

**Town of Seymour ~ Board of Finance**  
**MINUTES**  
**Budget Deliberations**  
**Presentation of First Selectwoman Budget**  
**Monday, March 16, 2026 at 7:00pm**  
**Norma Drummer Room – Seymour Town Hall**

**Members Present:** Andy North, Beverly Kennedy, Quinn Levey, Bettyann Peck, Richard Demko, Kristyn Haniewicz, Mary Kruger; Tracy Rappa, Robin Andrews, Alice Levey (alternates).

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Jason Vieira, Monica Dimon, Annmarie Drugonis, Kurt Miller, Steve Ditria, Dr. Susan Compton, Kristin Bruno, Kristen Harmeling, Al Bruno, Laura Wilkins, Lori Nespoli, Michael Kearney, Suzanne Garvey, Rob Dyer, Frank Gabianelli, Bob Findley, Kevin Murowsky, Dana Flach, Mary McNelis, Jack & Diane Jurskowski, James Garofalo, Timm Willis, Chris Edwards, John Bucherati, Mike Fappiano, Tim Connors.

**Item #1 – Call Meeting to order**

Chairman Richard Demko called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

**Item #2 – Pledge of Allegiance**

Everyone saluted the Flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Richard Demko introduced all members (and alternates) of the Board of Finance.

**Item #3 – Public Comment**

None

**Motion to Add to the Agenda – Mike Kearney of the American Legion Post #10**

Motion: Bettyann Peck                      Second: Kristyn Haniewicz

Yes: 7                                      No: 0                                      Abstain: 0

Michael Kearney – 72 Mountain Road – Commander of American Legion Post #10 Seymour – our items are under Town Contributions – we put the flags on the graves of the veterans in the Town of Seymour. There are 9 cemeteries in the Town of Seymour. Last year we put 1200 flags out. We have been working with Emblem Sales. We try to find the most cost effective way. Usually with the Shelton Post – they usually buy 42 gross. I got a price from Action Flag out of Georgia for 96 cents a piece if I could buy 20 gross which is 2 years worth and they would be 3/8 diameter. We would just have to get them pointed. If we get 10 gross the price would go up to about \$1.12. This is the first line item.

The second item is salary(stipend). We have never asked for an increase and have been doing this for 20 – 30 years. We do it on our own time and there are 9 cemeteries in Seymour. We cannot go out of town without permission from the other Post but do provide the flag. The numbers are never going to go down but will go up. This budget goes back to 2019. Last year 6 of us spent 10 hours at St. Augustines Cemetery for \$25. The Salaries line is just \$500. I'm not sure what a fair amount is, but I think that it should be more than \$500. Also, if we could get approval for the flags for two years worth of flags. Also, I would like to get someone to get someone to come out and take pictures of what we do – get it on a flash drive. Jason Vieira said that this is line item page 7 - 530- 110 Salary 530-610 Supplies - Budget is \$1500. Richard Demko said that it would help us to have an idea of how much you would like.

## **DISCUSSION:**

- Beverly Kennedy asked if you had asked the Boy Scouts or other organizations like that to help you out with this task. Mike said that they did, but it did not turn out to help out as much as you would think. We know our lists better.
- Bettyann Peck thanked for your service. General Supplies for \$1000 will not pay for the 2 years worth of flags? This does not include the shipping costs. Or tax.
- Richard Demko said that we will address this in deliberations on Wednesday.

### **Item #4 - Deliberation/Discussion of 2026/2027 Budget – First Selectwoman’s Budget**

Good evening, Chairman, members of the Board of Finance, and members of the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

This budget was built with one clear focus: **\*\*EFFICIENCY FIRST\*\***.

Our goal throughout this process was to respect taxpayers while still making sure the Town of Seymour can operate responsibly and plan for the future.

Like many communities, Seymour is facing rising costs, changes in state funding, and increasing service demands.

At the same time, residents are dealing with higher

costs in their everyday lives.

Because of that, every department was asked to review spending carefully, question increases, and focus on the services that are most essential.

The result is a disciplined, responsible budget focused on maintaining services while continuing to move the town forward.

Before getting into the details, it’s important to understand something.

This budget reflects more than just the cost of operating the town.

It also reflects decisions made **\*\*outside of Seymour\*\*** — including the loss of state revenue and the impact of unfunded mandates the town must absorb.

In fact, **\*\*THIS BUDGET IS BELOW STATUS QUO\*\***.

Departments were asked to review spending carefully and focus only on essential services.

One example is the addition of a full-time assessor as we prepare for revaluation.

This is not about expanding government.

It is about **\*\*accuracy, consistency, and efficiency\*\***.

Accurate assessments ensure fairness across the tax base and protect town revenue without increasing the tax rate.

## **POLICE VEHICLES**

I also want to share an example of how carefully this budget was reviewed.

As recently as **1:00 p.m. today**, the town portion of the budget was at approximately a **2.6 percent increase**.

During a staff meeting, the Chief of Police mentioned the department is currently **down three patrol vehicles**.

Patrol vehicles are not simply transportation — they are essential equipment for officers to do their jobs safely.

After reviewing the situation, we determined addressing the issue now was the responsible decision.

## **FIRE SERVICES**

Emergency services require careful planning.

Seymour relies on a **volunteer fire department**. While our firefighters volunteer their time, the **regulations they must meet are not voluntary**.

Training requirements, safety equipment, and apparatus standards all come with real costs — and unfortunately **fire trucks are not getting cheaper**.

## **CAPITAL PLANNING**

Planning ahead also means rebuilding long-term capital planning.

ARPA funding allowed the town to delay some capital spending, but that funding was temporary.

It is important to recognize this will likely be **the last year we can move forward without rebuilding capital funding into the budget**.

## **BOE**

Turning to education.

The Board of Education requested a **4.3 percent increase**.

I am putting a place holder of a **3.5 percent**.

## **STATE IMPACT**

Another factor impacting this budget is the loss of the **motor vehicle tax reimbursement from the State of Connecticut**.

Seymour previously received about **\$800,000 annually** through this program. Changes at the state level eliminated that reimbursement, which means this budget had to absorb nearly **\$800,000 in lost revenue** while maintaining services.

## MANDATES

It is also important to recognize the impact of **\*\*UNFUNDED STATE MANDATES\*\***.

The town is responsible for approximately **\*\*\$302,193\*\*** in mandated costs with no state funding attached.

That equals roughly a **\*\*1.85 percent increase to the town budget\*\*** and about **\*\*2.85 percent overall\*\***.

And that does **\*\*not include\*\*** the unfunded mandates placed on the Board of Education.

## GRAND LIST

Looking ahead, maintaining stable taxes over time requires growing the town's **\*\*GRAND LIST\*\***.

Responsible housing development and economic opportunity play an important role in that.

Housing brings residents.

Residents support businesses.

Businesses strengthen the local economy.

## SERVICE WARNING

When combining the town and BOE budgets, the **\*\*overall proposed increase is 3.29 percent\*\***.

However, it is important to be clear.

**\*\*THIS BUDGET IS ALREADY BELOW STATUS QUO.\*\***

If this budget is not approved by residents, the town will need to begin serious conversations about **\*\*reducing services\*\***.

## CLOSING

Every community eventually reaches a point where it must decide whether it wants to stand still or move forward.

The decisions we make today will shape Seymour for years to come.

Our goal is simple:

Maintain the services residents depend on,  
manage taxpayer dollars responsibly,  
and continue moving Seymour forward in a sustainable way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have color coded the lines in my budget.

The baby blue line items CANNOT be cut. They are required items.

The green lines are contracted employees.

The orange lines are UNION employees.

- Board of Finance – all in baby blue
- Town Meetings – all in baby blue
- Probate Court – all in baby blue – increase is due to elevator needs to be made ADA compliant and is done by census – charged each city in the area
- First Selectwoman’s Office – First Selectwoman’s Salary – kept it the same even though an increase was due; HR Director \$121,874.
- The increase in First Selectwoman’s Office is \$2,858 which is a 2.5% increase in HR Director, Chief Administrative Officer, and the Administrative Assistant.
- Economic Development is negative 13,500. Annmarie and Kurt have been working on this collectively throughout Town. We will go out and get more than one vendor.
- Registrar of Voters is much baby blue. \$18,000 in unfunded mandates. We HAD to buy new voting machines which we now have to buy maintenance contracts for. And there is early voting we have to fund.
- Finance Director in Orange, Accounting Manager & Regular Employee & Floater in Yellow. Payroll Clerk.
- Rest in blue - ADP went down due to using electronic paychecks. 5.38% increase \$25,948
- Tax Collector cannot cut at all - \$10,966 increase
- Town Treasurer – same
- Town Assessor – yellow is new assessor and assistant contracts, blue is the required education and required software and the clothing is part of the union contract
- Town Counsel – reduced due to using HR more
- Town Clerk is in blue and yellow. Required.
- **Total Town Government Expenses is \$2,083,136 with a \$49,431 increase.**
- In order to get a zero dollar increase we would need to cut \$3 million!
- Information Technology – budget is up 17,100 – much of it we can’t cut – 2.98% - total budget of 590,141 – 123,600 of that is unfunded mandates from the police department
- Miscellaneous – Much of this category is in blue which means we cannot take anything from this
- Recreation – This category is also blue which means we cannot cut anything here.
- Police Department – the salaries are Union and contracted – so we cannot change these. Reduced 1 police officer. 2 SRO’s. Cut to 125,000. 3 new officers. Line 340 increase. 32,900 unfunded mandates. We put a car in there. 255,890. Not going forward with the new dispatch place.
- Communications Commission increase is 8,500. For Tower Rental tax increase.

- Emergency Management – increase in stipend for Director - \$10,000 – Chris has saved us way more than \$10,000. We are the ONLY town in the area who has received money from FEMA from the flood. He has done an outstanding job for us.
- Ambulance – blue- required
- Lake Authority – blue required
- Fire Department – there were some required mandated increases in there resulting in a 26,900 increase.
- Fire Marshal – Contractual increases and clothing increases resulting in 20,389
- Water – Fire Hydrants – Up 7% or - \$372,698 because the water companies are pushing the cost of removing the lead from the pipes onto the municipalities.
- Town Operations/Building – Salaries are contractual obligations.
- Town Utilities are in blue and not changeable
- Town Engineer is in blue and not changeable
- Office of Code Compliance is not changeable
- Department of Public Works – Salaries are contractual – clothing is contractual, repairs & maintenance, catch basins, OSHA unfunded mandates, mechanics uniforms amounting to \$71, 783
- Highway Materials – increase of \$30,000
- Street Lighting – stayed the same
- Transfer Station – Contractual increases of \$10,774
- Waste Collection, Valley Health Department, Animal Control, NVCOG, all blue items
- **Total Town Operations \$6,049,994 with an increase of \$277,571.**
- Community Services – salaries are contractual for the directors – the summer camp part time help minimum wage has gone up so this increased; also general supplies costs increase – total increased costs is \$18,048
- Culture & Arts – Decreased by \$100
- Parks Department - Increased by \$4,500 – Education for turf; repairs & maintenance
- Library – increase in Bibliomation cost, salaries
- Employee Benefits – in blue can't touch
- Rest of it can't really touch.

**CAPITAL ITEMS: \$325,000**

- Additional Turnout Gear - \$100,000
- Community Center Basketball Court - \$22,000

- Police Department Firearms Locker - \$22,000
- Public Works Doors - \$24,500
- Town Buildings - \$100,000
- Forklift - \$40,000
- Phone System - \$25,000
- Salt Shed - \$45,000

These are items that we really need to move our town forward.

We need to push this to year two which pushes the air packs for the fire department also.

International truck, compressor, backhoe, fob system, town buildings, also, for next year.

These are things that we NEED to run the town.

It will cost \$500,000 to pave Pearl Street!

I put in here a 3.5% number for the Board of Education (they asked for a 4.3%)

The Town # was 2.97% (with the original department asks it was 6.9%)

**If this budget does not pass as is, services will be cut.(Town and School)**

**The decision we make today will shape Seymour for years to come.**

### **DISCUSSION:**

- Quinn Levey – asked to clarify the color codes – Annmarie said that Orange are contract positions – there are five – 2.49%; Blue are things that we cannot cut; Green are shared services; yellow are union contracts.
- Andy North said nice cuts. Lot of detail. Could we take last year to this year.
- Beverly Kennedy asked how much we will save when we go to bi-weekly paychecks and when will we do that? Jason Vieira said we need to wait until this contract is up. Two years. Get all the unions on board. Beverly Kennedy also asked about moving the Tower Rental. Annmarie Drugonis said the only way would be to build the tower ourselves which we tried to do but it got voted down. Beverly also had asked about the list she had requested of the # of employees of the Town on health insurance who are single, married, family. She has not yet received the information. Jason said he would get it for her Wednesday.
- Bettyann Peck asked about the coding on Page 5 and Page 7
- Mary Kruger asked about the PCRC – Annmarie Drugonis said that it is part of the Umbrella and that people can take part of their services if needed.
- Alice Levey asked under the Police Department – Line 104 – SRO – 2 – HS+ MS – HS took exam and became seargent.

- copies of the shared services contracts and where this money is coming from on Wednesday?
- Planning+Zoning – we need to start growing the town – not everything is a good fit for the town. Some businesses require a certain # of population in order to open their business. In 2000 we had 16,001. In 2010, 16,540. In 2020, 16,748. In 2024, 17,100. In 2026, 17,300.
- We need to get housing here. Or a restaurant. Smaller businesses. Downtown businesses. Big stores will cause traffic. The problem with Tri Town is we don't own it. We can take it by Eminent Domain. But the problem is that the owner has a ground lease that we can't break. No matter what.
- Beverly Kennedy asked if the actual numbers are as of February 28<sup>th</sup>. Jason Vieira said yes.

**Item #5 – Public Comment**

Jack Jurkowski -Amber Drive – I wanted to ask if employees are allowed to choose paper paychecks by contract. Annmarie said they must do direct deposit. Jack also asked what year the loss of motor vehicle revenue hit – this year or last year. Annmarie said it started last year.

Mike Kearney – 72 Mountain Road – I just wanted to thank the volunteers. I wanted to ask about the veterans exemption. It went down. Out veterans exemption is based on the mill rate. So when we got the revaluation, my taxes went up, my exemption went down, I paid more, mill rate went down. Annmarie Drugonis said that this is something that is handled through the State of Connecticut and your State Representative and the Veterans Administration. We will help how we can.

Laura Wilkins – 5 Cross Creek Lane

Regarding the EMS and Ambulance services. Do we get reimbursed when they come out? The town doesn't own the ambulance. It is a contracted service. Also, you had mentioned with the summer camp that the rates had gone up. We charge fees so the money comes back to us.

Annmarie said that she wanted to remind everyone that her number for the Board of Education was just a placeholder. And also that the Girls won tonight and they are off to Mohegan Sun!!!

**Item #6 – Correspondence**

None

**Item #7 – New Business**

03/18/26 Deliberation on First Selectwoman budget

03/19/26 Public Hearing @ 6:30pm

**03/23/26 Final Deliberations**

**04/07/26 Town Meeting @7pm @ Seymour Middle School**

**Item #8 – Adjournment**

Richard Demko adjourned the meeting at 8:42pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

**Monica Dimon**  
**Recording Secretary**