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City of Amesbury
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City Council Ad Hoc Budget Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
Budget Hearing

Tuesday, May 20, 2026
6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Councilor Amanda Haggstrom

Roll call was taken, present were Councilor Claudel Frederique, Councilor Pamela Gilday, Councilor Michael Hogg, Councilor Scott Mandeville, Councilor Jessica Redfern, Councilor Steven Stanganelli, Councilor Kelly Sullivan, Councilor Maryann Welch, and Chair Amanda Haggstrom

Councilor Stanganelli joined the meeting at 6:04

Mayor

- Chief of Staff Pamela Tobey presented the Mayoral Department's FY27 budget to the City Council (see attached presentation)
- Councilor Sullivan asked about the COLA Salary Increase.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked about the 2% budget decrease. Chief of Staff Pamela Tobey said this cut was composed of a reduction of office supplies, not having any sick or vacation buy back, and removal of advertisement in the yearbook.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked which department a Grant Manager would fall under. Mayor Gove answered it would fall under Administration & Finance were it to be created.

Legal Services

- Chief of Staff Pamela Tobey presented the Legal Services FY27 budget to the City Council (see attached presentation).
- Mayor Gove stated legal fees are sometimes hard to estimate as unplanned items come about as the year goes along. For example, the current 40B was unexpected and requires the use of legal services.
- Councilors asked various questions and engaged in discussion with Chief of Staff Pamela Tobey.

Administration & Finance/Liability Insurance/Municipal Buildings/Central Supply/Sealer of Weights/State & County Assessments/Reserve Fund/Employee Benefits/Other Assessments/Debt Service

- Mayor Gove presented the Administration and Finance's FY27 budget to the City Council (see attached presentation).
- Councilor Haggstrom noticed an error on the employee benefits slide, Mayor Gove stated this would be corrected to reflect the correct numbers.
- Councilor Hogg asked about cost recovery for the Weights and Measures Department, he suggested a cost or a certificate fee. The Mayor stated at the moment they do not have any cost recovery plan.

- Councilor Redfern asked if moving the Recreation Department into 62 Friend St. was cost beneficial. Mayor Gove answered this was not the purpose necessarily of their move. That holding onto 62 Friend St. versus selling this property is advantageous to the City's long term planning and goals.
- Councilor Mandeville asked about the new accounting software and transition away from SoftRight. Mayor Gove stated this would have to go to bid and was estimated around 700-800 thousand dollars.
- Councilors asked various other questions and engaged in discussion with Mayor Gove.

Human Resources

- Director of Human Resources Christine Caminero presented the Human Resources proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (see attached presentation).
- Director of Human Resources Christine Caminero explained she is looking to hire one full time staff member to assist her.
- Councilor Stanganelli asked if continuing education was required for her position and how cost could be saved around travel to these trainings. Christine Caminero answered although not required HR is always changing and staying up to date on the newest practices and platforms is necessary. She also stated attending zoom trainings versus in person conferences is one way she can cut cost.

Assessor

- Chief Assessor John Greeno presented the Assessor's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (see attached presentation).
- Councilor Gilday asked if he felt he had enough time to fill out his duties being split between Amesbury and Salisbury, Chief Assessor John Greeno answered yes.
- Councilor Gilday asked about putting John's in office hours on the city website.
- Mayor Gove reiterated that the current agreement between Salisbury and Amesbury is short term
- Councilors asked various other questions and engaged in discussion with Chief Assessor John Greeno.

Library

- Director of the Library Aimie Westphal presented the Library's proposed FY27 budget to the City Council (see attached presentation).
- Councilor Redfern asked about the reduction in staff hours, whether this was a loss of a position or reduction of hours within a position. Library Director Aimie Westphal answered it was both.
- Councilor Haggstrom asked about the role of the Head Archivist position, she further asked if the hours of this position could be cut at all. Library Director Aimie Westphal gave a brief overview of this position and emphasized it would be a huge disservice to be without the Head Archivist. She stated the archival records at the library would become inaccessible to the public without the Head Archivist.
- Councilor Haggstrom asked how many other surrounding communities have the Head Archivist position. Director of the Library Aimie Westphal answered she could not give an exact number.
- Councilors asked various other questions and engaged in discussion with Library Director Aimie Westphal

Adjourn

Councilor Mandeville made a motion to adjourn at 8:07. Councilor Welch seconded, and the motion passed unanimously (9-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Allie Connolly

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