# Office of Board of Selectmen

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**Selectmen's Budget Workshop Minutes**
**Tuesday, October 13, 2026, 4:00 pm**
**Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room**

Present were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, Selectman Mark Lewandoski, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant/Assessing Administrator Colleen Akerman, Finance Director Steve Forster, GA Director Donna Cilley, Library Director Tricia Sturm, Library Trustee Hillary Horn and Heritage Commission Chair Vicki Donovan.

Also present were Health Agency Members Andy Morse of Granite VNA, Beth Heyward of Community Action Program (CAP), Stacy Lopes of CASA, Beth Vachon of Lakes Region Mental Health (LRMH), Stacy Lopes of CASA, Krystin Albert and Nicolas Johnson of Franklin VNA & Hospice, Jonathan Lile-Sexton of Partnership for Public Health, and Jan Curtis of Community Wellness Center.

Via Zoom were Jim Harnett of Lakes Region Visiting Nurse Association, Ruth Morrissette of Waypoint, Shauna Foster of New Beginnings, Sarah Beaudry of American Red Cross, and Nicole Shedd of Family Promise of the Lakes Region.

The Chairman opened the public meeting at 4:00 pm and those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Mooney requested that audience members avoid conversation during the meeting due to the acoustics of the room, and informed attendees that although this is a public meeting, it is a workshop and not intended to solicit public comment.

**Review & Approve Minutes:**

**Minutes of Meeting 10/06/2026 Budget Workshop:**

*Selectman Travis O'Hara moved to approve the minutes of the Budget Workshop meeting held 10/06/2026; seconded by Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Health Agencies:**

**New Beginnings**:

Shauna Foster of New Beginnings presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $1,460.00. New Beginnings is the local domestic and sexual violence center in Laconia and they provide free, confidential services 24/7. Last year they provided 357 services to 60 Belmont residents including emotional support, safety planning, accompaniments, legal support, and shelter beds. Town funding supports personnel, professional fees, accounting and compliance.

**Granite VNA**:

Andy Morse of Granite VNA presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $16,000.00. They have provided home health, hospice and community wellness services in New Hampshire for 127 years. Last year they served almost 200 Belmont residents including 4,000 home health and hospice visits and 9 stays at their 24/7 hospice house. They also provided home baby visits, and bereavement, aging and caregiving programs that are not reimbursable by insurance. Overall, they provided $960,000 in services to Belmont last year. 10 of their 361 staff members reside in Belmont as well. Services they provide result in care close to home, healthier outcomes and prevent unnecessary hospitalizations.

**Lakes Region VNA**:

Jim Harnett of Lakes Region VNA presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $7,500.00. They provide home care regardless of finances. This past year they provided $60,000 in charitable care for Belmont to 60-80 patients. Their catchment area includes 40 communities, and they provide home care services, maternal and infant care, hospice, skilled nursing and end of life services. They hosted flu clinics in Belmont in 2025 and 2026.

**Community Action Program (CAP)**:

Beth Heyward presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $15,000.00. This year they supported more residents and provided year-round centers. They provided information for the Board to review that includes transportation information. Last year they provided $1,057,075.73 in services to Belmont residents.

**CASA**:

Stacy Lopes presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $500.00. Their request is unchanged from previous years. They provide statewide recruitment of volunteers who stand up for abused and neglected children. There are currently 6 active cases in Belmont, and they have 1 volunteer from Belmont. Ms. Lopes said they are always looking for more volunteers. They have 600 volunteers across the state and 40 in Belknap County. They served 1,400 abuse and neglect cases last year.

**Waypoint**:

Ruth Morrissette presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $4,000.00. Their organization has served New Hampshire for 176 years. They provide healthcare coordination for children from birth to age 21 with chronic health conditions with impacts to daily life. Some case workers stay the whole 21 years. They assist with Medicaid, HCCS and other funding and support IEPs and 504s, home modifications and adaptive equipment. They help to prevent institutionalization and hospitalization. They also help with transportation to Boston or Dartmouth, recreational activities and special camps. Their work can help to avoid DCYF involvement. They are currently working with 24 Belmont residents.

**American Red Cross**:

Sarah Beaudry presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $2,000.00. She oversees Belknap, Coos, Carroll and Grafton counties. She met recently with the fire chief and assistant fire chief about their "canteening" program where they go to any large fires or events

and provide support for first responders. They worked 7 cases in Belmont with 19 individuals in the last year. They provide food, clothing, lodging and emotional support, emergency evacuation plans and smoke detector installs, operate blood drives and provide classes for first aid, CPR, water safety and babysitting.

**Lakes Region Mental Health (LRMH)**:

Beth Vachon presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $19,921.00. They have been in operation for over 60 years. LRMH provides assistance for short-term crises, a Place to Go in Plymouth, an open access program, and a new court collaboration for low-risk offenders to get treatment. They serve low income and disabled residents who depend on Medicaid and partner with CAP to fill needs in the community. 64% of their revenues are from Medicaid and 36% are copays, self pays, grants and donations. This year's request is unchanged from last year. They provided $67,000 in charity care in Belmont and served 223 Belmont residents. They are seeing an increase in service hours for cases and an increase in services to youth with co-occurring mental health and developmental disabilities.

**Franklin VNA**:

Krystin Albert and Nick Johnson presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $4,000.00. They provided 976 visits to 89 Belmont residents, including 37 in hospice with $30,000 in charity care. 7 of their 46 employees reside in Belmont. They provided blood pressure and flu clinics, monthly grief groups and dementia caregiver support groups. They attended Belmont Old Home Day, Trunk or Treat, Touch a Truck, and the Employee Appreciation Day.

**Partnership for Public Health (PPH):**

Jonathan Lile-Sexton presented their proposed 2027 budget of $3,000.00. They assisted 412 Belmont residents last year out of 6,600 served in the county. They provide services for the aging and disabled, emergency preparedness, prevention and substance misuse, and community health. They provide mobile health services where a paramedic will visit patients at home to help prevent unnecessary ER visits.

**Family Promise of the Lakes Region**:

Nicole Shedd of Family Promise of the Lakes Region presented their 2027 budget request of $5,000.00. Their goal is to prevent and end family homelessness and provide independence and to serve 100 families and 200 children. They assist families who are hurting and only one expense, or medical emergency away from losing housing. It is targeted assistance for childcare, transportation, food or unexpected emergencies to provide long term stability. They launched September 14th with 25 families needing assistance. In 2025 there were 165 homeless, up from 129 the previous year, but there are many not reported who are staying with relatives, or in a hotel with unstable housing. Belknap House only has 19 spots. They are focusing on prevention and more responsible use of resources. It could be $2,000 for a one-time service versus $30,000 for an emergency shelter stay. They anticipate serving 5 Belmont families with 10-12 children over the course of the year.

**Community Wellness Center**:

Jan Curtis presented their proposed 2027 budget request of $2,000.00. Their organization is a non-profit exercise facility in Laconia dedicated to the health and wellness of seniors. They provide top quality exercise equipment and strength programming to encourage good health habits and provide socialization and better mental health. They are working to increase their membership through ads, fundraising and an open house. They need to maintain and improve their facility and equipment. They provide chair yoga and hope to add balance training and nutrition and more social activities because seniors need connections. They are open from 8 am to 2 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday and expect to increase their hours as they increase memberships.

**South Road Cemetery**:

Ruth P. Mooney temporarily stepped down from the Board to present their proposed 2027 budget request for $9,000. South Road Cemetery is a private cemetery, but the Town is required by law to have an active cemetery, and South Road Cemetery serves that need. They have a $500 increase from last year's budget but a few years ago when the budget defaulted, they took no funds for that year. They have been struggling with everything increasing. People are not buying new spots because they are using existing family plots for extended family. Many people are only purchasing cremation sites and there is not a lot of new income from sales. They do have an expansion area, but the budget is very tight. The Town and the county both own plots there for indigent individuals with no family. They are still playing catch up from a few years ago.

Chairman Ruth P. Mooney returned to the Board.

**Health Agency Review:**

The Board discussed the Health Agency budget as a whole and reviewed some of the increased request amounts. There were some concerns about supporting new agencies, and the lack of direct assistance provided by the American Red Cross in Belmont last year. The consensus was to try to keep the budget in line with last year's requests.

*Selectman Mooney moved to approve $73,881 for the following 2027 Health Agency requests:*

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|---|---|
| *South Road Cemetery* | *$ 9,000* |
| *Granite VNA* | *$11,000* |
| *Lakes Region VNA* | *$ 5,000* |
| *Community Action (CAP)* | *$15,000* |
| *CASA* | *$ 500* |
| *Waypoint* | *$2,000* |
| *New Beginnings* | *$1,460* |
| *American Red Cross* | *$0* |
| *Lakes Region Mental Health* | *$19,921* |
| *Franklin VNA & Hospice* | *$ 4,000* |
| *Partnership for Public Health* | *$ 3,000* |

*Family Promise of the Lakes Region $ 2,000*
*Community Wellness Center $ 1,000*

*seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

TA Jipson reported this is a 6.6% increase in the Health Agency budget.

**Cemetery Trustees:**

Sharon Ciampi temporarily stepped down from the Board and presented the Cemetery Trustees proposed 2027 budget request of $30,000. They have two alternates who attend their meetings and they are trying to play catch up from the default budget.

Cemetery Trustee Chairman Ciampi explained most of the budget is maintenance, and fuel and oil costs have had a big impact. The rest of the budget is for emergency tree falls, supplies, training and conferences. They belong to two organizations and attend conferences. They are working with the Trustees of the Trust Funds to rebuild their records and create a formula to use more perpetual care funds. They hope 2027 will be the first year they can get reimbursement for grave maintenance. This year they were able to use some perpetual care funds to help reimburse fence work at the cemetery on Church Hill.

There was discussion about the current amount expended for 2026 and there is still one maintenance payment to be made. They will be purchasing their Ancestry subscription as well. The maintenance contract will be going out to bid in December, and contractors are encouraged to tour the locations before bidding. Last year the contract was $23,000 but it is likely to be higher next year. There is currently $58,796 in the Capital Reserve Fund, which does not include the 2026 approved amount. Those funds are for emergencies, and they still need to do the cleanup at Weymouth Cemetery, and they are trying to work with the Department of Corrections for signs for the cemeteries.

The Board discussed the information available about the Weymouth cemetery. There are no good records of how many people are buried there. Cemetery Chairman Ciampi suggested that some records may have been turned over to South Road Cemetery after Russell Cushing passed away.

*Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the 2027 Cemetery budget request with a reduction to $28,000.00; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).*

Selectman Ciampi returned to the Board.

**Library Trustees:**

Library Director Tricia Sturm and Library Trustee Hillary Horn presented the Library's proposed 2027 budget request of $236,352.

The Board discussed the director's salary changes due to a new director. Library Trustee Hillary Horn could not speak to the changes because she was not involved in the salary discussions.

Overall the budget has a 9% decrease, which is due in part to the election of benefits for current staff. Last year the director's position went unfilled for quite a few months, and other positions had a change in staff. Library Director Tricia Sturm expressed appreciation for the Youth Services Librarian who took on both positions temporarily, and the staff members who stepped up to avoid any interruptions in daily operations. TA Jipson was concerned about the salary for the director compared to others in the State. Trustee Hillary Horn was not involved in the budget process but will bring the concerns to the other trustees.

*Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the 2027 Library budget request as presented; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Heritage Commission (15):**

Heritage Commission Chair Vicki Donovan presented the Heritage Commission budget request for 2027. They requested a budget of $250.00 and their warrant article is $2,500.00, which is unchanged from prior years. She provided information about their 2026 accomplishments and their goals for 2027.

*Selectman Pike moved to approve the Heritage Commission 2027 budget of $250.00 as presented; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

*Selectman Pike moved to approve the Heritage Commission's requested warrant article of $2,500.00 as presented; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**General Assistance (14):**

GA Director Donna Cilley presented the General Assistance proposed 2027 budget.

There is a significant uncontrollable increase in the budget. The highest increases are in the housing line, which is averaging about $14,000 per month. That is only for the homeless and does not include regular residents who are in crisis, which are starting to appear. There has been an upswing in the elderly and disabled homelessness. It's hard to house someone in a wheelchair because they need wider doors and reasonable accommodations. There is also an increase in mental health related issues with the homeless. There are not enough shelters for the homeless. There are some agencies that are providing assistance, but they operate on a different structure. CAP helps with housing stability, electricity and fuel. Deliverable products have increased significantly.

There was discussion about welfare administration legislation, services provided by Health Agencies, as well as an increase in the part-time line because of the increased need for services. GA Director Cilley is searching for grants to help fund a staff position so that she can work on some succession planning for retirement. The office cannot be run by one person and she is working until 7 pm every night.

*Selectman Pike moved to approve the 2027 General Assistance budget requests as presented; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Debt Service, Principal & Interest and TAN (16):**

TA Jipson presented the request for 2027. There is a 13% decrease due to paying off the Hoadley Road culvert bond this year and that has been confirmed with the bank. $220,000 in debt for a Town of our size is very good.

*Selectman Pike moved to approve the 2026 Debt Service, Principal & Interest and TAN budget of $220,968 as presented; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Legal (17):**

TA Jipson presented the Legal budget request of $50,000.00 for 2027, which is the same as last year. There are no union contracts under review this year and so far, less than $25,000 has been spent this year. In past years we were over budget. Legal fees increase each year and there is still pending litigation on some items. Code Enforcement and Planning have their own legal budget lines.

*Chairman Mooney moved to approve the 2027 Legal budget of $50,000.00 as presented; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Insurance Not Allocated (18):**

This item was tabled to a future meeting because numbers are not yet available.

**Solid Waste (19):**

TA Jipson presented the Solid Waste budget request of $830,730 for 2027. That is a 4.5% increase. Last year there was a State imposed surcharge included but Casella can't accurately identify what goes to each of their sites from Belmont specifically, and can't assign a value, so it was removed from this year's budget. It would have been reimbursable. There is also a line for items collected from our roadsides, but it can be reduced. The Board discussed Household Hazardous Waste (HHW), which was quoted at $9,992 and is based off of our population. There was low participation and there are some other alternatives for residents to dispose of HHW at their own cost so it was not included. The solid waste contract will go out bid for mid-year 2027. Last time, Casella was the only one who bid on the RFP.

*Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the Solid Waste budget of $830,370 as presented; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Health Agency Budgets Revisited:**

The Board did not want to put GA Director Cilley on the spot, but they asked for her input on the health agency requests. There is a lack of staff at LRMH. There are some concerns about where the funds are going if their staff has been reduced. Laconia reportedly cut their health agency budgets by 75% this year, but we cut ours in a prior year. CAP is doing a lot, and their

request was only $15,000. Laconia reduced the CAP budget from $40,000 to $10,000 for 2026-2027. They are pushing back for federal funding.

TA Jipson suggested the Board consider the Community Wellness organization. They are charging $50.00 for a single person and $90.00 for a couple and they are new this year.

The Board reviewed the LRMH request compared to the CAP request, and the reduction made by Laconia.

*Chairman Mooney moved to amend the Health Agency budget to $68,960 by reducing the LRMH allocation to $15,000; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed (4-0-1). Selectman Ciampi opposed.*

*Chairman Mooney moved to amend the Health Agency budget to $67,960 by reducing the Community Wellness Center to $0; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

The Board requested staff reach out to LRMH and Community Wellness to let them know of the change in the approved amounts.

**Town Clerk/Tax Collector Budget Review:**

The Board reviewed the wage requests for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office which included a 6% increase instead of the recommended 4% increase. The request was made due to the increase in taxes collected, the responsibilities of the office and the promotion of deputies. By law there needs to be a deputy and we have not had one. The Town Clerk deputy must be a resident of Belmont. The Tax Collector deputy can be a non-resident. There was an explanation included but the decision was previously tabled to be considered by the full Board.

They have done a phenomenal job collecting taxes this year and they get a lot of grief. The Board discussed 4% versus 6% and decided to leave wages at 4% because they are concerned about the budget passing.

**Water/Sewer Budget Review:**

There was a significant change in the budgets with a proposal to bring on another person as a shared 50/50 supervisor for both departments. The DPW Director would transition to an 80/10/10 salary split instead of 50/25/25. It is a good step forward to separate water and sewer from the highway. Previously the Town had a sewer commission that handled a lot of the work. We are also reliant on a company for lots of services and they have been declining to renew contracts with other municipalities. With the anticipated WRBP changes it is a good idea to have a supervisor. The departments are separate from Highway in lots of other communities.

**Adjournment:**

*Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30pm; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board 10 / 21 / 2026:

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman

Mark Lewandoski, Selectman