

## HYBRID BUDGET TASK FORCE MEETING AGENDA

MONDAY, NOV. 17, 2025 - 6 P.M.

HYBRID AT SENIOR CENTER – 45 DAYTON ST, SOUTH HADLEY

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*Note: Not all topics listed here may be reached for discussion. In addition, the topics listed are those which the chair reasonably expects will be discussed as of the date of this notice. This meeting may be audio and/or visually recorded.*

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

### 2. MEETING MINUTES

DRAFT Nov. 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Documents:

[BUDGET TASK FORCE MINUTES\\_2025-11-03.PDF](#)

### 3. PROJECT UPDATE

#### A. Education/History

- Updates from other 2 1/2 override efforts, municipal budget articles
- [HTTPS://COMMONWEALTHBEACON.ORG/THE-CODCAST/MUNICIPAL-BUDGETS-AT-THE-BREAKING-POINT/?UTM\\_MEDIUM=EMAIL&UTM\\_CAMPAIGN=DL%2011-12-25&UTM\\_SOURCE=2&UTM\\_SOURCE=ACTIVECAMPAIGN&UTM\\_MEDIUM=EMAIL&UTM\\_CONTENT=MUNICIPAL%20BUDGETS%20AT%20THE%20BREAKING%20POINT&UTM\\_CAMPAIGN=DL%2011-12-25](https://COMMONWEALTHBEACON.ORG/THE-CODCAST/MUNICIPAL-BUDGETS-AT-THE-BREAKING-POINT/?UTM_MEDIUM=EMAIL&UTM_CAMPAIGN=DL%2011-12-25&UTM_SOURCE=2&UTM_SOURCE=ACTIVECAMPAIGN&UTM_MEDIUM=EMAIL&UTM_CONTENT=MUNICIPAL%20BUDGETS%20AT%20THE%20BREAKING%20POINT&UTM_CAMPAIGN=DL%2011-12-25)
- [HTTPS://COMMONWEALTHBEACON.ORG/LOCAL-GOVERNMENT/AFTER-A-PROP-2-%C2%BD-DEFEAT-LAST-YEAR-MELROSE-PASSES-13-5-MILLION-OVERRIDE/](https://COMMONWEALTHBEACON.ORG/LOCAL-GOVERNMENT/AFTER-A-PROP-2-%C2%BD-DEFEAT-LAST-YEAR-MELROSE-PASSES-13-5-MILLION-OVERRIDE/)

#### B. Operational Information

- Department Discussions - recap, town administration, public health, finance

#### C. Property Valuation

#### D. Community Survey

#### E. Capital

**F. Public Forum Planning**

**G. Budget Scenarios**

**H. Financial Projections**

**Documents:**

[B. SEPT 25 COMPREHENSIVE QUARTERLY REPORT1.PDF](#)  
[E. FY26 CAPITAL PLAN.PDF](#)

**4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Data and Finance
- B. Public outreach

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. Timeline

**6. NEXT MEETINGS**

**7. ADJOURN**

November 3, 2025, Senior Center/Hybrid, 6:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Voting Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Non-Voting Members</b>	<b>Present</b>
Andrea Miles	no	Lisa Wong, Town Administrator	yes
Kevin Mcallister	yes	Chuck Romboletti, Assistant Town Administrator	yes
Dan Luis	no		
Gena Lomelin	yes		
Emily Young	yes	<b>Guests</b>	
Hector Lomelin	yes	Anne Capra, Planning & Conservation Director	
Forrest Bowlick	yes	Sarah Gmeiner, Town Clerk	
Nicholas Gingras	yes	Scott Moore, Facilities Director	
Nicholas Prentis	yes	Jennifer Gundersen, Chief of Police	
John McCarthy	yes	John Broderick, Public Works Director	
Charles Miles	no		

1. **Call to Order:**

Nicholas Gingras called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

2. **Meeting Minutes**

Nick Gingras made a motion to approve the minutes of October 20, 2025. Seconded by Nick Prentis. Motion carried unanimously (abstention by none)

3. **Project Update**

a. **Operational information:**

**Planning & Conservation Department** - Anne Capra provided an overview of the Planning & Conservation Department, including responsibilities for planning, redevelopment, housing, conservation permitting, committee support, grant writing, and handling frequent public inquiries. She highlighted recent grant achievements in community development and brownfields assessment, land conservation efforts such as Lauzier Farm protection, environmental restoration projects like the Elmer Brook culvert, and ongoing climate resiliency planning.

**Planning & Conservation Q&A Discussion**

- Members raised questions about the impact of potential staffing reductions, particularly the loss of grant writing and the resulting inability to maintain zoning updates, community plans, and timely response to constituent inquiries. Anne explained that the

department has secured over \$12 million in grants in under 10 years and that grant management requires extensive reporting and implementation oversight. Discussion also covered “missing middle” housing needs, barriers to growth including zoning resistance, and opportunities for economic development. Members explored issues related to Falls redevelopment, federal grant uncertainty, and capacity constraints. Anne noted that private ownership, estate issues, and limited staffing contribute to slow development of the falls area.

**Town Clerks Department** – Sarah provided an overview of the Town Clerk’s Office, which includes election administration, vital records, licensing, and ongoing state ballot petition processing. She explained the cyclical nature of the office’s work and current staffing levels of two employees.

**Town Clerk Q&A Discussion:**

- Members asked about opportunities to reduce election costs, such as shifting the date of the spring election to the fall to align with state and federal elections. Sarah noted that while some savings could be realized in election worker hours, many costs, including ballots, ballot box programming, etc., are fixed, so net cost savings may be limited. Early voting and advance processing are reimbursable. Any change to election timing might require a bylaw amendment. Discussion mentioned changing the date may support voter turnout. Questions also touched on precinct staffing and whether reductions were feasible; Sarah indicated that current operations are already minimal while still meeting legal requirements.

**Facilities/Maintenance Department** – Scott provided an overview of the Facilities Department, which is staffed by one employee and responsible for repairs, preventative maintenance contracts, Green Communities grant work, and capital planning support. He noted that centralizing facilities management has significantly reduced costs compared to when individual departments handled their own building issues.

**Facilities Q&A Discussion:**

- Committee members discussed capital planning, grant opportunities, and the Town’s long-term facility needs. Scott confirmed there is an existing multi-year capital plan, accessible at each Capital Planning public meeting. Discussion also covered the use of free cash versus stabilization funds for capital needs, with an emphasis on ensuring long-term financial flexibility.
- Kevin commended Scott for his leadership, responsiveness, and proactive approach in managing the department’s portfolio of town-owned buildings. Scott’s efforts in coordinating preventive maintenance, addressing urgent repair needs, and overseeing capital improvement projects were noted as key strengths of the department. Kevin emphasized that the department continues to balance routine maintenance with

longer-term planning, ensuring that facilities remain safe, functional, and cost-effective for town operations.

**Police Department** – Chief Gunderson provided an overview of the department and its operations. The department currently has 25 sworn members, organized into a command structure with two lieutenants, six sergeants, and three detectives, leaving 19 patrol officers. Two patrol officers are assigned to schools, and one officer is currently out injured, reducing the effective patrol staffing. The department handles approximately 22,000 dispatch calls annually, of which roughly 15,000 are actionable incidents, in addition to responding to 2,500–3,000 medical calls per year. Chief Gunderson highlighted the time-intensive nature of certain incidents, such as domestic violence arrests and OUI arrests, which can require up to six hours of officer time per incident due to the combination of response, custody, documentation, and reporting. She explained the operational relationship with Mount Holyoke College (MHC), which has its own police force.

#### **Police Q&A Discussion:**

- During the discussion, Chief Gunderson addressed staffing challenges, noting that overnight shifts can be thin, and proactive work such as traffic enforcement is limited due to insufficient officers. The impact of Mount Holyoke College on policing is minimal, as most criminal incidents on campus are handled by the college, with the police only responding to more serious crimes or upon request. The Chief discussed rising complexities in calls, including mental health crises, domestic disturbances, and online fraud, noting that 25% of the department has crisis intervention training. Training costs are significant, with statutory requirements alone amounting to approximately \$60,000 annually, not including specialized or leadership training.
- Chief Gunderson highlighted technology and resource innovations, including use of GPS-enabled speed tracking, portable speed boards, a departmental drone for search and rescue, and other technology which has improved efficiency and investigative capabilities. The department participates in a regional dispatch study with neighboring towns, though the Chief expressed concern over losing the ability to interact directly with dispatchers.
- Community engagement remains a priority, with officers participating in programs such as Meals on Wheels and other local events to maintain positive community relationships. Traffic enforcement remains a significant concern, particularly speeding in residential areas, and the department has explored traffic calming measures such as speed limit reductions and signage. Finally, Chief Gunderson discussed the emerging challenges of cryptocurrency-related fraud, highlighting the limitations in police authority to recover funds and the department's strategy to mitigate risks through community guidance and potential regulatory changes.

**Department of Public Works (DPW)** - John Broderick, DPW Director, provided an overview of the department, which is organized into five divisions: Wastewater Treatment, Highway,

Parks, Solid Waste, and Vehicle Maintenance. He explained that each division is funded and staffed differently but works collaboratively to maintain town infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, parks, and sewers and stormwater systems. John highlighted the administrative challenges with a significantly reduced office staff and noted the upcoming retirements of experienced supervisors and mechanics, which will create a leadership gap. He emphasized the complexity of DPW operations, the need for ongoing maintenance and capital upgrades, and the use of enterprise funds to cover wastewater and solid waste operations. John also noted the importance of past projects, including Judge Burke interceptor repairs and inflow reduction initiatives, which have addressed long-standing infrastructure issues.

**Public Works Q&A Discussion:**

- During the discussion, John addressed questions about staffing challenges, noting the difficulty in recruiting qualified municipal employees, particularly CDL drivers and operators due to federal drug testing requirements and higher private-sector wages. He described the significant upcoming capital needs for wastewater treatment facilities, including upgrades to pump stations and electrical systems, with costs estimated in the tens of millions over the next 5–10 years. The group discussed solid waste management, recycling, and disposal, including challenges with hauling sludge out of state and the high cost of recycling. John explained ongoing efforts to improve stormwater management, inflow reduction, and tree maintenance, and noted that extreme weather and aging infrastructure increase maintenance complexity. He highlighted that the town's wastewater and solid waste rates are competitive compared to similar communities, despite rising costs, and stressed the importance of proactive capital planning to avoid more significant future expenses. Members briefly discussed state-level readiness to support municipal infrastructure needs, including regulations related to the Town's open-air dump. John remained available for follow-up questions after the meeting.

4. **Other Business**

- a. Nov. 5, 2025 Special Town Meeting – The committee reviewed the PowerPoint presentation to be delivered by Nick Gingras on Wednesday night, reporting on the task force's work to date. Committee members provided comments and expressed general support for the content of the presentation.

5. **Adjourn**

- a. At 8:46pm, Kevin McAllister made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John McCarthy. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Budget Task Force Clerk**



SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES  
QUARTERLY REPORT

WILLIAM SUTTON



WILLIAM SUTTON, Town Accountant

Date: November 3, 2025

To: Selectboard  
Lisa Wong, Town Administrator  
Appropriations Committee

From: William Sutton  
Town Accountant

Subject: September Quarterly Financial Report

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### ***September Quarterly Report:***

This letter is to inform you that the Statement of Expenditures vs. Appropriations printout has been run for September 2025. The printout was analyzed for expenditures exceeding budgeted totals by more than 25.0%, since this report represents expenditures through the first quarter of the fiscal year. The printout has been checked and highlighted for informative purposes to determine the course the various appropriations are on for the fiscal year. There is not necessarily a major problem with the appropriations that are more than 25.0% spent since some departments have the majority of their expenditures at the start of the fiscal year and/ or due to the timing of some of the various expenditures. However, close attention may need to be applied to these appropriations as we move forward into the fiscal year and further expenditures are processed.

Attached is a summary report of the General and Enterprise Funds expenditures through September.

Attached is a listing of the departments whose expenditures exceeded 25.0% of the budget as of 9/30/25. I also attached a quick summary page on how revenues are tracking through the same time period. If there are any further questions or explanations needed, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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## General Fund Revenues and Expenditures-Budget to Actual Summary as of 9/30/2025

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	FY26 Budget	FY26 Actuals Through 9/30/25	% of Budget
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***Revenues***

*The Revenue budget will be in the December quarterly report when the tax rate is set.*

	FY26 Budget	FY26 Actuals Through 9/30/25	% of Budget
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***Expenditures***

General Government	\$ 2,863,420	\$ 675,144	23.6%
Public Safety	\$ 4,060,430	\$ 798,364	19.7%
Education	\$ 25,771,460	\$ 2,577,025	10.0%
DPW	\$ 1,842,113	\$ 357,110	19.4%
Human Services	\$ 1,247,986	\$ 228,850	18.3%
Libraries & Culture	\$ 850,573	\$ 210,594	24.8%
Debt	\$ 3,256,399	\$ 809,665	24.9%
Misc/ Unclassified	\$ 12,549,703	\$ 7,854,037	62.6%
Total	\$ 52,442,084	\$ 13,510,789	25.8%

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## General Fund Revenues and Expenditures - Budget to Actual

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### Highlights of September Quarterly Report

- Revenue items listed below represent the larger revenue items or changes that appear material in nature at this time only.
- Note of caution: The timing of receipts in a particular month from one year to the next can impact the overall assumptions either favorably or unfavorably.
- Based on the Revenue report as of September 30, 2025:  
(It is still early in the fiscal year to get a strong sense of how revenues are looking.)
- The majority of the General Fund revenues are tracking similar to last year at this time with a few exceptions. A couple highlighted areas are listed below.

#### Revenues that are tracking above last year at this time:

- Payment in Lieu of Taxes are up \$40,000 reflecting the increase in reimbursement from SHELd for insurances.
- We have received \$18,700 in Room Tax revenues through September 30.

#### Revenues that are tracking below last year's revenues:

- Tax Liens are down \$147,000 from this time last year. Not many tax title redemptions yet at this time.
- Motor Vehicle Excise is down \$33,500 or 16% from last year. This may be due to timing of commitments and payments compared to the prior year.
- Penalties and Interest is down \$39,500 or 47% from this time last year. This is largely due to less interest on tax liens and motor vehicle excise taxes as noted above.
- Licenses and Permits are down \$35,000 or 30% from this time last year. This is due to a decreased amount in building permits.
- Interest Income is down roughly \$114,000 from this time last year. The total interest income should still be well above our estimates although we will keep monitoring this as rates are beginning to come down a little and various capital monies are spent.

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**List of Departments Exceeding 25.0% of Budget  
Listing as of 9/30/25:**

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Department	Type	% Spent	Notes
<b><i>General Government:</i></b>			
Selectboard	Other Expenses	49.1%	Postage; Dues & Subscriptions
Collector/Treasurer	Other Expenses	29.6%	Professional Services
IT Department	Other Expenses	57.6%	Software Maintenance; Supplies
<b><i>Public Safety:</i></b>			
Police	Other Expenses	27.8%	Electricity; Annual Contracts
Weights & Measures	Other Expenses	92.0%	Payment made
<b><i>Libraries &amp; Culture:</i></b>			
Library	Other Expenses	30.0%	Network Services paid for year
<b><i>Unclassified/ Misc:</i></b>			
Employee Benefits	Retirement Contrib.	100.0%	Timing of payments - paid up front
Other Misc.	Liability Insurance	83.9%	Payment at start of year;

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## Enterprise Fund Revenues and Expenditures - Budget to Actual

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	<b>FY26 Budget</b>	<b>FY26 Actuals Through 9/30/25</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>
<i>Revenues</i>			

*The Revenue budget will be in the December quarterly report when the tax rate is set.*

	<b>FY26 Budget</b>	<b>FY26 Actuals Through 9/30/25</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>
<i>Expenditures</i>			
Landfill	\$ 1,391,851	\$ 233,621	16.8%
Waste Water Treatment	\$ 1,892,415	\$ 359,619	19.0%
Ledges Golf Course	\$ 1,624,409	\$ 478,878	29.5%
Total	\$ 4,908,675	\$ 1,072,118	21.8%

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## Highlights of September Quarterly Report - Enterprise Funds

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- Overall, revenues in the Landfill Enterprise Fund are tracking similar to last year's. Rubbish revenues are up about \$118,000 or 13% from this time last year, due to the increase in the rubbish fee. However, Pay as You Throw revenues are down about \$89,000 as expected. Interest income is down about \$10,000.
- Revenues in the WWTP are down roughly \$97,000 from last year. This is mainly due to interest income down \$75,000. Any increase in sewer fees due to the increase in rates will not be reflected until the December quarterly, as the first billing wasn't until October.
- Golf Course revenues (non food & beverage) are tracking about \$47,000 or 8% higher than last year. This is basically in greens fees. Food and beverage is up approximately \$2,500 from this time last year.

Department	Type	% Spent	Notes
Golf Course	Other Expense	29.50%	Operations; Maint. Contract









