TOWN OF GRANBY
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET WORKSHOP III
MARCH 12, 2026
MINUTES

CERTIFIED TRUE ELECTRONIC COPY
From the Records of the
Town of Granby
as of 5:30 P.M.
April 9, 2026
Attested by:

PRESENT: Mark H. Fiorentino, First Selectman, Margaret Q. Chapple, Vice-Chair; Mark C. Neumann, Kimberly L. Becker, and Frederick A. Moffa.

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Michael P. Walsh, Town Manager, Kimi Cheng, Director of Finance; David Demchak, Board of Finance; Michael Guarco, Board of Finance Chairman; and Kent McCord, Board of Finance.

CALL TO ORDER

Selectman, M. Fiorentino, called the Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop III to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Main Meeting Room, Granby, Connecticut.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by First Selectman, Mark Fiorentino.

2. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

2.1. General Administration

2.1.1. Overview – Michael Walsh

Town Manager, M. Walsh held his comments for a separate section of the agenda.

2.1.2. Town Clerk- Jen Espinal

Town Clerk, J. Espinal, introduced herself and presented her first Granby budget, noting her appointment in March 2025 and prior experience in Simsbury. She outlined the department's structure, staffing, and schedule, and emphasized a holistic budget approach focused on stewardship of taxpayer funds. The presentation reviewed statutory responsibilities, including record-keeping, vital records, elections, and support for boards and commissions, as well as coordination with state agencies. Key accomplishments included conducting successful elections, e-recording for land records, improving dog licensing compliance, and implementing an dog licensing online payment portal. Goals and objectives highlighted transparency, customer service, revenue opportunities, process improvements, and increased community engagement. Metrics for success include reduced processing times, accurate record-keeping, staff training, financial reporting, and workflow audits.

A brief discussion clarified revenue from nominee land record fees and explained the creation of a "special projects" budget line item to allow in-house indexing work rather than outsourcing.

2.1.3. Election Services- Laura Wolfe

The Registrars of Voters presented their budget, outlining staff including the registrars, deputies, and approximately 200 volunteer poll workers who support elections, primaries, and referendums. They reviewed statutory responsibilities such as voter registration, absentee voting,

election supervision, early voting, audits, and training. Early voting requirements, including 14 days for general elections and 7 for primaries, were noted as a primary driver of increased costs, along with new equipment and process changes. While prior state grants helped offset expenses, future funding remains uncertain. The department highlighted strong community participation, including multiple "Democracy Cup" recognitions, and emphasized reliance on volunteers to operate elections. Board members expressed appreciation for the professionalism of the registrars and the effectiveness of the volunteer-driven system, with no major concerns raised about the proposed budget.

2.1.4. Human Resources- Krista Shaffer

Christa Schaffer, Human Resources Director, presented the HR budget and highlighted accomplishments over her tenure. HR oversees 62 full-time employees plus part-time and seasonal staff, handling benefits administration, workers' compensation, contract negotiations, and employee relations. Team-building initiatives, including Myers-Briggs assessments and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) training, are underway to enhance management cohesion and staff development. Shaffer noted that bringing HR to a full-time role two years ago centralized responsibilities, improved consistency, and freed managers to focus on core duties.

Continuous audits of personnel rules ensure compliance with state laws and organizational standards. Board members commended HR for these improvements and the long-term efficiency and liability savings achieved.

2.1.5. IT Operations – Jon Lambert

John Lambert, Director of Technology for the town and schools, provided an overview of IT operations, achievements, and budget considerations. Serving 24 years, Lambert oversees a team that splits time between town and school responsibilities, including systems administration, AV support for municipal meetings, cybersecurity, network management, and backup/disaster recovery. Key accomplishments include:

- Replacement and virtualization of servers to improve disaster recovery and reduce hardware dependency.
- Network speed upgrades, firewall and email system improvements, and help desk software implementation for remote support.
- Assisted police dispatch center relocation, library technology enhancements, GCTV studio upgrades, and senior center ARPA-funded projects.
- Financial system upgrades for town and schools, along with phone system audits leading to projected annual savings of roughly $28,800 through carrier changes.
- Integration of additional town departments (fire, ambulance) into the municipal network for efficiency and cost savings.
- Ongoing support for cloud and in-house systems, employee devices, security cameras, key fobs, and card readers.

Lambert emphasized a lean budget approach with no new capital requests for FY27, noting the current technology is largely up-to-date and future replacements will follow a 5–7-year cycle. He also discussed early considerations for AI, mainly in the school environment using Google

Gemini for lesson planning and surveys. Board members commended Lambert's consolidation of IT services, citing significant cost savings and enhanced system reliability compared to prior outsourced arrangements.

2.1.6. Town Manager's Office – Michael Walsh

- **2.1.6.1. Legal Services**
- **2.1.6.2. Fringe Benefits**
- **2.1.6.3. Probate**
- **2.1.6.4. Constingency & Reserve**
- **2.1.6.5. Boards and Regional Programs & Staff Development**
- **2.1.6.6. Insurance**
- **2.1.6.7. Community Support**
- **2.1.6.8. Health Services**

The minutes presented within these sections are a summary of the discussion that took place at the Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop. To view the meeting in its entirety and hear full reports, please click the following link at Granby Community Television https://gctv16.org.

Town Manager M. Walsh introduced his background, noting that he is an accountant by trade with 10 years of experience at Cigna. He also served as a public auditor, worked as the Finance Director for East Hartford for 25 years, worked with the Office of Policy and Management on pandemic response efforts, and held the position of Mayor of East Hartford.

Walsh presented the Town Manager's department organizational chart, highlighting staff changes and responsibilities. Additionally, he noted that Catherine continues to work in communications, social media, and securing a $580,000 grant for the Salmon Brook walking path.

A review of town charter responsibilities covered administrative changes such as the reorganization of Public Works and merging of Parks & Recreation with Senior, Youth, and Social Services. The focus was also placed on financial oversight, including the capital project planning process and leveraging decades of municipal financial expertise to improve service delivery.

The discussion continued with an overview of community engagement efforts, such as a study on municipal structures inspired by East Granby and regional collaborations with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving on projects like the farm store at 87 Simsbury Road.

M. Walsh also emphasized transparency in its operations and budget processes, detailing the personal services report and ongoing efforts to communicate financial strategies to taxpayers. Employee engagement and development were addressed with regular one-on-one meetings with direct reports to assess well-being and work alignment, focusing on developing future supervisors, particularly in Public Works. A "Family First" philosophy was emphasized to ensure employee well-being and productivity, while fostering a culture of calculated risk-taking and celebrating successes.

Updates on infrastructure and planning included the acquisition of new properties and ongoing projects like the Holcomb Farm renovation, which is expected to complete by mid-June. Several capital projects, including sewer ordinances, and a radio project, were also discussed. A draft capital bond package will be presented for approval in the April 6 Public Hearing.

Labor relations updates revealed that all four open contracts had been settled within four months, with the dispatcher contract potentially extending from three to five years. Discussions on pension plans and OPEB, including compliance with IRS regulations, were also highlighted.

Emergency preparedness was reviewed with a successful weather-focused disaster drill that showcased Granby's readiness for extreme weather and climate-related emergencies.

Financial planning updates emphasized transparency in the budget, highlighting how taxpayer funds are allocated, including explanations of the mill rate and revenue strategies.

The ongoing priorities for the town include Granby Ambulance, Lost Acres Fire Department, and Granby Community TV, with continued engagement required for these initiatives.

Personnel and policy updates noted recent changes in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act and Fair Labor Standards Act, alongside efforts to streamline project oversight and reduce headcount by 6%.

Discussions surrounding the Probate budget revealed Granby's allocation of $6,411 for the year, based on population percentages shared with Avon, Canton, and Simsbury. Simsbury also requested a meeting to discuss space for their Probate Court, as they are out of space in their current location.

In terms of fire department funding, discussions focused on adjusting the agreement with Lost Acres Fire Department due to their growing needs, with a potential formula shift based on inflation rather than the Grand List. The possibility of bonding two vehicles for the Fire Department was also considered.

2.1.6. Finance Management – Kimi Cheng

2.1.6.1. Revenue Collection

2.1.6.2. Property Assessment

Director of Finance, K. Cheng, provided an overview of roles and responsibilities. Kimi oversees the Assessor's Office, the Collector of Revenue Department, and the Finance Department. The Finance Department consists of a senior accountant handling payroll and accounting, along with an accounting clerk managing accounts payable (AP). The department's key responsibilities include preparing the annual financial report, managing debt service and investments, overseeing pension operations, and ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations. Additionally, they manage the Assessor's Office, which handles tax listings and exemptions, and the Collector

of Revenue, responsible for collecting real estate, motor vehicle, personal property taxes, and sewer bills.

The department achieved notable successes, including maintaining a modified audit opinion, earning the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 19 consecutive years, and automating the budget preparation process, which now includes the capital budget.

The department also implemented a new software module in IVision and secured a 4-year electricity contract for the town. The tax collection rate had significant amounts in supplemental motor vehicle tax.

For the upcoming year, the department plans to continue its commitment to achieving financial excellence. They also aim to implement copier leasing across town buildings in collaboration with the IT department and encourage online payment options for improved taxpayer convenience. Additional objectives include completing the Grand List without requesting extensions and streamlining building permits through software.

Kimi proposed several budget changes, including centralizing purchasing activity within the Finance Department, and increasing part-time hours in the Revenue Collections Department to accommodate staff training. Requests for professional development funds were made to support participation in industry meetings, as well as to cover educational expenses for the Collector of Revenue as she works toward certification. Another request was made for a credit card machine in the Collector of Revenue office to standardize payment processing across departments.

2.2. Capital Budget – Michael Walsh

The discussion transitioned to the capital budget, specifically focusing on the sources of revenue to fund capital items, outlining several sources, including the general fund, loan proceeds, local capital improvement program grants, and contributions from the Holcomb Farm Trust and police contractors' accounts.

A total of $3.67 million has been allocated to cover capital expenses, including a road overlay project valued at $1.1 million, as indicated on page 121 of the budget workbook.

The capital fund is separate from the general fund, which operates on a fiscal year basis, while the capital fund persists until its designated projects are fully completed.

The Board of Selectmen is expected to review a report related to reallocations for the Board of Education's capital fund at the next meeting.

It was noted that the capital plan aligns well with the adopted budget, providing a clear breakdown of expected expenditures. There was an emphasis on reviewing the capital plan each year during the budget cycle, with the plan serving as a guiding document for the allocation of funds.

2.3. Debt Services- Michael Walsh

The town's debt service activity focuses on managing payments related to annual bond maturities and the interest costs associated with bonded projects.

2.4. Revenues- Kimi Cheng

Kimi gave a detailed breakdown of revenue lines, particularly focusing on education and motor vehicle taxes. The Board of Education's revenue sources include tuition from out-of-town students, special education costs, and various tuition programs for transitional education. These revenues are part of the Board of Education's budget, which is influenced by the governor's budget. An increase was noted in the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding, as well as an increase in the MRSA (Motor Vehicle Revenue Sharing Account) related to motor vehicle tax.

The motor vehicle tax cap remains at $32.46, meaning the town cannot charge more than this amount for vehicle tax bills. Any difference between the capped rate and the actual tax charge is reimbursed by the state, and this reimbursement will continue to be calculated through the state's policies.

In addition to the motor vehicle tax discussion, the town is confident in its revenue projections for the current year, but there is caution about potential changes in future years based on legislative decisions. The town's revaluation process could affect the mill rate, though it was noted that with a 90% residential tax base, the overall impact on the mill rate would likely be minimal. The consensus was that the town should be prepared for potential changes, but for now, the outlook for this year remains stable.

2.5. Other Funds- Kimi Cheng

In addition to the General Fund, the town operates a variety of other funds, each dedicated to specific purposes and managed according to distinct accounting practices.

One such fund is the Solid Waste Fund, which supports the drop-site bulky waste recycling program at the Town transfer station and the Household Hazardous Waste program. The fund generates revenue through fees charged for drop-off services, bulky waste disposal, recycling, investment earnings, and the sale of residential trash barrels. Expenses from this fund cover the operations of the transfer station, including salaries, the purchase of trash barrels, and costs associated with household hazardous waste disposal. Management of the revenues and expenses in this fund falls under the responsibility of the Public Works Department.

The Dog Fund is dedicated to supporting the activities of the Animal Control Officer (ACO), who is contracted with the Town to manage animal population control and operate the town's animal shelter. The ACO works within the Police Department, under the supervision of the Police Chief, and adheres to regulations set forth by the State Department of Agriculture. The revenue for this fund comes from service payments from neighboring towns (Barkhamsted and Hartland), fines, license fees, and an annual contribution from the General Fund. Expenses include the ACO's compensation, dog supplies, kennel supplies, and related equipment.

Finally, The Sewer Utility Fund and sewer rates are approved by the Board of Selectmen, serving in its capacity as the Granby Water Pollution Control Authority. Expenses related to this

fund include a portion of staff salaries, annual transportation and treatment fees paid to the Simsbury Water Pollution Control Authority, electricity costs, and necessary repairs to the system. Through these funds, the town ensures the proper functioning and sustainability of its wastewater treatment and sewage collection services.

3. PUBLIC SESSION

None

4. MOTION FOR PENDING VOTE

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY F. Moffa, seconded by K. Becker the Board voted unanimously (5-0-0) to make the following changes to the proposed budget book for the upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting, as noted by the First Selectman:

First, to adjust the Granby Ambulance Association allocation to $80,000.

Second, to update the Farmington Valley Health District allocation as previously discussed.

Third, to remove the LFD allocation, with adjustments to corresponding revenue entries to reflect these changes.

5. ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION DULY MADE BY M. Newmann, seconded by P. Chapple, the Board voted unanimously (5-0-0) to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Recorded & Attested,



Jen Espinal

Town Clerk

Received for Record: March 19, 2026, at 2:40 P.M.
By Laura Milne, Assistant Town Clerk

The Board of Selectmen Meeting scheduled for April 6, 2026, will be cancelled, due to the FY 2027 Budget Public Hearing. The next Board of Selectmen Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 20, 2026, 7:00 P.M. at the Granby Senior Center.