

At a Special meeting of the Town Council in and for the Town of Gloucester on May 4, 2026:

I. Call to Order

Councilor W. Steere called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members present: Stephanie L. Westgate; Cheryl A. Greathouse; Walter M. O. Steere, III, Vice- President;

Members absent: Jonathan E. Burlingame; William A. Worthy, Jr. President

Also Present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Christine Mathieu, Deputy Town Clerk; Elizabeth Beltram, Finance Director; Melissa Bouvier, Senior Center Director

III. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor W. Steere asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Executive Session Motion (R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1)) Motion to convene in Executive Session pursuant to **R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1)** for the purpose of:

- Discussion of the job performance and/or character of an individual, and
- Conducting an interview of a prospective employee (job applicant)

The individual(s) to be discussed/interviewed have been notified in advance in writing of the right to require that such discussion be held in open session.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we now need a motion to adjourn to closed executive session:

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to ADJOURN to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1) for the purpose of:

- Discussion of the job performance and/or character of an individual, and
- Conducting an interview of a prospective employee (job applicant)

The individual(s) to be discussed/interviewed have been notified in advance in writing of the right to require that such discussion be held in open session.

Seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Councilor W. Steere asked the Clerk to call the roll:

Councilor Westgate- Aye
Councilor Greathouse- Aye
Councilor Steere- Aye

Discussion: None

MOTION PASSED

All were asked to leave the room and told they could return once executive session had ended.

Executive Session

V. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes taken in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

Motion made in open session

All were invited back into chambers after Executive Session

OPEN MEETING 7:00 P.M.

VI. Reconvene Open Session - Disclosure of votes taken in Executive Session & Consideration of the Sealing of Minutes - Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to RECONVENE Open Session – Disclose zero (0) votes were taken in Executive Session & to Seal the Minutes of Closed Executive Session; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Town Council Discussion and/or Action

A. Amendments, Additions, Changes to proposed FY 2026/2027 budget – Councilor W. Steere stated that at the last meeting to discuss changes to the budget, on April 27, 2026, decreases and increases were voted by Town Council. Councilor W. Steere stated that there were two decisions tabled, and after those items are decided, Council can consider any other final changes to the budget.

1. Bldg/Zoning Official Salary Increase

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to add to the budget line item under Building/Zoning Official, Salaries/Wages/Fringe Benefits, Building/Zoning Official an increase of \$4,700 for a total of \$79, 947; to reflect salary increase; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

2. Councilor W. Steere stated that there was also a motion discussed regarding increasing the cleaning contract allocation by \$6,000 for the Senior Center, Other Purchased Services:

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to INCREASE Senior Center, Other Purchased Services, by \$6,000 to cover the increased cost of Senior Center cleaning contract, at contract renewal with current vendor; seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: Councilor S. Westgate asked if the other terms remained the same. Councilor W. Steere stated that the terms were the same. J. Fecteau, Town Clerk stated that the contract will still need to be approved by Council.

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

B. Adoption of FY2026/2027 Budget for the Financial Town
Referendum- Discussion and/or Action

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse to ADOPT the 2026/2027 budget presented at Public Hearing on April 20th, 2026, as amended by Town Council on April 27th and May 4th, 2026, for presentation to the voters at the Financial Town Referendum to be held on May 19th, 2026; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

C. Adoption of FY2026/2027 Ballot Questions for Financial Town
Referendum Discussion and/or Action

Councilor W. Steere stated that the final ballot questions for the Financial Town Referendum, to be held on May 19th, 2026, need to be adopted.

Councilor W. Steere stated that the Finance Director has included all changes made by Town Council motions.

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse as to the first ballot question:

Question #1: Shall the Town Budget for fiscal year 2026/27 appropriate a sum of \$ 35,744,211 which includes Municipal Services & Capital Expenses; Gloucester School Dept. Operating & Capital Expenses; Gloucester's share of the Foster/Glocester Regional Operating & Capital Expenses; and includes a Levy of Property Tax (not including Motor Vehicle taxes) not less than \$ 28,053,010 or more than \$ 28,103,010;

seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate as to the second ballot question:

Question #2: Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of \$25,000 from the surplus for a restricted reserve fund titled “Town Hall Building, Future Maintenance”?

This appropriation will come from surplus and will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes;

seconded by Councilor C. Greathouse

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor C. Greathouse as to the third ballot question:

Question #3: Shall the Town Budget include an appropriation of \$25,000 from the surplus for a restricted reserve fund titled “Paving”?

This appropriation will come from surplus and will not increase the amount to be raised by taxes;

seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere
NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED

Councilor W. Steere stated that the budget is right up against the 4 percent cap. Councilor W. Steere stated his thanks to the Budget Board, Town Council and everyone who had a part in putting together this budget. Councilor W. Steere stated he hopes this budget passes because if it doesn't

then cuts will need to be made to the school and the town. Councilor W. Steere stated that he hopes all will come out to support the budget on May 19, 2026.

Councilor W. Steere asked if anyone would like to speak before Council adjourns.

1. E. MacPhee, art teacher, stated her opinion as to the potential impact that may occur if cuts are made at the schools as to teachers, teaching assistants and programs.

Councilor W. Steere stated he appreciates the sentiments and all teachers but the Council does not control the school budget as to allocations. Councilor C. Greathouse asked if cuts have been made to the school budget. E. Beltram, Finance Director stated that is still a work in progress. Councilor C. Greathouse stated that she has some suggestions for the school. E. Beltram suggested that she send that list to the school committee.

No Action taken

2. J. Whitford, stated that his opinion that the proposed school budget shows a \$500,000 decrease. Councilor W. Steere stated that the school budget shows a 1 percent increase and not a decrease. E. Beltram stated that the school asked for over a 7% increase so the decrease is shown as to that requested increase.

J. Whitford stated that the school is currently in a deficit and that deficit will continue with the 1% increase. Councilor W. Steere asked how the deficit will continue if the school is receiving more money. Councilor W. Steere stated that if the school is overspending then that is a different issue.

J. Whitford stated his opinion that this problem will continue and stated his opinion that ways need to be found to help get the school out of a deficit.

Councilor W. Steere stated that the school committee handles their own budget and their own finances.

J. Whitford stated his opinion as to the effect if cuts were made to teachers and programs.

No Action taken

3. A. Ferreira, School Comm. member, stated her opinions as to the types of issues between the school and the town and avenues to address those issues. A. Ferreira stated that there are 3 bills being heard at the General Assembly on Thursday, May 6 related to transportation and state aid which are financial issues in the school budget. A. Ferreira encouraged others to submit testimony.

No Action taken

4. D. Steere, resident, stated his opinion that there are things in the budget that he is not happy with and gave the examples of the animal control officer and the building inspector getting raises. D. Steere stated that Council has a tough job because they have to work with the 4 percent cap. D. Steere stated a suggestion for the school to look at their budget and see where they can cut.

No Action taken

VIII. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor S. Westgate to ADJOURN at 7:39 P.M.; seconded by Councilor S. Westgate

Discussion: None

VOTE: AYES- Westgate, Greathouse, Steere

NAYS-0

MOTION PASSED