

**Town of Sherman
Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop
Mallory Town Hall
March 9, 2026
7:00PM**

Present: First Selectman Don Lowe; Selectman Joel Bruzinski; Treasurer Andrea Maloney; Business Manager Liz LaVia

Absent: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Invited & Audience: Pat Cosentino; Mary Fernand; Karen Fildes; Renee Leekin; Phil Giuliani; Jake Siciliano; Michelle Sanford; Tim Laughlin

Clerk: Nicole Zegley

Call to Order: First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:00PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Pat Cosentino gave introductions of the school staff and presented the Sherman Board of Education 2026-2027 budget.

Board of Education

The initial budget reflected an increase of 3.87%. The Board of Education and school administration were able to reduce it to 3.12%.

RBT (Registered Behavioral Technician) - Increase from .89 to .20 FTE (Full Time Equivalent)

Speech and Language Teacher - Increase from .8 to 1.0 FTE

Paraprofessional - Increase by 1-½ positions

Social Worker - Two days a week at \$14,000 with the assistance of a state grant

Technology Technician - Increase of .89

Lunch Coordinator - Increase of .29 FTE

Executive Assistant - Increase of .8

Shared Positions for Technology and Facilities Directors

Cost Center #1 shows a 22.13% change which equals \$341, 000

Cost Center #2 shows the school having a 7.9% change which equals \$349,000

Cost Center #3 reflects Special Education decreased 9% which equals \$226,000

Cost Center #4 reflects high school tuition and transportation decreased 11.11% which equals just over \$200,000

Mr. Laughlin thanked Dr. Cosentino for her presentation. He added that after several conversations about tuition that it was based on free and reduced qualifications. Special Education needs of approximately \$25,000 and shared services for facilities and technology.

First Selectman Don Lower inquired on the tuition for the preschool and what the money will be used for.

Mr. Laughlin explained that the budget reflects revenue from the school for preschool tuition and teachers.

Selectman Joel Bruzinski was concerned about the way the item is listed in the budget as it may confuse taxpayers. He also pointed out that it increased the school budget when the Board of Selectmen requested that they make cuts.

Mr. Laughlin pointed out that historically this is one of the schools lowest budgets. He also commented on the record regarding the Executive Assistant position to support the superintendent. He clarified that this was a request put forward by the BOE and not the school administration.

First Selectman Don Lowe requested clarification about shared services for technology and building maintenance.

Mr. Laughlin explained about facility services and how they leverage what is a \$50 million investment in the school, the services and the contracts that are going to come out of that on economies of scale throughout the town. If the support could be found in the town and leverage the positions, help the people in those roles and contribute to the efficiency of town government.

The Board of Selectmen, Andrea Maloney and Liz LaVia all collectively decided that further discussions were needed on this budget item.

Dr. Pat Cosentino explained that there is a new capital program called DRIP that they are hopeful about for \$35,000 from the state. It's a grant that can be used for capital improvements.

Selectman Joel Bruzinski asked for clarification on how many new positions were being requested.

Dr. Pat Cosentino and Karen Fildes explained the 4.58 FTE increase. The 1.49 increase is actually the number of existing employees. The technician at .89, is a new position, as is the 0.8 for the executive assistant.

First Selectman Don Lowe assured Dr. Pat Cosentino that she would hear back from them by Thursday.

The Board discussed the school budget and the changes that were asked and the additional cuts that they would like made. At a previous meeting Selectman Bob Ostrosky expressed a cut of at least \$100,000. They expressed the lack of need for two new employees during this difficult budget season.

Mr. Laughlin explained the need for the new technology position. During the school renovation the educational technology teacher was retained, but the library paraprofessional position was eliminated when the individual retired. The new technology position proposes to bring back that job with the new school.

First Selectman Don Lowe inquired if Mr. Giuliani was a union employee and what it would cost to have him work with the fire department.

Mr. Laughlin estimated an 80/20 split of approximately 8 hours a week.

Liz LaVia said to be mindful that in the past the challenge was that the town was responsible for the benefits of the employee.

Selectman Joel Bruzinski was concerned with the optics of the situation with so many changes going on within the town. The hopes are that once the new building is 100% open there will be a better understanding.

Liz LaVia asked for clarification that the money for the shared services would be the Pre-K tuition revenue.

Mr. Laughlin confirmed.

The Board, along with Andrea Maloney and Liz LaVia were all in agreement that the shared positioned job descriptions need to be clearly defined and there are many moving parts that need to be discussed further.

Selectman Joel Bruzinski asked if there was a more cost effective way to support the part time superintendent than adding a full time Executive Assistant, possibly by boosting an existing position.

Mr. Laughlin explained that the discussion would need to be addressed with the Board of Education.

The Board continued the meeting by going over the town's budget spreadsheet.

Adjournment:

Motioned By: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded: Selectman Joel Bruzinski

Time: 8:21 PM

Respectfully Submitted By Nicole Zegley

