

FY2025 Budget Narrative: Building Department

Salaries and Benefits Budget Changes/Retention Dynamics:

Will you hire or add employees next year – replacements, retirements, leaves of absence, etc.?

There are no plans for new hires in 2025. We are trying to fill the previously approved part-time position. A big part of this will be inspecting and issuing Rental Certificates of Occupancy. If the Ordinance for this requirement passes in 2025.

What contract obligations or changes impacted this year’s budget, if any?

There are no contract obligations or changes.

What employment challenges does your department face in this area – succession plans, early retirements, the ability to hire and retain employees?

Training is a big part of an ongoing succession plan. There are no retirements planned for 2025. It has always been a challenge trying to fill a part-time position with a qualified individual.

Personnel

Current for 2024?	Full Time	Part Time
Milon C. Marsden Jr.	x	
Vincent W. Bauer	x	
Sandra T. Dufresne	x	
Approved Part Time to Be Filled		x
Additional for 2025?		
None		

Changes in personnel? – Retirements, promotions, new positions

Hiring challenges? – recruitment, retention?

Operational Costs – (Non-Personnel)

Catastrophic events? – Storms, accidents, equipment failures, unanticipated building maintenance?

No Operational Costs as described anticipated.

What are the biggest factors driving operational cost changes? *N/A*

Are there any anomalies that occurred this year or will occur next year? *Severe storm surges?*

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Are there plans to manage growing costs or to drive reductions?

The goal is to maintain our current budget. To have the time to complete important trainings and retain certifications. Time has not allowed this to happen.

Capital Expenditures

Capital outlay – include explanatory narratives and quotes N/A.

Warrant articles – include now for informational purposes N/A.

Other than CIP submissions what are the possible warrant articles and why they will be needed? *N/A.*

Why are these included in the budget as capital expenditures and not as operational costs? *N/A.*

How are these part of a strategy/plan to maintain/support/update capital equipment? *N/A.*

DEPARTMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Past Year:

What has your department accomplished this year? A successful transition into the Town Clerks old office space.

Enabling an additional room for plan review for permitting. Also allowing for in-office consultations and meetings. Therefore, the availability for being more available, more convenient, and private.

An established viewing area for the public, allowing more available, more convenient, extended hours for viewing files and an actual desk for the public to work from.

Extending the available office hours by opening the office at 7:00 am instead of 8:00 am. This has allowed contractors to stop in on their way to a job to apply for a permit or ask questions. This has been a convenience for the public and adds efficiency to the operations of the department.

We have also experienced a complete year with a new policy enacted by the Building Department. Applicants can now go directly to the Planning and Zoning Department to review and discuss the need for special approvals or variances for their project. Whereas previously the applicant would have to go through the permit application process. Then receive a Permit Denial Letter before they could go to the Planning and Zoning Department to review and discuss the need for special approvals or variances. After which they would have to reapply to the Building Department with the received special approvals or variances.

This updated process has saved days and weeks in the process. Applicants now only apply to the Building Department once with the appropriate approvals from Planning or Zoning as needed.

Were you able to meet the department's expectations and/or the needs of the community last year?

Were there any key successes you would like to share?

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Rye has many restrictions and very limited areas for growth and expansion. This leads to more complicated builds and permitting. Review of these Architectural and Engineered plans is imperative and time consuming. Through detailed review and analysis of plans, the department has been able to be proactive with catching issues that would affect life safety, and code compliance. To interact with builders and professionals to detail concerns with a project before it starts.

In several cases, this department has challenged designs for Flood Zone Construction and FEMA compliance requirements. Which has led to projects being redesigned by the registered design professional.

This is a constant concern in anticipation of the ongoing FEMA Audits.

Moving Forward:

What are your department goals for next year?

The first goal is to implement a Rental Certificate of Occupancy process. This will enable us to inspect rentals for minimum Life Safety Requirements. We can also tie this Certificate into other areas of concern. Such as overcrowding, over parking, ADU compliance, pump out requirements and septic system efficiency.

We are working with the Rules and Regs commission to implement this and several other changes that will make things easier and more efficient.

Create efficiencies?

Along with what is listed above,

In order to better guide the public through the Building Permit Process and what is required. We are working on taking all the existing and available information In the Town Ordinances, Building Codes and Life Safety Codes to create a list or a guide. Projects are varied and have specific varied requirements. A guide is represented as just that, a guide. The project at hand dictates what will be required for submission.

To finalize a list as a guide on where to find required information. This will be solely directed to the Building Permit Application process.

Solve hiring/retention issues?

Attempting to fill the previously approved part-time position. This is key to The Rental Certificate proposal.

IT initiatives to streamline operations?

Scanning of the public records. This is crucial to streamline access to all public information that can then be obtained electronically through the town website. I spent 15 years in Hampton as a Building Inspector. This process made a significant impact for convenience and efficiency.

If you fell short this year, what needs to happen to close the gap?

Part time help, taking advantage of available trainings and certification, FEMA continuing Education and being a bigger part of the New Hampshire Building Officials Association.

Do you see the needs/expectations of the community changing over the next three or so years?

We do not foresee many changes due to the limitations of the area. I do see more raze and rebuilds. More complicated builds needing more variances and special permits. Rye is isolated, I do not see things slowing down very much at all. In fact, we have already taken in about 30% more than this same time last year.

What must happen in this department to keep up with those changes?

Part time help, taking advantage of available trainings and certification, FEMA continuing Education and being a bigger part of the New Hampshire Building Officials Association.

What are the largest risks or threats to the department - market/environmental/demographic changes?

The select few that do not follow direction, that are not held accountable. Though you would think they were the greater majority by the noise they make. The few that want to get away with cutting corners. As a result, putting others in danger. But the only thing in their way is the Building Department. To these few, we may not be popular, but we are consistent. We uphold the Town Ordinances as voted in by the residents. This includes the International Building and Life Safety Codes, which are "minimal" requirements. We are here to protect the public, and the homeowner. Even if it is from themselves. A building that is built to meet these "minimal" codes requirements is a "safe" building and the first line of defense to prevent a fire or an accident.