

Open Letter to the Selectboard: Establishing a Budget Oversight Committee for Accountability

To the Selectboard:

As we ask residents to support a Proposition 2½ override, we must also commit—clearly and publicly—to strong financial oversight and accountability.

The Save South Hadley Coalition, with a steering committee made up of representatives from the Council on Aging, Libraries, Schools, Budget Task Force, Town Committees and Boards and other residents, is calling for the formation of a Budget Oversight Committee (BOC) to ensure that any new revenue is used responsibly, transparently, and in full alignment with the recommendations outlined in the Town’s Budget Task Force Final Report.

The Budget Task Force made it clear that addressing South Hadley’s long-term financial challenges requires not just additional revenue, but also disciplined financial management, continued cost controls, and structural reforms. An override alone is not the solution—it must go hand in hand with sustained oversight.

Purpose of the Committee

The proposed Budget Oversight Committee would:

- Monitor how override funds are allocated and spent
- Ensure adherence to the financial strategies and recommendations in the Budget Task Force Final Report
- Track progress on cost-saving measures and operational efficiencies
- Provide regular public reporting to maintain transparency and trust
- Serve as an independent check to ensure commitments made to voters are honored

The town would:

- Host quarterly update forums.
- Develop and share a simple and accessible, scorecard or dashboard, tracking progress against BTF report, as reported by the BOC

Composition

To ensure both expertise and independence, we recommend a 9 member committee consisting of:

- Four representatives of key town bodies
- Five residents not currently serving on any town board or committee other than Town Meeting, ensuring independent, community-based oversight

A Commitment to the Community

If we are asking taxpayers to make a meaningful investment in South Hadley's future, we owe them more than promises—we owe them accountability.

Creating a Budget Oversight Committee ensures that:

- Every dollar is tracked
- Every commitment is followed through
- Every resident can have confidence in how their tax dollars are being used

Such a committee could help drive the revenue recommendations outlined in the Budget Task Force report and lead to new revenue gains within the first two years. By pairing necessary funding with strong, ongoing oversight we can move forward as a community responsibly.

Steering Committee
Save South Hadley