

**ENDWELL FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
2027 BUDGET WORK SESSION
JULY 28, 2026**

Commissioners Present:

James Arnold, Chairman
Gary Leighton
Matthew Cook
Scott Costello
Muhammed Mujic

Others Present:

Michelle Pandich, Fire Company 1st Vice President
Denny Sullivan, Fire Company Trustee
William Frantz, 2nd Assistant Chief

District Officials Present:

Erika Pereira, District Secretary
Matthew Grafton, Fire Chief
Jennifer Loup, District Treasurer
Ronald Materese, District Deputy Treasurer

Chairman Arnold called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Board convened for the purpose of beginning its detailed review and development of the Endwell Fire District's proposed 2027 operating budget and reviewing the District's anticipated revenues, expenditures, fund balances, capital reserve planning, tax levy limitations, and other financial matters affecting the 2027 fiscal year.

The Board and District Treasurer reviewed the preliminary 2027 Budget Worksheet and supporting financial information.

Discussion was held regarding the planning and development of the 2027 budget. The Board reviewed the District and Department budget lines and discussed anticipated increases, decreases, and known costs for 2027. The Board reviewed each 2027 line item and compared the 2026 budget with current expenditures and projected needs to develop proposed budget amounts for each line.

The draft budget was developed with the goal of remaining within the 2% allowable levy growth factor. Yellow-highlighted items on the budget worksheet represented costs identified during the work session as fixed or amounts the Board did not anticipate changing, including Capital Reserve funding, the Training Tower budget line, and Debt Service Principal and Interest payments.

Significant District budget items discussed and reflected in the working budget included:

- Electric increased from \$25,000.00 to \$35,000.00; gas increased from \$13,000.00 to \$14,000.00; water increased from \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00; and telephone increased from \$22,000.00 to \$24,000.00.
- Professional Services increased from \$26,000.00 to \$34,000.00; payroll increased from \$70,000.00 to \$83,200.00; and Member Physicals increased from \$28,000.00 to \$41,000.00.
- Workers Compensation Insurance decreased from \$50,000.00 to \$40,000.00, and the Inspection Dinner budget decreased from \$22,000.00 to \$15,000.00.

- Capital Improvements remained budgeted at \$140,000.00, Technology increased from \$43,000.00 to \$45,000.00, and District Equipment Purchases increased from \$41,000.00 to \$42,000.00.
- District Treasurer Jennifer Loup advised the Board that, according to the Fire Service Secretary and Treasurer Manual, the contingency appropriation may be budgeted at approximately 10% of the applicable budget amount, which would be approximately \$148,410.00. She noted that this is a recommendation and not a requirement but wanted to bring it to the Board's attention, as the District has budgeted approximately \$40,000.00 for contingency in each of the past five years. The Board discussed the appropriate contingency amount for the 2027 budget and agreed to budget \$50,000.00. The Board determined that increasing the contingency appropriation to \$148,410.00 would result in an estimated tax levy increase of approximately 10.2%, while the Board's goal is to keep the 2027 tax levy increase at or near 2.0%.
- The Department budget was also reviewed. Turnout Gear was reduced from \$65,000.00 to \$60,000.00; diesel fuel and gasoline were each increased from \$9,000.00 to \$10,000.00; Training Seminars increased from \$5,000.00 to \$6,000.00; and Fire Meals increased from \$3,500.00 to \$4,000.00.

The Board discussed capital improvement projects and equipment purchases anticipated for 2027 and future years.

- Capital Improvement Projects were discussed.
 - The Board continued its discussion regarding the proposed replacement of Station 3, which had been reviewed in detail at the July 15, 2026 Special Meeting. The Board discussed the project in connection with the development of the 2027 budget and the District's long-term financial planning. The current project information includes an estimated construction cost of \$2.3 million and a professional architectural and engineering services proposal from Delta Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors & Landscape Architects, DPC, totaling \$291,500.00. The Board discussed the financial impact of the project and the need to determine an appropriate method of financing, with bonding anticipated as a potential funding source. District Counsel will be contacted regarding the legal and procedural requirements associated with financing and proceeding with the Station 3 replacement project. The Board also discussed obtaining information from Delta regarding the anticipated billing schedule for its professional services to assist the District in determining when project-related expenditures will need to be budgeted.
 - The Board discussed HVAC system inefficiencies and potential future upgrades. The Training Room HVAC system requires attention to improve temperature control. Commissioner Costello will research potential HVAC system improvements to enhance building efficiency.
 - The apparatus floor at Station 1 still needs attention.

The 2027 bond payment is \$181,725.00, consisting of \$150,000.00 in principal and \$31,725.00 in interest.

The estimated PILOT payment amount for 2027 has not yet been received from the Town of Union.

The real property tax cap allowable levy growth factor was set at 2% for calendar-year local

governments, including Fire Districts, for 2027. The Board also reviewed the Endwell Fire District tax base growth factor of 1.0008.

The Board discussed potentially declaring Utility 31-2, the 1998 Chevrolet pickup, surplus due to excessive repair costs. The Board also discussed plans to auction the former Chief's vehicle and other surplus equipment.

The Board discussed the District's Incentive Program and the potential financial impact of increasing the value paid per point. There are currently 2,546 incentive points earned among eligible members. At the current rate of \$15.00 per point, the total potential cost would be \$38,190.00. Increasing the value to \$25.00 per point would result in a potential cost of \$63,650.00, while increasing the value to \$30.00 per point would result in a potential cost of \$76,380.00. The District does not budget the full potential cost of the Incentive Program but has generally attempted to maintain funding equal to at least one-half of the potential obligation. After discussion, the Board agreed to maintain the incentive value at \$15.00 per point for 2027. The Board expressed intent to evaluate a phased increase in the point value over the next two budget cycles, subject to the District's financial condition, tax levy limitations, and anticipated costs associated with constructing the new Station 3. The Board agreed to fund the 2027 Incentive Program budget line at \$18,000.00 in an effort to keep the overall 2027 tax levy increase at or near 2.0%.

The board briefly discussed funding for the apparatus and equipment capital reserve fund, as well as the timeline for purchasing equipment and apparatus. The budgeted amount to be transferred into the capital reserve in 2027 is \$296,575.00. For any vehicle sales, proceeds should be transferred immediately to the apparatus capital reserve fund in accordance with the established capital reserve schedule. Additionally, a minimum transfer of \$60,000.00 in unallocated funds should be made at year-end. Jennifer Loup will recommend transfer amounts for the December meeting. The Board will further discuss funding for the capital reserve at the next budget work session.

District Treasurer Jennifer Loup and District Secretary Erika Pereira will continue updating the budget worksheets based upon the Board's discussion and additional financial information received.

The working 2027 budget totals \$1,493,220.00, consisting of \$1,253,520.00 for the District budget and \$239,700.00 for the Department budget. These amounts remain subject to further review and revision during the budget process.

The Board discussed damage to the Brusk truck (B31) resulting from debris ingestion. Depending upon the final cost of repairs, the District may submit an insurance claim for the damage.

Motion by Commissioner Costello, seconded by Commissioner Cook, to enter into Executive Session at 7:33 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. All in favor, aye; opposed, none. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Costello, seconded by Commissioner Cook, to adjourn executive session and return to the Budget Work Session at 8:13 p.m. with no action taken. All in favor, aye; opposed, none. Motion carried.

The next Budget Work Session is scheduled for August 19, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business to discuss, motion by Commissioner Costello, seconded by Commissioner Cook, to adjourn the 2027 Budget Work Session. All in favor, aye; opposed, none. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erika Pereira". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Erika Pereira
Fire District Secretary