Town of Belmont

143 Main Street, P.O. Box 310, Belmont, New Hampshire 03220-0310
Telephone: (603) 267-8300 Fax: (603) 267-8327

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 5, 2026, 6:00 pm
Belmont Mill
Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Tracey LeClair, Selectmen's Representative Travis O'Hara, Members Ron Mitchell, Marsha Campbell, Don House, Mark Roberts, Paul Maggioli, Lee Cheshire, Scott Bell and Doug Trottier; TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman; Finance Director Steve Forster; General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge, and Heritage Commission Chair Vicki Donovan. Also present was Selectboard Chair Ruth P. Mooney.

Via Zoom was Vice Chair Jessi Fleck.

Absent: Members Don Hurd (excused) and Susan Roache (unexcused).

Chairman Tracey LeClair opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

Audience members were requested to refrain from whispering during the meeting and reminded that this is a public meeting for the committee to work with department heads. There is no mandate for the committee to accept public comment, and a public hearing to accept comment will be held in January.

Welcome & Introductions:

The Committee introduced themselves.

Remote Participation Request:

Vice Chair Jessi Fleck made a request to participate remotely for medical reasons.

Tracey LeClair moved to allow Jessi Fleck to participate remotely; seconded by Paul Maggioli. Motion passed unopposed (10-0).

J. Fleck noted there was no one in the room with her. All votes during this meeting will be held by roll call due to remote member participation.

Chairman LeClair thanked everyone for collecting their budget binders for review. The committee is now tasked with reviewing proposed budgets submitted by department heads and approved by the Board of Selectmen. This is the last stop before the budget is put before the voters. We will listen and learn. This is not a forum for comments on the performance of

department heads. We will discuss the overall budgets and keep things moving. She also reminded members that if they disagree with a budget or line, they need to speak up during the meeting so that all members can stand by their votes when discussing the budget.

Minutes Approval – 01/08/2026:

T. LeClair moved to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2026 meeting as presented; seconded by Ron Mitchell. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Officer Nominations & Elections:

T. LeClair moved to nominate J. Fleck as Vice Chair, seconded by Marsha Campbell. J. Fleck accepted and there were no other nominations. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Jessi Fleck abstained. Motion passed (10-0-1).

R. Mitchell moved to nominate T. Leclair as Chairman; seconded by Mark Roberts. T. LeClair accepted and there were no other nominations. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Tracey LeClair abstained. Motion passed (10-0-1).

Binder Overview and Important Dates for Local Officials:

TA Jipson gave an overview of the budget binder setup. Agendas and important dates are included in the front of each binder. The NHMA list shows all of the deadlines.

Role of the Budget Committee and State Budget Highlights:

Each member's binder included documents such as an overview of the role of the budget committee, information on federal funds and state budget highlights, a fund balance PowerPoint and other important information and data.

TA Budget PowerPoint:

TA Jipson reviewed the PowerPoint presentation provided for the budget books. The presentation included details about meeting dates; who is up for re-election; 2026 in review; the budget comparison from 2025 to 2026; estimated revenues of $6,000,000 for 2026; employee changes; 2027 outlook for heating fuel, electric, insurance and retirement rates; the Library's expansion request; 2026 grant funding of over $1,000,000; proposed operating budget for 2027 with a 5.5% increase, estimated revenues of $6,000,000; and capital reserve fund balances as of 10/31/2026.

Budget worksheets were printed on 10/27/2026 so the actual 2026 expended values may not be up to date for all budget lines. TA Jipson has the "live" numbers and can provide

updates for any of the actual numbers on request. If any members find an error in any of the worksheets, please let us know so that they can be corrected.

Department Budgets:

Heritage Commission (2):

Heritage Commission Chairman Vicki Donovan said they have had 5 members on the Commission since 2018, as well as a couple of different Selectman representatives and student representatives from Belmont High School. They add a voice for history, heritage, community, schools, seniors and work with the American Legion. They provided a document of accomplishments including new banners in the village, senior citizens' food drive, Old Home Day, the 250th celebration and proposed 2027 projects. They are requesting $250 for their established programs, and their warrant article for $2,500 will be discussed later in the budget process.

There were questions about the interest on our bank accounts. Finance Director Steve Forster stated we are receiving 2.5% on regular accounts and 3.75% on capital reserve accounts. The rates are reviewed quarterly with Camden Bank.

T. LeClair moved to approve the Heritage Commission 2027 budget of $250 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by L. Cheshire. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

General Assistance (1):

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley discussed the challenges we are facing with over expended budgets due to the unhoused population, seniors and those with mental health issues, which is an issue across the State. General Assistance partners with local organizations for support whenever possible. Homeless encampments are being shut down and then the homeless shift to another location and we are not making any progress. Inflation, increases to heating fuel, rents, evictions and Medicaid and Medicare changes have impacted our residents.

It is difficult to get any space at the homeless shelters. The Town has a block of rooms and some cottages at a local hotel that are used to house the homeless at a reasonable monthly rate. Residents must sign a shelter agreement and adhere to strict rules including no alcohol, drugs, or smoking and there is a curfew and work schedules must be provided. They also contribute to their housing costs based on their income. Medically vulnerable people can't go into a regular shelter, and we need to take care of them until they can be rehoused. Mobile medics provide services under a county grant. There are not many problems with substance misuse by shelter residents because it isn't tolerated under the shelter agreement. Most of our housing budget line is used for the homeless, but we are seeing more residents needing assistance with rents or mortgages. There has been an increase in liens, which are a mechanism where we can provide assistance and recover what we can in the future. This year we were also responsible for 7 cremations.

There was discussion about transporting the homeless. The department now has a vehicle that was purchased outright using Opioid Abatement funds. The fund also covers fuel and maintenance.

GA Director Cilley discussed the implementation of House Bill 348, which focuses on residency requirements for homeless individuals, and expressed concerns about the 6-day deadline for identifying residents' origins and the challenges this creates for temporary housing arrangements. The Selectmen approved hiring a part-time 10-hour per week employee in 2026 using the part-time budget line, and the 2027 budget increases that time to 12 hours per week. GA Director Cilley hoped to include an additional full-time employee who could train this year so that she could retire next year, but we need to pass this budget. Training expenses have increased but there will be no vehicle costs due to the grant funds available.

There were questions about the actual amount spent on some line items, but we are using some encumbered funds from last year.

Committee members expressed their appreciation for GA Director Cilley's service to the Town over many years, especially transporting people in her personal vehicle and cleaning the rooms and cottages that are used for the homeless.

R. Mitchell moved to approve the General Assistance Administration 2027 budget of $123,721 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Paul Maggioli. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Housing was budgeted for $150,000 for 2026 and we have already spent $182,000. This year's request is $225,000. The hotel and cottages alone are $167,400 and we still need to assist people who are housed in Town. Paul Maggioli asked for clarification on the increase and if it is to add more space for the homeless or due to increased costs. The department is not looking for more homeless space but there are more people in Town needing assistance with rent and mortgage payments. We will lien those who own their own home. GA Director Cilley commented on how amazing our food pantries are to help sustain people. The utilities line decreased because most residents receiving assistance are homeless who are currently in our shelter rooms which include utilities.

R. Mitchell moved to approve the General Assistance Vendor Payments 2027 budget of $239,350 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by Doug Trottier. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Parks & Recreation and Beach (3):

Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge reviewed this year's programs including Gunstock, summer camp, and exercise classes. There are plans for an outdoor skating rink at Sargent Park this winter. Director St. Onge is looking for grants and reviewing RSAs with regards to ADA compliance for future projects.

For transparency, Selectman O'Hara disclosed that his daughter is employed part-time by the Parks and Recreation department but there is not a conflict of interest.

Director St. Onge stated some costs were shifted to the other budget to better differentiate between programs and events. There were only a few campers this year who were not Belmont residents, but some were children of Town employees. Don House asked if there are staffing issues, but most of the younger staff enjoy having their nights and weekends free. The camp director is a teacher, but the counselors are teenagers. The budget includes 8 weeks of camp for 2027.

R. Mitchell moved to approve the Parks & Recreation 2027 budget of $183,119 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by S. Bell. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

J. Fleck asked about the difference in the lifeguard line. Director St. Onge explained that one person acted as camp staff and a part-time lifeguard this year. The beach was only staffed during summer camp time this year, but she hopes to get another lifeguard and rotate the schedules to have some Saturday and holiday coverage next year. Things have been okay without a gatekeeper. There is a porta-potty on site during the season and the signs about no lifeguard on duty are always up.

P. Maggioli moved to approve the Parks & Recreation's Beach 2027 budget of $10,280 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by L. Cheshire. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed (11-0).

Patriotic Purposes (4):

Director St. Onge moved $1,000 from the Parks & Rec budget to this budget for events. The goal is to do one event per month. This year there were summer bands, a yard sale, Old Home Day, market days, Trunk or Treat and Deck the Village is scheduled. The Old Home Day line was left open with $1 but they are only using money they've raised and the budget for fireworks, which were encumbered from last year. Only one person showed up to one Old Home Day Committee meeting but there were enough volunteers on the day of the event to run it. Moving forward one person cannot shoulder all of the work for Old Home Day and it should not be the responsibility of the Town. Selectman O'Hara stated the Selectmen's goal is

to make Old Home Day completely self-sufficient financially and with volunteers, like Gilford Old Home Day.

D. Trottier moved to approve the Patriotic Purposes 2027 budget of $14,101 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by R. Mitchell. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Legal (5):

The legal budget was reduced by $10,000 compared to last year, which was a union negotiation year. This legal line covers three law firms for employment, planning/zoning/land use/general and franchise agreements. We use NHMA as a free resource before engaging our legal counsel whenever possible.

R. Mitchell moved to approve the Legal 2027 budget of $50,000 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by D. Trottier. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Debt - Principal & Interest (6):

Belmont has low debt for a town of our size. The last payment was made on the Hoadley Road culvert, which was a reduction of 13.3%. The only debt now is the police department bond, which ends in 2040. TAN is an anticipated note if there is a shortfall in money and the Town needs to borrow money for operations. The line is left open with $1. It is not commonly used for towns because we receive tax payments twice a year and we also do not want to pay interest on a loan.

L. Cheshire moved to approve the Debt – Principal & Interest 2027 budget of $220,968 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by D. Trottier. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Finance Director Forster mentioned the interest we earn with the NHPDIP accounts, which is projected to be $165,000 this year. Town funds are moved between the regular bank account and the NHPDIP account as needed to cover our financial commitments. The school is paid $1,500,000 per month and the money goes quick. We try to keep it in NHPDIP as long as possible.

Insurance Not Allocated (7):

This line covers our Primex rates for unemployment, workmen's comp and property and liability. There was an 8.1% decrease for 2027. There is also a 2026 rebate of $15,000 which

the Selectmen chose to put into the General Fund as revenue. T. LeClair credited Town employees for the lack of claims.

R. Mitchell moved to approve the Insurance Not Allocated 2027 budget of $357,879 as recommended by the Selectmen. The motion was seconded by D. Trottier. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Other Old Business: None

TA Jipson encouraged members to email her with any questions, and she can also check with department heads if any additional information is requested.

If members are unable to attend any meeting, they need to email Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman as soon as possible because we need to ensure a quorum to transact business and make decisions.

Adjournment:

T. O'Hara moved to adjourn at 7:58 pm; seconded by D. House. Roll call vote: Mark Roberts – aye, Scott Bell – aye, Doug Trottier – aye, Ron Mitchell – aye, Paul Maggioli – aye, Tracey LeClair – aye, Lee Cheshire – aye, Marsha Campbell – aye, Don House – aye, Travis O'Hara – aye, and Jessi Fleck - aye. Motion passed unanimously (11-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Committee: 11/19/2026

Chairman Tracey LeClair

Vice Chair Jessi Fleck

Selectman Travis O'Hara

Ron Mitchell

Marsha Campbell

Mark Roberts

Paul Maggioli

Don Hurd

Don House

Scott Bell

Lee Cheshire

Doug Trottier

Susan Roache