

Town of Meredith

Town Manager's Office

41 Main Street, Meredith, New Hampshire 03253

Tel: (603) 677- 4205 • Email: TownManager@meredithnh.gov

Website: www.meredithnh.gov

October 27, 2025

To: The Honorable Meredith Selectboard

From: Judie Milner, Town Manager

Subject: Submission of the Proposed 2026 Budget

Honorable Board Members,

It is my honor to present to you the proposed FY2026 Meredith Budget. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the management team, various committees, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee, and Director Carpenter for their dedication and hard work in developing this comprehensive proposal.

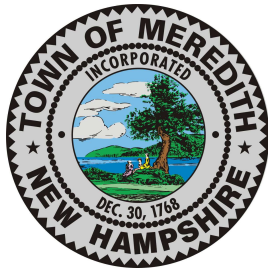
While we continue to advance several long-term planning initiatives—including the Master Plan, Vision and Mission Statements, Strategic Goals, and Capital Improvement Plan—Meredith has reached a point where we can confidently establish key priorities to guide this budget process.

This budget focuses on three priority areas:

1. Becoming a Premier Employer
2. Balancing the Community
3. Funding Our Long-Term Needs

1. Becoming a Premier Employer

To continue providing high-quality services to residents and businesses, Meredith must attract and retain skilled, dedicated employees. Becoming a premier employer ensures that we maintain an efficient, forward-thinking organization capable of meeting community needs and managing service delivery risks.



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This budget funds a comprehensive pay and classification study to evaluate all positions based on actual job duties, compare them to similar roles in both the public and private sectors, and assess benefit packages. The FY2026 budget maintains the current employee benefit structure—health, dental, disability, and life insurance—without changes to coverage or cost-sharing arrangements.

2. Balancing the Community

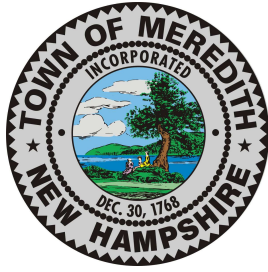
A balanced community depends on proactive economic development that promotes diverse, sustainable growth while preserving Meredith's character and natural beauty. Diversifying our economic base reduces risk and strengthens the tax foundation that supports essential services.

This budget includes funding to restructure the Community Development Department into a Planning & Development Department, ensuring compliance with statutory functions while enhancing its capacity to support Meredith's economic vitality. Additionally, the Town Manager's Office will assume a leadership role in economic development, with the assistance of a consultant to guide strategy and implementation.

3. Funding Our Long-Term Needs

This year, the Meredith Management Team and the Capital Improvements Committee worked collaboratively to develop a multi-year, comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). While the plan will continue to evolve, it provides the clearest picture yet of Meredith's long-term capital needs. I extend my appreciation to all who contributed to this outstanding effort.

The proposed budget includes increased funding for capital projects across multiple budget lines. The road maintenance budget has been increased to \$1.3 million, aligning with the findings of the 2025 Roads Assessment Study. This figure represents roughly half the difference between the 2025 appropriation and the study's recommended annual investment of approximately \$1.5 million.



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Certain roads identified for replacement are tied to upcoming infrastructure projects currently in design and will be addressed in coordination with those efforts. This phased approach allows us to achieve the recommended funding level within two years, rather than placing the full burden on taxpayers in a single cycle. Other capital improvements are similarly prioritized in this budget to bring overall capital spending closer to the levels outlined in the plan.

Conclusion

With these priorities, the proposed 2026 budget represents a 5.59% increase over 2025. Detailed budget presentations will be provided in November, followed by discussion and Board recommendations in December.

I look forward to working closely with the Board to finalize a responsible and forward-looking budget that reflects our shared vision for Meredith's future—one that meets today's needs while preparing for tomorrow's opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

Judie Milner,
Meredith Town Manager