finance Director, Diane Nadeau, School Superintendent, Kate Bolton, Director of Business & Finance and Shannon Lindstrom, Chair of the Board of Education.

Item 3. Approval of Minutes: April 30, 2026 – Special Meeting. No action taken.

Item 4. Discussion and Action on Recommended FY27 Budget Adjustments.

Both the School Department the Town presented proposed recommendations to the Finance Committee and responded to questions. After a very lengthy discussion the Committee made the following proposals:

Motion by J. Anderson, seconded by K. Shupe, to move the school budget forward to the with a \$699,330 reduction in the school budget.

Motion was Withdrawn and the following motion was made:

Motion by J. Anderson, seconded by K. Shupe, to reduce the school budget by \$1.2 million.

Vote: 3 Yeas. Motion Carried.

Motion by L. Cain, seconded by J. Anderson, to take the reductions deferring the town clerk, a part-time upgrade, deferring the finance clerk upgrade, half year funding for the long-range planner, deferring the police hiring date until January 2027, and accepting the reallocation of the TIF funds.

Vote: 3 Yeas. Motion Carried.

Item 5. Public Comments.

Present in the Room:

- Jim Marshall of Inspiration Drive and a teacher at Wentworth School, expressed gratitude to community members for engaging with his fifth-grade students' advocacy efforts. He emphasized the critical need to avoid proposed budget cuts, which he believed would significantly harm education quality. He voiced the importance of preserving educational technology positions and experienced teachers, as staffing changes could negatively impact

student achievement. He argued for strategic budget cuts outside the classroom to maintain strong educational programming and expressed appreciation for the ongoing dialogue about these issues.

- Mitchell Rockstar of Howard Lane, expressed appreciation for the Board and Finance Committee's responsible management of taxpayer money. However, he criticized their ambitious budget goals, deeming them unrealistic given the current inflation rate of 3.5%. He warned that excessive budget cuts, particularly those affecting students, could lead to greater losses in the long run. He expressed the importance of not leaving debts for future generations.
- Whitney White of Saratoga Lane, stated she has a child in kindergarten at Blue Point, and expressed appreciation for the school staff and advocated for a 3% mill rate increase to preserve educational quality. She highlighted her child's positive experience at Blue Point, specifically mentioning Miss Mitchell, an edtech, and stressed the importance of funding schools without cutting positions. She would be "happy and elated" to support this funding goal.
- Lindsay Allen of Sterling Drive, shared her perspective as a parent of two boys, one in first grade with an IEP and a younger daughter. She emphasized the importance of educational services like ed techs, which not only support her son, but also assists teachers in effectively engaging all students. As a guardian of children's interests, she expressed willingness to pay higher taxes to enhance school funding, contradicting those who advocate for tax cuts, underlining her commitment to community support.
- Alexis McCoy of Gunstock Road and the daughter of a public school teacher, spoke against cuts to the schools. She expressed her support for public education, highlighting the negative effects of funding reductions she witnessed growing up. She would be willing to pay higher taxes for the benefit of the town and its residents, and concluded by thanking the council for their efforts.
- Mariah Peric of River Woods Drive, a pediatric nurse and mother of two, advocated for the School District's funding. She noted the school's outstanding staff and the crucial role they play, beyond teaching and went on to highlight the challenges faced by families due to economic pressures and stresses the importance of investing in education. She argued that a proposed \$2.1 million budget cut would harm children's support services, increase class sizes, and lead to staff burnout, ultimately diminishing the community's value. She called for recognition of the staff's worth and the need for appropriate resources to support children's futures.
- Todd Waters of Partridge Lane, felt that a proposed 2.9% budget cut would negatively impact bus routes, requiring children to wake earlier and wait longer. It would also reduce ed tech positions crucial for classroom supervision and managing activities, leading to increased bullying and larger class sizes. As more students with IEPs, including those with autism and ADHD, enter schools, the need for breaks and appropriate classroom support is more vital than ever. Historically, budget increases have been substantial, while current funding is the lowest in recent years, despite a growing financial surplus. Given these circumstances, cuts to school budgets should be reconsidered.
- Stephen Zamierowski of Theresa Massie Lane expressed his gratitude for Scarborough and advocated for families impacted by proposed service cuts in education. He represented local

parents expressing concern over budget cuts affecting programs and staff, emphasizing that 60% of residents support school investments. He argued against further cuts beyond the \$94.6 million budget, citing inflation concerns. He supported the 2.9% property tax increase as responsible and highlighted the need for targeted tax programs to assist families facing financial strain, urging swift adoption of state property tax deferment programs.

Via Zoom:

- Lacy Bell of Katie's Lane, emphasized the importance of special education programs at Blue Point, where her children participate. She highlighted the necessity of Ed Tech support for students with disabilities, particularly her son with autism and ADHD. She noted that parents are increasingly aware of school funding issues, noting the formation of a Facebook group to advocate for educational support. She critiqued the proposed 2% mill rate increase as unrealistic amid rising costs and diminishing state funding. She called for restoring previous budget cuts to better align with community priorities and the true needs of the schools and students.

Present In the Room:

- Sue Hamill of Bay Street, felt many residents are indifferent, leading to a silent majority; while 25% of the population has children in school, 75% do not. We support strong schools and are not seeking a tax cut, understanding that the budget will increase. She appreciated the focus on capital, which will influence next year's budget due to significant projects, including a \$3 million payment affecting the tax increase. Lastly, we plan to bond \$500,000 for the Eastern Trail, which we don't own, necessitating a review of this bonding issue.

Via Zoom:

- Duncan Birch of Fairway Drive, emphasized the importance of defending educational funding, highlighting the invaluable services provided by schools in supporting those in need. He reflected on his own experiences, describing schools as safe havens during a challenging childhood. He urged the council to reconsider budget cuts, advocating that investments in education today will yield long-term benefits.

Present in the Room:

- Don Cushing of River Pines Drive, represented a significant portion of the community, emphasizing concerns about the sustainability of tax policies. He highlighted the high tax percentages faced by different age groups, noting that individuals aged 45-54 see a tax bill representing 4.3% of their income, while those aged 65 see this rise to 7.6%. He warned that ignoring the needs of those not currently in the school system may lead to discontent in the community, urging consideration of proposals he submitted to the council.

Via Zoom:

- Jennifer Birch of Fairway Drive, expressed concern about the proposed 2% budget target for schools, arguing it is inadequate given current inflation rates of 3-4%. She highlighted the challenges faced by working parents in attending meetings to voice their opinions. She

commented on the negative impact of staffing changes, citing her son's experience with losing a beloved early interventionist due to position shuffling. She emphasized that such changes affect children in significant ways, beyond mere statistics. She appreciated the ongoing discussions about balancing municipal and school budgets to serve the community effectively.

Item 6. Adjourn. Motion by J. Anderson, seconded by K. Shupe, to move approval to adjourn the regular meeting of the Finance Committee.

Vote: 3 Yeas. Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Yolande P. Justice

Clerk to the Council

[Not present at meeting; translated by Video]