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City Council Ad Hoc Budget Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
Budget Hearing #3
Thursday, May 21, 2026
6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Vice Chair Scott Mandeville.

Roll call was taken, and present were Councilor Claudel Frederique, Councilor Pam Gilday, Councilor Michael Hogg, Councilor Jessica Redfern, Councilor Steve Stanganelli, Councilor Maryann Welch and Vice Chair Scott Mandeville,

Absent were Councilor Kelly Sullivan and Chair Amanda Haggstrom.

Councilor Redfern offered a motion to take the Inspectional Services presentation out of order. Councilor Gilday seconded, and the motion passed 6-1, Councilor Stanganelli opposed.

Inspectional Services (Budget Book Page 79)

- Inspectional Services Director Jim Wilson presented the Inspectional Services proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilor Frederique asked if the budget increase of 5% is enough to keep up with growing demand. Mr. Wilson replied that the part time employees may need to become full time and there may be a need for a part time building inspector.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked about the salary budget increasing and the consulting budget decreasing. Mr. Wilson answered that the consulting budget has not been used much in the past few years due to developers paying for third party consulting. Mr. Wilson further noted that his salary has increased, an extra five hours was added for two employees, and the COLA contributed to the increase in the salary budget.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in discussion with Mr. Wilson.

Councilor Redfern offered a motion to take Health Services out of order. Councilor Welch seconded, and the motion passed 5-1-1, Councilor Hogg abstained, and Councilor Stanganelli opposed.

Health Services (Budget Book Pages 80-81)

- Inspectional Services Director Jim Wilson presented the Health Services' proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilor Frederique asked if the new fee structure is to handle future staffing needs. Mayor Gove answered that the new structure was due to a need to be updated as it has not been updated in many years.
- Councilor Frederique asked if the staffing model is stable for the long term. Mayor Gove said the goal is to review the staffing model.

- Councilor Welch asked about the reduction of the staffing budget. Mayor Gove answered that the city had been carrying a budget for a public health nurse that was not filled, therefore that item was removed.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked for what consulting is expected to be used. Mr. Wilson stated that it is to be used for septic inspections.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in discussion with Mr. Wilson.

Community and Economic Development (Budget Book Pages 76-78)

- OCED Director Nicholas Cracknell presented the Community and Economic Development's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilor Stanganelli and Mr. Cracknell discussed from where funding for staff is acquired.
- Councilor Gilday noted that the only item that has increased is the salary budget.
- Councilor Redfern asked about the key drivers behind the budget. Mr. Cracknell replied that staff retention, including training, and permitting are the key drivers.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in a discussion with Mr. Cracknell.

Planning Board (Budget Book Page 78)

- OCED Director Nicholas Cracknell presented the Planning Board's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in a discussion with Mr. Cracknell.

Conservation Commission (Budget Book Pages 78)

- OCED Director Nicholas Cracknell presented the Conservation Commission's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilors asked questions and engaged in discussion with Mr. Cracknell.

Zoning Board of Appeals (Budget Book Page 78)

- OCED Director Nicholas Cracknell presented the Zoning Board of Appeals' proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in a discussion with Mr. Cracknell.

Department of Public Wellness (Budget Book Pages 82-83)

- Director of Public Wellness Courtney Hutchinson presented the Department of Public Wellness' proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilor Frederique asked if there are any gaps in the service that ideally would be addressed. Ms. Hutchinson replied that the department is not able to meet the need due to staff splitting time between the Council on Aging and the increase in mental health, so the new structure will allow for the gaps to be closed.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in discussion with Mr. Hutchison.

Vice Chair Mandeville called for a recess at 7:51 PM.
The meeting resumed at 7:57 PM.

Councilor Redfern offered a motion to take Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School out of order. Councilor Gilday seconded, and the motion passed 6-1, Councilor Stanganelli opposed.

Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School (Budget Book Pages 138-139)

- Superintendent Maureen Lynch presented the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilor Stanganelli asked clarifying questions regarding the budget line items.
- Councilor Gilday asked if Amesbury pays for part of feasibility cost. Ms. Lynch replied that this is not the case.
- Councilor Stanganelli inquired about the special education costs. Ms. Lynch replied that there has been an increase of special education students overall, but that it is not certain which students will be coming due to the enrollment lottery.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in discussion with Ms. Lynch.

Department of Public Works (Budget Book Pages 71-75)

- DPW Director Joe Buckley presented the Department of Public Works' proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).
- Councilor Stanganelli asked about the increase in the training budget. Mr. Buckley answered that items paid out of the training budget include physicals and drug and alcohol testing.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked about the increase in the hazmat materials budget. Mr. Buckley said the cost of equipment has doubled.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in discussion with Mr. Buckley.

Sewer (Budget Book Page 94)

- DPW Director Joe Buckley presented the Sewer Department proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).

Water (Budget Book Pages 95-96)

- DPW Director Joe Buckley presented the Water Department proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).

Snow/Ice (Budget Book Page 74)

- DPW Director Joe Buckley presented the Snow/Ice's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).

Recycling/Refuse Removal (Budget Book Page 74)

- DPW Director Joe Buckley presented the Recycling/Refuse Removal's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).

Outdoor Lighting (Budget Book Page 74)

- DPW Director Joe Buckley presented the Outdoor Lighting's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (**see attached presentation**).

Adjourn

Councilor Stanganelli offered a motion to adjourn at 9:19 PM. Councilor Redfern seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmine Looney

The public can view this meeting:

- In person
- ACTV Channel 6
- the ACTV website: <https://www.amesburyctv.org/public-government-access-television>
- or the ACTV Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/AmesburyCommunityTelevision