

Budget Work Session

April 22, 2026

Members Present: Mayor Janet Winkler, Mayor Pro Tem, Rick Shew, Commissioners Richard Blevins, Larry Chapman, Jim Engelman, Jeff Link, and Ann Smith

Others Present: Town Manager, Jonathan Greer, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Officer, Shana Guy, and Town Clerk, Tammy Swanson

Call to Order:

Mayor Janet Winkler called the Budget Work Session to order.

Discuss FY2026/2027 Budget:

Jonathan presented the requests from the department for the FY 2026-2027 Budget.

Personnel:

-HUB – Change part-time position to fulltime position – Employee, Rakeema Felder.

Jonathan mentioned that Rakeema has been a big help to Addie, and has been a wonderful addition to the staff.

-Renewal of Planning Contract with WPCOG (COG) –

Current Planning Contract - \$27,000 annually.

Original proposed contract renewal from COG - \$58,000 – reduced by COG to \$36,000.

Code Enforcement Contract - \$17,000 annually.

Jonathan suggested that the Town approve a planning contract with the WPCOG for one more year. Then halfway through the year, hire a planner for the Town that could do both planning and code enforcement. Jonathan commented that hiring someone halfway through the year would allow time for a planner to work with Teresa and with Curt. Jonathan added that he understands that both Gamewell and Drexel are making similar choices with their WPCOG contracts.

Some of the Board members commented that they have received complaints about the Town not having a planner available more days of the week. So, having our own planner would be good for the public.

Jonathan stated that he does not want to give up the stormwater contact with the COG. He stated that stormwater is too complicated for us to try and do on our own.

Police Dept:

-Hire Additional Officer(s): Chief Nelson has requested 2 additional officers for his Dept. The Town has not hired additional officers for the Police Department since 1989; however, the call volume has increased with the growth of the Town.

- Cost of 2 additional officers: \$300,000 (Per Officer - Rookie - \$68,200 salary/benefits + \$78,200 equipment/vehicle).

-SROs at the Schools: The SROs are funded for Hudson Elementary School and Hudson Middle School through the school system, and if the County decided to cut the funding, it could have an effect on our Police Department.

Richard stated that when there are staffing shortages in the Police Department, none of the officers are able to go to school for training, take vacations or anything. Shifts are reorganized to cover the need. He stated that we have used SROs in the past to cover the road, but if the SROs are taken away, we would not have the backup. He mentioned that when the SROs are used, they still do walk-throughs at the schools.

Also, on weekends, there are officers on duty alone for several hours, which is not a good thing. Richard commented that he realizes there is definitely a need for additional officers, but he also realizes that money is needed to make it happen.

-Non-sworn Officers: Some towns are using non-sworn officers to investigate traffic accidents, etc., which takes some of the burden off the sworn officers. The non-sworn officers would not be able to make arrests. It was mentioned that the City of Hickory is trying this approach – hiring non-sworn officers before they attend BLET.

-Former Landscape Building: To be used by Police Department – evidence storage/equipment. (Evidence is currently stored in different locations.)

- \$43,000 fencing and security (cameras).

- \$80,000 includes the \$43,000, new doors and floor epoxy.

-Vehicles: Staff has been looking into the possibility of leasing vehicles to see if the process could work for the Town. It was mentioned that the Public Works Dept. has not had a new vehicle since pre-Covid.

Sanitation:

-Republic Contract: This is a contract renewal year for sanitation. Republic Services is currently doing an audit to make sure they are being paid for all they pick up in Town. Republic continues to be our best option for garbage pickup.

Fees:

-Disposal of Household Items – Other times than Spring Clean Up – items are placed at the curb for pick up by the grapple truck (no longer leave dump truck at residences).

- **Suggested increasing fee from \$100 per load to \$150 per load.**

HUB Station:

-School Concerts at HUB

The schools request to use the HUB for chorus concerts, proms and formals – Staff is suggesting a discounted rate for in-Town schools using the HUB.

- **Elementary School Chorus Concerts** – waive fees – (to be left to the discretion of the Town Manager and HUB Director) Typically, these concerts are held through the week, and HUB Staff is already at the HUB.
- **Suggested 50% discount for in-Town schools only. (Proms, formals, etc.)**

-HUB Kitchen Rental – (only comparison is Blue Ridge Kitchen – We have taken their schedule and scaled it down.)

-We need to keep in mind that there will be wear and tear on the equipment.

-Discussed adding a monthly fee as well - may need to see how the users react to the fees - basically, the first year will be a learning curve.

Food Trucks do have to be tied to a kitchen, and if the truck does not really use the facility hourly, the membership fee might serve as their tie to a kitchen.

A fee of \$1,100 per month was suggested, with the possibility of an increase in 6 months.

-A Building Façade - This is the same thing that was done for B Building. If the entire amount is not funded in this budget, Addie will work with whatever budget amount is approved.

Recreation:

-Pool Rental Fee for Parties - \$200 for 2 hours

-Renovations for the Pool – The last big renovation on the pool was done in 2011 at a cost of approximately \$217,000. The pool now needs replastering at a cost of approximately \$200,000 – this work could be done in sections after pool season, and we could possibly get by without doing the deep end. We also have a leak in the pool which will have to be repaired after pool season this year.

Options for pool repairs discussed:

-Grind down the plaster and paint – (has to be done every 2 years).

-Consider putting plan in place to eventually close pool and replace with splash pad, etc.

-New UTV for the Recreation Dept: The UTV the Recreation Dept. has currently would be used at the HUB.

-CivicPlus Recreation Software: Includes all kinds of recreation management – currently, everything at the Recreation Center is done on paper. With this software, everything would be done electronically – credit card payments could be accepted, and people could schedule rentals online.

Jonathan commented that implementing this software was one of the reasons for the increase in recreation fees. We do have an inside-Town rate, and an outside-Town rate for our programs, and this software works with GIS to show whether or not someone lives in Town. Jonathan added that Granite Falls just started using this same software.

Public Works:

-Update Wash Pit – this would be the final part of their upgrade.

-One ton Dump Truck and snow plow – A smaller dump truck would be more maneuverable than the big truck.

Administration:

-New Laptops for Board Members – The Board Members indicated that they are good with their current laptops.

-New Town Website: We do need to update the Town's website. Our website has to be ADA accessible by April 2027. Jonathan stated that he plans to talk with CivicPlus about the Town's website, and possibly bundling with the Recreation Center software.

-Town's Façade Grant Program – Since we are going to be doing the Streetscape project, we may want to encourage the businesses in the project area to spruce up the look of their buildings. Since we have a Façade Grant program in place, we could encourage the businesses to take advantage of the program.

Requests in Review:

-Consensus – hire one additional police officer - \$70,000 (might be able to use reserve vehicle).

-Consensus – hire planner for ½ fiscal year.

-Consensus – hire Rakeema Felder fulltime at HUB.

-Consensus - minimum for police department building - \$43,000 (fencing, security and keypad access) -will put trailers, etc., in the building. Richard suggested just fencing in the back area, without the fencing in the front. Jonathan said he would discuss the fencing with Chief Nelson. If we do eliminate the fencing for the front, we would probably need to do an upgrade to the garage doors.

-Consensus - add in \$40,000 to plaster shallow end of the pool.

-Consensus - add in \$12,500 for wash bay update at Public Works.

-Consensus - add in \$50,000 for A Bldg. Façade at HUB.

April 22, 2026 Budget Work Session

- Consensus – add in \$23,275 for Gym bathroom heaters and HVAC at HUB.
- Consensus - look at other options for UTV for Recreation Dept. – (possibly used).
- Consensus - add in the \$20,000 for Façade Grant Funds for the Town businesses.
- Consensus – Cost of Living – 3% increase.
- Consensus – Bonuses - \$1,000.

Rick asked Jonathan to prioritize items that were requested, but not included or fully funded.

Jonathan mentioned the following items:

- UTV for Recreation Dept.
- Software package for Recreation Dept and Town Website.
- Complete façade at HUB – A Building.
- Purchase smaller dump truck.
- Consider adding in some funding for vacation buybacks.

Adjournment:

Motion: (Larry Chapman/Jim Engelman) to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved.

Tamra T. Swanson, Town Clerk