

## **Reference Charter Chapter VII Finance and Taxation, Section 702**

### **Budget Procedure, B. Duties of the Board of Selectmen**

A few weeks back I took a class on Municipal Budgeting Fundamentals or Non-financial Professionals, offered by the UConn's School of Public Policy and their Public Service Executive Leadership Collaborative. The class was taught by the Assistant Director of Management & Budget, City of Hartford. The purpose of the workshop was to learn to identify the characteristics of an effective budget, the stages of budget development and execution, and how to distinguish between budget approaches. It explored budgeting concepts and approaches such as historical and zero-based budgeting; capital budgeting; performing basic budget calculations; and interpreting typical financial reports. Participants gained a basic understanding of the budget process and budget products so that they can actively participate in their entity's resource management process and confidently interpret budgets and financial reports.

Further research into this process led me to the New Hampshire Municipal Association's Best Practices series' offering called Best Practices in Local Government Budgeting - <https://www.nhmunicipal.org/town-city-article/best-practices-series-best-practices-local-government-budgeting>. This article outlined the challenges faced in budget development and offered some best practices municipalities should follow to develop a successful and impactful budget.

One of the first things both the class and the article suggested was a need for a clear set of long term goals that can be used to guide in the development of a budget. Based on this concept, I would recommend that we add a new item 1 under Duties of the Board of Selectmen called Strategic Plan and shift the other items in section B down (2. Proposed Budget, 3. Capital Plans, 4. Annual Tax Rate).

**1. Strategic Plan. Every year, the Board of Selectmen shall establish a strategic plan prior to the development of the proposed budgets. Utilizing input from the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), department heads, boards and commissions and the community, the board shall define and develop a set of long-term goals and priorities for Woodbury. This plan shall provide a vision and mission statement to the teams developing the budget to ensure expenditures align with that vision and mission. Along with the vision and mission, the board shall develop measurable goals which break down into objective actions for each department and/or areas of focus. This shall allow for the aligning of budget allocations to effectively achieve those goals.**

## **Additional Info**

<https://www.nhmunicipal.org/town-city-article/best-practices-series-best-practices-local-government-budgeting>

A government's budget reflects its vision, strategy, and priorities. Similarly, the process public sector leaders use to create and communicate the budget reflects how they operate. The most effective processes are inclusive, transparent, and efficient. They build trust through involvement and buy-in from citizens, department heads, and elected officials. According to public sector experts and professional organizations, local governments build greater trust and buy-in from stakeholders when they adopt and adhere to budgeting best practices. Operational best practices ensure budget planning is strategic and organized. Communications best practices help local leaders convey information simply, clearly, and frequently, which results in greater transparency and strengthened trust.

### **Draft of Fiscal Policy 006 – Budget Policy**

#### **Fiscal Policy 006: Budget Policy**

##### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Town of Woodbury budget policy is to provide guidance for budgetary decision-making and set a standard for sound budgetary practice and fiscal performance. Utilizing an adopted budget policy provides a structure for consistent and transparent budgeting that is fiscally responsible. This policy provides methods and best practices regarding operating and capital budgets, budgetary controls, revenue and expenditure execution/reporting that result in the legal establishment, timely execution and effective monitoring of the Town's budget.

The Town uses strategic planning to map its goals and manage the resources necessary for achieving them. The Town Strategic Plan defines the direction for the Town and provides a framework for the strategies and activities of the departments. The budget process is structured each year to achieve the fiscal and policy goals for the upcoming fiscal year while adhering to the timeline defined by this policy.

According to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the National Advisory Council on State and Local Budgeting (NACSLB), the budget policies should address and establish the guidelines for the following components:

- Operating and Capital Improvement Projects
- Budget Execution and Controls
- Revenues and Expenditures



**LUKE A. BRONIN**  
MAYOR

## **Strategic Plan**

### **Fiscal Year 2024 Strategic Plan**

Hartford will continue to promote economic growth and recovery while improving quality of life, maintaining core services for our most vulnerable residents, and protecting the city's long-term fiscal stability. The City will do this by (a) continuing to budget responsibly, while focusing on core government services; (b) strengthening and building new partnerships that produce economic growth and economic opportunity for residents; (c) working to maintain our partnership with the State of Connecticut and abide by the five-year plan approved by the Municipal Accountability Review Board; and (d) continuing to focus in every way possible on making neighborhoods safer and stronger, including through youth engagement.

### **Fiscal Year 2024 Core Goals**

#### Promote Economic Development and Job Growth

- Aggressively pursue opportunities for economic growth, thereby growing the Grand List
- Retain jobs and encourage existing employers to grow
- Continue efforts to improve, rehabilitate or demolish blighted property, which can also support Grand List growth

#### Maintain Hartford's Fiscal Stability

- Manage with discipline and rigor, pushing for savings while delivering core services
- Continue to streamline government operations and make government more efficient
- Maintain support for the partnership with the State of Connecticut, and the partnership with major employers

#### Keep our Streets Safe and our Neighborhoods Strong

- Continue and grow partnerships to reduce violence
- Stabilize Public Safety staffing and expand efforts to recruit Hartford residents
- Use technology to advance public safety and efficiently allocate resources
- Promote economic opportunity for Hartford residents, including returning citizens and Opportunity Youth

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Education and Opportunities for Young People

- Expand hours, access, and programming at our recreation centers and libraries
- Maintain and expand opportunities for Hartford youth, specifically justice-involved youth, while focusing on youth homelessness and trauma-informed care
- Partner with the Board of Education to strengthen neighborhood schools
- Support the school system's work to reduce chronic absenteeism and reengage students in the wake of pandemic disruption

Continue our Recovery

- Utilize American Rescue Plan funding to support critical investments in youth services and support; community safety and wellness; arts and culture; business support and activation; housing non-profit support; economic and community development; and critical infrastructure
- Work with a variety of partners to continue supporting residents and meeting their basic needs, including food and shelter

## City of Hartford Department Strategic Objectives

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### Mayor's Office

- Maintain financial stability and pursue economic growth
- Work to promote development around the City
- Keep our streets safe and our neighborhoods strong
- Continue the City's pandemic recovery and responsible deployment of aid funds
- Coordinate with other governmental bodies to pursue the City's policy priorities

### Corporation Counsel

- Maximize the cost effectiveness of the City's legal representation through an appropriate balance of in-house and outside counsel
- Ensure the provision of timely legal services on key development initiatives throughout the City
- Provide support and legal guidance with respect to execution of the City's approved ARPA appropriation plan
- Provide legal counsel and support in the implementation of the provisions of the amended City Charter
- Ensure that all City policies are updated consistent with current statutes, regulations and court rulings

### Office of the Chief Operating Officer

- Lead interdepartmental efforts to support the City's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, for the benefit of employees, residents, businesses, and visitors
- Continue efforts to improve performance of City departments, including significant projects that require interdepartmental collaboration
- Expand efforts to use data to inform decision making throughout operating departments

### Metro Hartford Innovation Services

- Enhance the user experience to improve the ease of use of technology
- Continue to improve cyber security through implementation awareness and security operations
- Improve IT project delivery through change management and process assessments
- Improve IT systems district-wide to support the District Model of Excellence
- Continue to identify and pursue opportunities to simplify and streamline IT purchasing

### Finance

- Invest in efforts to grow the City's Grand List to increase and diversify tax revenues
- Ensure that all financial reporting is in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) as well as the reporting standards promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB)
- Maximize the collection of current and delinquent municipal taxes while ensuring fair and equitable service to all taxpayers
- Enhance applicable contract compliance monitoring and reporting

**Human Resources**

- Negotiate collective bargaining agreements that are fair and equitable
- Continue to partner with departments to prioritize the hiring of Hartford residents, particularly within Public Safety positions
- Continue to update policies, department procedures and job descriptions
- Provide mandated and optional training opportunities to City employees
- Continue to automate HR systems to reduce administrative burden and increase organization effectiveness

**Office of Management, Budget and Grants**

- Provide accurate budget reporting and rigorous analysis
- Track progress and maintain adherence to long-term fiscal sustainability plan for the City of Hartford
- Aggressively pursue grant opportunities to support administrative priorities
- Increase focus on delinquent revenue collections for private duty, special events, and use of City property in an effort to reduce delinquencies and increase the percentage of paid accounts

**Families, Children, Youth and Recreation**

- Collaborate with system leaders and partners to improve life course outcomes for Hartford residents with a focus on literacy and chronic absenteeism
- Act as a thought, implementation, and action partner in the development of innovative and effective strategies
- Ensure holistic learning and development of children and youth with two-generation approaches
- Collect, analyze, and share data to assess measurable impact and inform key decision-making
- Empower children, youth, and families to advise, advocate, and lead solutions for themselves, their peers, and city
- Leverage and align resources to sustain innovation and impact

**Fire**

- Update policies and procedures to maximize department personnel and other resources
- Improve training of members to reinforce the HFD Mission Statement and enhance service
- Use data and the Firestat review process to improve department performance
- Maintain international accreditation and ISO rating

**Police**

- Stabilize Police staffing through robust recruiting and aggressive Police Academy scheduling
- Expand efforts to recruit Hartford residents as well as candidates that are racially and gender diverse
- Build and strengthen partnerships with community members to address public safety concerns
- Use technology such as street cameras to modernize and supplement law enforcement
- Make continuous efforts to address crime through innovation and collaboration with stakeholders
- Continue to provide officers with training necessary to meet high performance standards
- Contribute to the ongoing multi-departmental effort to respond to certain calls for service with non-law enforcement personnel

**Emergency Services & Telecommunications**

- Develop improved efficiencies through technology
- Enhance staffing and workforce development
- Ensure service resilience and optimization
- Implement process improvements and enhancements through policies and procedures

**Public Works**

- Improve quality of life through timely, efficient and effective maintenance and waste collection
- Incorporate Complete Streets and Quality of Life initiatives into all roadways, parks, and facility projects
- Work cooperatively with other applicable City departments on efforts to reduce blight
- Manage expenditures for roadway infrastructure, public buildings and the City fleet of vehicles and equipment managed by Public Works
- Conduct self-assessment review of Public Works policies, procedures and service delivery methods; undergo peer review by other Public Works professionals to measure, benchmark and identify areas of potential performance and technology improvement

**Development Services**

- Improve the quality of life for City residents
- Improve customer service by improving technical functionality and increasing digital access to information
- Increase the availability of safe, decent and affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for all of Hartford's residents
- Recruit and retain employers in order to increase meaningful and sustainable employment for City residents
- Accelerate City's efforts to remediate brownfields and blighted properties
- Increase citywide planning initiatives
- Leverage opportunities to improve pedestrian safety by implementing roadway modifications
- Guide development through coordinated, managed processes and by obtaining constituent feedback
- Assist small businesses in post-pandemic recovery by implementing small business programs

**Health & Human Services**

- Develop a Citywide strategy to reduce health disparities with attention to chronic medical conditions (specific to cardiovascular disease and obesity)
- Lead Citywide public health efforts in response to COVID-19
- Develop capacity to address violence prevention as a public health issue
- Complete the accreditation process with the Public Health Accreditation Board
- Implement changes to retention policies, procedures and controls

**Registrars of Voters**

- Maintain voter files and the voting tabulators in preparation for elections
- Ensure accuracy of daily updates by completing record retention, maintenance of enrollment, Canvass, and DMV
- Promote voter education and participation, by engaging and informing citizens of the electoral process
- Increase the number of bilingual poll workers at the polling locations
- Provide training of election officials per State statute
- Conduct Annual Canvass of Voters as required by CGS 9-32 9-35 and court decree

**Town & City Clerk**

- To increase civic engagement through the implementation of the iCompass City Council Management/Boards & Commissions software. This will provide greater transparency, and create a platform to grow civic engagement.

**City Treasurer**

- Monitor and maintain the MERF's diversity, equity and inclusion report card as a tool to review and discuss MERF managers' DEI progress
- Continue to support small, local, women- and minority-owned firms at an industry leading level to manage pension fund assets
- Continue to evaluate economically targeted investment (ETI) opportunities to facilitate economic development in the City of Hartford
- Work with the City administration to enhance our City parks through the prudent investment of Hartford Parks Trust Fund assets
- Continue the prudent management of the investment program to help reduce the Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) cost paid by the City and continue to invest these funds for ongoing benefit
- Continue to generate interest income from the City's short-term investments
- Continue to provide internship opportunities for local high school students in the financial services industry
- Manage the City's (including the Board of Education's) deferred compensation plans in a manner that broadens employee participation and maintains best in class governance, investment options and support services
- Continue to partner with the Human Resources Department to incorporate editorial content relating to financial literacy into their biweekly HR Beats employee newsletter to benefit City employees
- Continue to partner with Council President to organize a bilingual Financial Literacy Summit
- Continue to monitor COVID-19 related developments and leverage technology and workplace flexibility to maintain staff productivity and a safe work environment
- Continue to partner with Liberty Bank & CATIC to make home ownership more affordable for Hartford residents

**Internal Audit**

- Improve operational policies, procedures and controls to ensure compliance
- Identify cost savings and revenue enhancements
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations and functions through quality improvement
- Provide support and consulting services to management
- Inform management of, and minimize the potential for, fraud and other financial and operational risks and exposures





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## STRATEGIC PLAN COMMISSION

### Scope of Responsibilities

The Strategic Plan Commission shall serve in an advisory only capacity, advising the Board of Selectmen, and such other commissions, departments, and offices as the Board of Selectmen may require, as to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan Commission shall monitor the Town's progress concerning implementation of the Strategic Plan and update the Board of Selectmen accordingly, recommend changes to the Strategic Plan to the Board of Selectmen, advise and provide recommendations to the Board of Selectmen to facilitate implementation of the Strategic Plan, and engage in such other activities as may be directed by the Board of Selectmen from time to time.

As an advisory only body, the Strategic Plan Commission shall have no authority to directly implement the Strategic Plan and shall not and is not meant to replace the duties and responsibilities of any other Town commission, department, or office.