

**Town of Nelson
Budget Caucus
7:00 PM**

February 3, 2026

Executive Board Attending: Brenna Kucinski, Mike Blaudschun, Don Carlisle, Edie Drinkwater, Admin. Assist.

Others attending: Residents

Absent:

Brenna called the February 3, 2026 Budget Caucus to order at 7:06 PM.

Brenna read article #3 and proceeded to review all line items, noting and explaining any increases/decreases or new items and then moved to review each warrant article. Questions and comments were accepted throughout the review:

- Zoning code compliance, previously handled by W. Kassotis, will be done by M. Blaudschun and a stipend paid per event.
- Assessing increase due to a Reval year
- The Gravel Pit is now Paid in full as of 2025 and replaced by the lease purchase payment for the loader
- Anticipated cost of Government Buildings drew questions of funds not expended in 2025 but included in 2026
- While all buildings may have unexpected maintenance problems through the year it is known that the rear of the Safety Building needs repair but the extent of damage is unknown until the wall is opened and the damage fully exposed
- The roof of the cupola requires a lift to completely assess the damage – weathervane is falling off
- Residents requested a clearly defined plan for repairs and cost estimates
- Cemetery includes funding for new cemetery development
- The Munsonville Cemetery is now owned by the town along with associated expendable maintenance funds
- Police budget slightly down. W. Kassotis has retired- the Police Chief will take over most of the jobs Wayne was performing
- A used chipper was purchased last year replacing a very dangerous piece of equipment
- Backhoe and Loader cost will be down as these were both new last year
- The Peterbilt Highway truck is bringing great concern for the Road agent and Select Board. Repairs are extensive and as of this date the repairs are not complete and the final cost remains unknown.
- All trucking options will be under consideration for hauling gravel and plowing, including in-town & for hire
- Highway capital reserve fund increased to \$40,000 as truck replacement is eminent
- Bridge expendable trust is increased due to the urgent need to repair Bailey Brook Bridge (State Red Listed)

- Police revolving fund drew both questions and support. Some emphasized that details are on the officer's own time and not while on duty in town. Some voiced concern over use of the cruiser. Others noted this is a safety service that is needed to protect infrastructure work areas for the good of all.
- An additional Dry Hydrant for increased fire protection is planned for installation at Center Pond this year.
- Article by Petition to return police service to part-time or Sheriff's department drew a mix of questions, emotion, and support. Some presented interpretations of cost comparisons to other neighboring towns, others expressed that the level of need does not require full-time, others expressed personal struggle to pay taxes. Service from the Sheriff's department brought both positive and negative reviews. One resident called a full-time town police chief "An Investment in the Community".
- M. Blaudschun offered cost per assessed value for each department compared to the police department. The cost to a home owner is based on what you own. (your assessed value)
- An Article by Petition to fund Nelson school students to attend the Game of Village 2026 drew no discussion. This is a known and often supported article seen in previous years.

Meeting Adjourned 9:05 PM

Next regular meeting February 4, 2026 at 3:00 PM

Minutes for Budget Caucus - February 3, 2026

Brenna Kucinski, Chair

Michael Blaudschun, Selectman

Don Carlisle, Selectman