



Town of Middleton

182 Kings Highway, Middleton, New Hampshire 03887

Budget Committee Hearing
Old Town Hall
200 Kings Highway, Middleton, NH 03887

February 12, 2025 5:30 PM

These minutes serve as the legal record of the meeting and are in the form of an overview of the Budget Committee meeting. It is neither intended nor is it represented that this is a full transcription. A recording of the meeting is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/@townofmiddleton9741/streams> for a limited time for reference purposes.

Committee Members

Budget Committee Sierra Pawnell (Chair) Patti Sindorf (Vice Chair) Kathleen Blaney (absent)	Representatives Michael Green, BOS Rep Christine Maynard, SLVD Rep Nicole Huntress, School Rep
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Attachments

Proposed Warrant Articles for 2025
Proposed Town Budget for 2025

Call to Order

S. Pawnell opened the Budget Committee Public Hearing at 5:40 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Town Budget Review (continued)

The committee members discussed possible ways to reduce the total budget to be in compliance with the 2% increase cap the Town voted on previously.

R. Tufts-Keegan suggested reducing the employee insurance line and the Planning Board legal line. She said it's not ideal but doing that would allow the Committee to recommend a budget in line with the 2% cap without spending a lot of time focusing on the minutiae for each line.

C. Maynard said she doesn't think cutting the Planning Board legal budget is a good idea. That money is intended to help the Town implement necessary and desirable changes to the Zoning Ordinance legally and correctly. She will explain this at Town Meeting.

There was discussion about employee wages and salaries.

C. Maynard expressed frustration that there were raises approved before the Budget Committee voted on the recommendations.

There was conversation about balancing the cost of benefits and wages against the need to be competitive and still keep within the budget.

There was discussion about managing the Police line and plans for the future.

There was discussion about the Town Budget being a bottom-line budget.

C. Maynard made a motion to accept the revised recommended amount of \$1,894,725.95 for the Town Budget.

S. Pawnell seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Warrant Articles For 2025 (detail attached)

S. Pawnell read each article aloud and each was discussed individually.

The vote on each article was as indicated below.

Article A:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article B:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article C:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article D:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article E:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: M. Green

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article F:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article G:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article H:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article I:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article J:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article K:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article L:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article M:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article N:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article O:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article P:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article Q:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article R:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article S:

Recommended by: S. Pawnell

Seconded by: C. Maynard

Budget Committee Recommends (5-0)

Article T:

No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article U:

No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article V:

No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article W:

No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article X:

No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article Y:

No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

It was decided to cancel the regularly scheduled February 17, 2025 meeting.

S. Pawnell closed the Budget Committee Public Hearing at 7:18 p.m.

S. Pawnell made a motion to postpone the review and approval of the minutes for the January 20 and February 3 meetings until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

C. Maynard seconded the motion.

Motion carried

S. Pawnell made a motion to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

C. Maynard seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Willis
Administrative Clerk

School Budget Review

MSD FY 2026 Proposed General Fund Budget

S. Pawnell reviewed each line of the MSD FY 2026 Proposed General Fund with the Budget Committee members.

There was discussion about the proposed increase in the wages line and on the proposed Warrant Article III and how the numbers were calculated. There were several unanswered questions from Committee members.

B. Gagnon said if there are unanswered questions, they can only vote on what they know.

C. Beaulieu said every year when teachers increase their steps they get more money. She does not have specific percentages.

B. Gagnon asked what happens if the proposed increase doesn't get voted through.

C. Beaulieu said there is another Warrant Article for that.

B. Gagnon said the Budget Committee did not write the Warrant Articles so they cannot amend them.

S. Pawnell said they can vote against it because the numbers don't match up.

There was discussion about what the Committee wants to suggest for the Wages line.

B. Gagnon suggested they consider what the increase is for the Town.

C. Maynard explained there is frustration on the part of the Committee and taxpayers because they do not get clear explanations from the School Board.

C. Beaulieu suggested Kathy come to the meetings because she would be able to answer more questions.

B. Gagnon noted there is money left from the ESSER grant that was not used and this affects her willingness to vote for the rest of the budget.

There was discussion and some questions about the Insurance lines. **C. Beaulieu** said Health Insurance costs rose significantly.

C. Maynard said the requested increase in salaries and benefits should be broken down by category and explained more clearly in Warrant Article III.

The members agreed to recommend a decrease in the proposed amount for Staff Development from \$10,750 to \$8,000.

Members questioned why there is a 56.2% increase in the proposed Repair and Maintenance Line in addition to Warrant Article 6 which is requesting \$75,000 for the Construction, Renovation and Repair Fund.

Overall, members requested more detail for expenditures and clearer definitions of what each line includes.

There was discussion about the default budget.

The Committee members continued to review the remainder of the MSD FY 2026 Proposed General Fund Budget and discussed recommendations for each line.

B. Gagnon asked how many years there are left on the school loan.

C. Beaulieu said they are in year ten; she believes the loan is being paid over a total of 20 years.

C. Maynard expressed dissatisfaction with paying and training School Board Members when the Budget Committee cannot get answers to their questions. She asked what line that money comes out of.

Middleton School District Warrant 2025

S. Pawnell read each Article out loud and the committee voted on each.

Warrant Article III

Yay - 3 No - 3 Abstain - 0

Warrant Article IV

Yay - 4 No - 2 Abstain - 0

Warrant Article V

C. Beaulieu said Middleton does not currently have a Diagnostic Prescriptive Teacher. This position is for Special Education.

P. Sindorf said the School Board said money to cover these expenses is currently coming out of three different lines, but they could not say how much is coming out of what lines.

Yay - 2 No - 4 Abstain - 0

Warrant Article VI

C. Maynard said right now the capital reserve fund has \$288,372.

B. Gagnon asked if \$75,000 was what they put in last year.

S. Pawnell said yes.

B. Gagnon said we need an addition.

C. Beaulieu said the Capital Reserve Fund cannot be used for a mobile classroom, but can be used for an addition.

Yay - 6 No - 0 Abstain - 0

Warrant Article VII

Yay - 6 No - 0 Abstain - 0

Warrant Article VIII

Yay - 6 No - 0 Abstain – 0

Warrant Article IX

B. Gagnon asked about a tuition agreement being signed last year. She said they can't vote on something when they don't know what the amount is.

C. Maynard said it's the School Board's responsibility to give the Budget Committee facts.

Warrant Article II

S. Pawnell read Article II out loud as amended by the Budget Committee:

Shall the Middleton School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling, \$5,657,274? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$5,599,854 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Middleton School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. *NOTE: This warrant article (operating budget) does not include appropriations requested in ANY of the other warrant articles. (The Middleton School Board recommends \$5,657,274 by a vote of 5-0. The Middleton Budget Committee recommends \$5,333,232 by a vote of 5-1.) Estimated tax impact on \$5,657,274 is an increase of \$1.12/\$1,000 resulting in an estimated tax rate of \$10.70.

Yay - 2 No - 4 Abstain – 0

S. Pawnell said there is a public hearing scheduled on the Town Budget at 6:30 on February 3, 2025 at the Municipal Building.

S. Pawnell closed the Budget Committee Public Hearing for the School Budget at 8:45 p.m.

S. Pawnell announced that Bonnie Gagnon has resigned from the Budget Committee effective immediately and thanked her for 10 years of service.

C. Maynard made a motion to adjourn at 8:53 p.m.

B. Gagnon seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Willis
Administrative Clerk



Town of Middleton

182 Kings Highway, Middleton, New Hampshire 03887

Budget Committee

MEETING SIGN-IN

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 5:30 PM

Old Town Hall

200 Kings Highway

Please Print Legibly

Name

Address

Phone/E-mail (optional)

~~Salvatore~~
Student
Andrea Bowden

BOS LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS

	Bonnie	Tracy	Mike	Tim	Roxanne
Police			1	2	
Highway		1	2		
Fire/EMS				2	1
Budget Committee	1		2		
Recreation	1			2	
School		2			1
Conservation	2	1			
ZBA			2	1	
Planning Board			2		1
Stafford Cty Commission		2			1
Legal		2		1	
Joint Loss				2	1
Primex	2	1			
Personnel Policy		2		1	
Building Code/Health Officer	2		1		
Administrative Assistant (Kim)	2	1			
Administrative Clerk (Robin)				2	1
Town Treasurer	2			1	
Tax Collector/Town Clerk	1			2	
Social Media/Website		2		1	

1	3	4	2	4	6
2	5	4	4	6	0

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19

Warrant Articles for 2025

Article A: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for the purpose of road construction and paving of various roads in town. This is a non-lapsing appropriation pursuant to RSA 32:7 VI and will not lapse until the road construction and paving is completed or December 31, 2029, whichever is sooner. (Majority Vote Required)

(tax rate/1000 \$0.55)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article B: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Highway Department Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)

(tax rate/1000 \$0.03)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article C: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000) to be added to the Reevaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)

(tax rate/1000 \$0.04)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article D: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)

(tax rate/1000 \$0.01)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article E: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One thousand dollars (\$1,000) to be added to the Natural or Man-Made Disasters Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)
(tax rate/1000 \$0.003)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article F: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a ten (10) year lease/purchase agreement in the amount of Five Hundred and fifteen Thousand dollars (\$515,000), for the purchase of leasing/purchasing a fire truck with one hundred and forty thousand dollars (\$140,000) to come from the Fire Department Replacement Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to come from unassigned fund balance and to raise and appropriate thirty-one thousand dollars (\$31,000) through taxation for the first years lease payment. This lease will have an escape clause. Should this article pass, Article G will no longer be considered. (Majority Vote Required)
(tax rate/1000 \$0.08)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article G: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the Fire Department Replacement Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)
(tax rate/1000 \$0.07)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article H: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Public Safety Complex Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)

(tax rate/1000 \$0.03)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (4-1)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article I: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Medical Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. (Majority Vote Required)

(tax rate/1000 \$0.03)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article J: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-eight thousand, forty-nine dollars and seventy cents (\$28,049.70) to be added to the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund, previously established. Such sum representing the amount of income received in 2024 from the Cell Phone Tower and **said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.** (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article K: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-nine thousand dollars (\$29,000) to be used to purchase accounting software, data conversion, and training for new accounting system, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)

Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article L: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be used for ZBA (Zoning Board Adjustment) legal litigation fees, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article M: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Six thousand dollars (\$6,000) to be used to purchase GIS mapping software, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article N: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to add to the existing Expendable Trust Fund for the purpose of treating Milfoil and other exotic aquatic species, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article O: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum not to exceed Twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be used to equip the highway truck with plow gear, body, and hydraulics, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article P: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Municipal Building Improvements Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of improvements to the municipal building and to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in fund, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** Furthermore, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article Q: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Police Gear and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of purchasing police gear and equipment and to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in fund, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** Furthermore, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article R: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Fire Gear and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of purchasing Fire gear and equipment and to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in fund, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** Furthermore, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (5-0)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article S: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Preservation of Historical records Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of preserving the Town of Middleton records and to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be placed in this fund, **with said funds to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.** Furthermore, to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund. (Majority Vote required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (3-2)
Budget Committee Recommends ()

Article T: To see if the Town will vote to not maintain any roads identified by the State of New Hampshire as private roads, class VI roads, and roads subject to gates and bars. (Majority Vote Required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (3-2)
No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article U: Pursuit to RSA 72:39-a, to see if the Town will vote to increase the Elderly Exemption allowances to forty thousand (\$40,000) for ages 65-74, fifty thousand (\$50,000) for ages 75-79, and sixty thousand (\$60,000) for ages 80+. (Majority Vote required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (4-0-1)
No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.

Article V: Pursuit to RSA 72:39-a, to see if the Town will vote to increase the Elderly Exemption income limits to: Single thirty-five thousand (\$35,000), married fifty thousand (\$50,000), and asset limit seventy-five thousand (\$75,000). (Majority Vote required)

Board of Selectmen Recommends (4-0-1)
No Budget Committee Recommendation due to being a non-fiscal article.