

BUDGET TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2026 9:30 - 11:00 am

Hybrid: In-person at the Community Health Institute/JSI and virtually on Zoom

Attendance

Name	Attendance
Task Force Members	
Traci Fowler (Co-Chair)	In person
Shannon Swett (Co-Chair)	In person
John Burns	Absent
Alissa Cannon	Zoom
Karen Collins	Absent
Kate Frey	In person
Lauren McGinley	In person
Jen Lessard (Cheryle Pacapelli proxy)	Zoom
Kristine Paquette	In person
Sarah Shanahan	In person
Public	
Matt McKenney, Governor's Commission member	In person
Kourtney Soucy	Zoom
Abigail Shockley	Zoom
Dianne Castrucci	Zoom
Elyssa Sage	Zoom
Liaison(s)/ Subject Matter Experts/ Invited Guests	
Jill Burke (DHHS)	In person
Elizabeth Biron (DHHS)	Zoom
Center for Excellence on Addiction/JSI Staff	
Amy Daniels, Olivia DiGeronimo	In person
Julia Tran	Zoom

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Approve Minutes from 11/21/25 Meeting

Traci Fowler made a motion to approve the November minutes as written; Kate Frey first, Lauren McGinley seconded. All in favor, no abstentions.

BDAS Updates on SFY27 Budget Planning

Since receiving input from the Task Force at the November meeting, the Budget co-chairs have revised and presented the [FY27 Recommendations memo](#) to the Governor's Commission at the December Commission meeting. The recommendations were approved, and BDAS confirmed that these recommendations will serve as a guide and that they will report their progress on them moving forward.

Jill Burke provided an update on the status of BDAS contracts. The majority of current contracts will go out to the RFP process in March, and proposals will be due in May. For a majority of them, legacy programs will be able to re-bid, with exceptions to contracts to provide training, technical assistance, and evaluation services. The Task Force expressed concerns that if RFP decisions are not made by July or earlier, programs will need contingency plans to avoid the harmful impacts of disrupting services.

BDAS is closely monitoring the RFP process to avoid potential lapse in services. Members of the Task Force wondered if retroactive funding is possible, and if BDAS can stagger the RFPs. Individuals, not as members of the Task Force, can always reach out to the Governor's Office (Contact Chief Paul Dean) or Executive Counselors to provide education on the risk involved with not allowing retroactive contracts with such a tight timeline, especially with all of the contracts following a simultaneous, competitive bid process.

As a Budget Task Force, members discussed possibly making a recommendation in a formal letter to the Chair Annette Escalante that the Commission review this issue. Sarah S. made a motion that the co-chairs of the Budget TF have a conversation with Annette and potentially follow up with a memo expressing the Task Force's procurement process going forward. Kate Frey first, Lauren McGinley second. All in favor.

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The Task Force also discussed recommendations three and five from the memo and how these responsibilities should be operationalized. Recommendation 3 focuses on monitoring the unintended consequences of the "revenue swap," while recommendation 5 is related to reducing excessive administrative and contracting burdens. Members requested a clearer understanding of "monitoring," and an action item is to ask the Chair about a procedural plan for recommendations.

Legislative Updates

Last week's events of SAMHSA's funding termination and reversal showed a need to have crisis funding in reserve. The Alcohol Fund had served as a source of flexible funding. Additionally, there are no updates on gambling dollars. The Chair is planning to establish a Task Force on problem gambling.

Review of Governor's Commission Statute

Amy Daniels presented Governor's Commission statute RSA 12-J to prime a discussion on the Budget Task Force's role and responsibilities for 2026. As a reminder, Task Forces are intended to serve in an advisory capacity. The Commission Chair is allowed to create task forces as appropriate and appoint task force chairs.

Discussion of 2026 Goals

For the remainder of this year, the Budget Task Force intends to provide input on strategic planning and annual reporting. All members agreed that the Budget Task Force is necessary. The Task Force provides structure, a process, and a network to keep the Commission informed. A member of the Task Force reflected that this task force has worked well together, understanding each other's needs and supporting each other's work to better serve different communities throughout New Hampshire.

For the next 1-2 years, the Task Force discussed possible activities, including taking a comprehensive look at all funding sources at the federal, state, and local level, and compiling that information to inform the Commission and strategic planning. This work can build off the [Funding Crosswalk](#), which demonstrates how funding is braided. The

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Task Force also proposed working more closely together with the other task forces and thinking about contingency planning.

Members also discussed the possible structure of Task Force meetings and whether to consider workgroups rather than full Task Force meetings in the future. This answer is dependent on whether technical assistance will be provided. No matter what form, work will need to be done outside of meetings to support strategic planning and its associated deliverables.

Public Comment & Adjourn

Dianne Castrucci commented that it is reassuring to hear where the Budget Task Force's values and priorities lie. Elyssa Sage asked if vendors whose contracts are going out in March have been notified. Jill confirmed that current contractors have been notified that their contracts are going to RFP. Matt McKenney reiterated that the Task Force does not have to start from scratch to develop a new Strategic Plan. In the short term, Task Forces can discuss the state's progress on parts of the plan. Matt also noted a trend of large organizations applying for smaller scale contracts because of changes in the federal funding landscape. Since New Hampshire's network of services is unique from many other states, it is important to have an understanding of in-state services; in-state organizations already have that expertise.

After public comment was completed, Kristine Paquette moved to adjourn. Lauren McGinley seconded, all in favor.

Decisions/Recommendations Made

1. The Task Force approved the minutes from the November 21st Task Force meeting.
2. The Task Force voted to have the co-chairs discuss their procurement process with Annette Escalante and to potentially follow up with a memo.

Next Steps

- The next Budget Task Force meeting will take place on Friday, March 27th, at 9:30 am.