

HB 1526 - AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

12Mar2026... 0694h

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

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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.

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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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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 RSA 32:14, III is repealed and reenacted to read  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, and ballots shall be accepted by the  
6 moderator for a period of not less than one hour following the completion of discussion on the  
7 question.

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

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

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

24           (d) For a town or district that uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA 40:13 or  
25 under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, if budget committee members-at-large are to be  
26 elected with initial members-at-large elected to staggered terms at the next annual meeting  
27 pursuant to RSA 32:15, III, the wording of the question shall be as follows: "To assist voters in the  
28 prudent appropriation of public funds, shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:14 to establish a  
29 budget committee consisting of (number) members-at-large who are elected, with initial members  
30 elected at the next annual meeting?"

1           2 Municipal Budget Law; Adoption. Amend RSA 32:14, V to read as follows:

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

7           3 Municipal Budget Law; Budget Committee Membership. Amend RSA 32:15, III-IV to read as  
8 follows:

9           III. *If a town or district uses an official ballot form of meeting under RSA 40:13 or*  
10 *under a charter adopted pursuant to RSA 49-D, and the meeting decides members-at-large*  
11 *are to be elected, the meeting shall either elect the initial members-at-large for staggered*  
12 *terms as described in paragraph II at the next annual meeting, or shall authorize the*  
13 *moderator to appoint members-at-large to serve a one-year term until the next annual*  
14 *meeting, as provided in RSA 669:17. Otherwise, if the meeting decides members-at-large are to*  
15 *be elected, the meeting shall either elect the initial members for one-year terms by means other than*  
16 *by official ballot, or shall authorize the moderator to appoint members to serve until the next annual*  
17 *meeting, as provided in RSA 669:17. Elections for staggered terms, as described in paragraph II,*  
18 *shall not begin until that next annual meeting, and shall be by official ballot if the municipality has*  
19 *adopted the official ballot system, as set forth in RSA 669 or RSA 671. A budget committee shall*  
20 *be deemed duly constituted and able to conduct business once a quorum of its elected or*  
21 *appointed members-at-large have been sworn into office.*

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

27           (a) *To change the number of members-at-large, the wording of the question*  
28 *shall be: “Shall we change the number of budget committee members-at-large from*  
29 *(number) to (number)?”*

30           (b) *To change the manner of selection of members-at-large, the wording of the*  
31 *question shall be: “Shall we change the manner of selection of budget committee members-*  
32 *at-large from (“appointed by moderator” or “elected by voters”) to (“elected by voters” or*  
33 *“appointed by moderator”)?”*

34           4 Cooperative School Districts; Budget Committee. Amend RSA 195:12-a, I to read as follows:

35           I. A cooperative school district at an annual meeting, under a proper article in the warrant,  
36 may vote to establish a budget committee pursuant to RSA 32:14 and may rescind such action in a  
37 like manner. The budget committee shall have the same number of members as the cooperative

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1 district school board plus one additional member from the school board as provided in this  
2 paragraph. The terms of office and manner of election of members shall be determined in the same  
3 manner as for the cooperative school board. Whenever it is voted to establish a budget committee,  
4 the moderator in the first instance shall appoint the members of the budget committee, except for  
5 the additional member appointed from the school board, within ~~[15]~~ **30** days of the vote establishing  
6 the committee. The members appointed by the moderator shall serve until the next annual meeting  
7 when the meeting shall elect their successors. No member of the cooperative school board shall be  
8 appointed or elected to the budget committee except that the chairperson of the cooperative school  
9 board shall appoint a member of the board to serve on the budget committee in an ex-officio, non-  
10 voting capacity. After appointment or election the budget committee shall promptly organize and  
11 choose a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The secretary shall keep records of the  
12 proceedings of the budget committee, which shall be public records open to public inspection.

13       5 Repeal. RSA 32:14, IV, relative to procedure if the vote is favorable, is repealed.

14       6 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.