

HB 1526 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2679
09/08

HOUSE BILL **1526**

AN ACT relative to the adopting of a municipal budget committee and electing members thereof.

SPONSORS: Rep. Wherry, Hills. 13; Rep. Pauer, Hills. 36; Rep. Burnham, Straf. 2; Rep. Wood, Merr. 13; Rep. Sellers, Graf. 10; Rep. Freeman, Belk. 8; Rep. Mary Murphy, Hills. 27; Rep. DeRoy, Straf. 3; Rep. Tom Mannion, Hills. 1

COMMITTEE: Municipal and County Government

ANALYSIS

This bill:

I. Modifies the procedure for adopting, rescinding, and electing a municipal budget committee.

II. Modifies the time frame for the appointment of initial members of a cooperative school district budget committee.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in **bold italics**.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT relative to the adopting of a municipal budget committee and electing members thereof.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Municipal Budget Law; Budget Committee. RSA 32:14, III is repealed and reenacted to read
2 as follows:

3 III. Voting shall be by official ballot unless the town has not adopted the official ballot, in
4 which case the clerk shall cause the same question to be printed upon special ballots which shall be
5 used to determine the vote of the town at the annual meeting.

6 (a) If budget committee members-at-large are to be appointed by the moderator
7 pursuant to RSA 32:15, II, the wording of the question shall be: "To assist voters in the prudent
8 appropriation of public funds, shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a budget
9 committee consisting of (number) members-at-large who are appointed by the moderator?"

10 (b) If budget committee members-at-large are to be elected with initial members-at-large
11 appointed to one year terms by the moderator pursuant to RSA 32:15, III, the wording of the
12 question shall be: "To assist voters in the prudent appropriation of public funds, shall we adopt the
13 provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a budget committee consisting of (number) members-at-large
14 who are elected, with the initial members appointed to one-year terms by the moderator?"

15 (c) Except for a town or district that uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA
16 40:13 or under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, if budget committee members-at-large are
17 to be elected with initial members-at-large elected to one-year terms pursuant to RSA 32:15, III, the
18 wording of the question shall be as follows: "To assist voters in the prudent appropriation of public
19 funds, shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a budget committee consisting of
20 (number) members-at-large who are elected, with the initial members elected to one-year terms by
21 the meeting?"

22 2 Municipal Budget Law; Adoption. Amend RSA 32:14, V to read as follows:

23 V. A town or district which has adopted this subdivision may rescind its adoption in the
24 manner described in paragraphs II and III, ***except that the wording of the question shall be:***
25 ***"Shall we rescind the provisions of RSA 32:14, eliminating the budget committee so that the***
26 ***governing body assumes all budgetary responsibilities for the prudent appropriation of***
27 ***public funds?"***.

28 3 Municipal Budget Law; Budget Committee Membership. Amend RSA 32:15, III-IV to read as
29 follows:

1 III. *If a town or district uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA 40:13 or*
 2 *under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, and the meeting decides members-at-large*
 3 *are to be elected, the meeting shall either elect the initial members-at-large for staggered*
 4 *terms as described in paragraph II at the next annual meeting, or shall authorize the*
 5 *moderator to appoint members-at-large to serve a one-year term until the next annual*
 6 *meeting, as provided in RSA 669:17. Otherwise, if the meeting decides members-at-large are to*
 7 *be elected, the meeting shall either elect the initial members for one-year terms by means other than*
 8 *by official ballot, or shall authorize the moderator to appoint members to serve until the next annual*
 9 *meeting, as provided in RSA 669:17. Elections for staggered terms, as described in paragraph II,*
 10 *shall not begin until that next annual meeting, and shall be by official ballot if the municipality has*
 11 *adopted the official ballot system, as set forth in RSA 669 or RSA 671.*

12 IV. A town or district which has adopted this subdivision may vote at any subsequent
 13 annual meeting to change the number or manner of selection of its members-at-large. No such
 14 change shall take effect until the annual meeting following the meeting at which the change was
 15 adopted. *Currently elected or appointed members-at-large shall continue to serve until the*
 16 *end of their current term.*

17 (a) *To change the number of members-at-large, the wording of the question*
 18 *shall be: "Shall we change the number of budget committee members-at-large from*
 19 *(number) to (number)?"*

20 (b) *To change the manner of selection of members-at-large, the wording of the*
 21 *question shall be: "Shall we change the manner of selection of budget committee members-*
 22 *at-large from ("appointed by moderator" or "elected by voters") to ("elected by voters" or*
 23 *"appointed by moderator")?"*

24 4 Cooperative School Districts; Budget Committee. Amend RSA 195:12-a, I to read as follows:

25 I. A cooperative school district at an annual meeting, under a proper article in the warrant,
 26 may vote to establish a budget committee pursuant to RSA 32:14 and may rescind such action in a
 27 like manner. The budget committee shall have the same number of members as the cooperative
 28 district school board plus one additional member from the school board as provided in this
 29 paragraph. The terms of office and manner of election of members shall be determined in the same
 30 manner as for the cooperative school board. Whenever it is voted to establish a budget committee,
 31 the moderator in the first instance shall appoint the members of the budget committee, except for
 32 the additional member appointed from the school board, within [~~15~~] 30 days of the vote establishing
 33 the committee. The members appointed by the moderator shall serve until the next annual meeting
 34 when the meeting shall elect their successors. No member of the cooperative school board shall be
 35 appointed or elected to the budget committee except that the chairperson of the cooperative school
 36 board shall appoint a member of the board to serve on the budget committee in an ex-officio, non-
 37 voting capacity. After appointment or election the budget committee shall promptly organize and

HB 1526 - AS INTRODUCED

- Page 3 -

1 choose a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The secretary shall keep records of the
2 proceedings of the budget committee, which shall be public records open to public inspection.

3 5 Repeal. RSA 32:14, IV, relative to procedure if the vote is favorable, is repealed.

4 6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.