

October 29, 2025

Budget and Finance Minutes

Present: Nancy Woolley, Pat Harvey, Julie Smith, Michael Teetsel, Chad Richardson, Barb Dehart (via TEAMS), & Lois Bond, Kristen LaPell, Matt Parish, Mickaela Richardson & Jan McCann

Absent: Greg White

The meeting was called to order at 5pm.

Approve October 2, 2025, minutes: Nancy moved to approve the minutes of October 22, 2025, as presented. Chad seconded. All in favor.

WRVA proposed budget: Matt Parrish, executive director for White River Valley Ambulance (WRVA) presented the proposed budget for FY27. He shared the current budget-to-actual figures and explained that the organization is finalizing numbers while awaiting updated insurance rates. Most other budget categories remain under projections, and any year end surplus will be directed to an equipment replacement fund.

Matt noted that staffing continues to be a challenge, with consistent recruitment efforts but ongoing shortages-currently down one paramedic, with another leaving at year end.

He reported that WRVA continues to serve as the transporting service for the valley and now supports First Response coverage for Rochester, Bethel, Pittsfield, and Stockbridge. In FY25, WRVA responded to 83 emergency calls in Rochester. Mutual aid support for Rochester is provided by South Royalton, Brandon and Middlebury.

Matt stated that WRVA expects to finalize and vote on their budget once insurance rate information becomes available at their next board meeting.

Shelter Team proposed budget: Jan McCann reported that the Shelter Team plans to maintain a level-funded budget for the upcoming year.

Nancy asked for an update on the Team's activities over the past year. Jan shared that she participated in developing the Emergency Management section of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and staffed a booth at the Harvest Fair during inclement weather. Visitors primarily inquired about tick prevention and treatment. The team distributed reflective clips for children's backpacks and jackets, which she suggested sharing with the school to distribute in time for Halloween safety.

Jan also noted that the CPR training is planned in the coming months, pending additional provider availability.

Michaela reported that the Town has enrolled in Vermont Alerts, allowing residents to receive emergency notifications via text, email or landline. Of the nearly 5,000 subscribed, 143 are immediate Rochester residents. Nancy suggested promoting the signups through the Town Office email, and Mickaela said the Shelter Team could also help increase awareness for additional users.

Mike asked about the Shelter Team's role in emergencies. Jan explained that the core group of about nine or ten trained volunteers-certified through state and federal programs following Tropical Storm Irene-is equipped with cots, towels, and hygiene supplies to establish a local shelter which is activated by the Selectboard. The Red Cross typically assumes shelter operations after the first three days of an emergency. The team also conducts annual drills and inventories supplies.

Jan asked about purchasing a tent and table. The Committee confirmed she may proceed with the purchase, provided she stay within her budget line.

Review Employee Health Care Insurance:

Julie and Kristen attended a meeting with Acrisure Representatives to review proposed changes to employee health coverage.

The Town's current carrier, MVP showed the lowest premium increase among available options. The most significant change is a \$50 increase to the deductible. Julie will distribute plan comparison information for MVP, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and the VLCT vision and dental plans to the other committee members.

A final decision on health insurance must be made in November to ensure payroll deductions are updated by early December. Kristen will circulate the MVP Plan information to Town employees for review this week.

Review Budget Variance: There have been minimal changes since the last review; no further discussion was required.

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm

The next Budget and Finance Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, with Water/Sewer, Fire/Rescue in attendance

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith