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Searching for cost savings

By **Katie Liesener**/ Staff Writer
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Concluding nine months of discussion on ways to tighten Wayland's belt, the Ad Hoc Budget Advisory Committee appeared before the Board of Selectmen last week to suggest upwards of \$1 million worth of cost-saving measures to chip away at the town's projected \$3.3 million fiscal 2007 shortfall and mitigate another financial nightmare in the future.

The committee, which member selectmen Chairman Michael Tichnor called the first "in recent years," recommended, among other things, that the town increase school lunch prices by 60 cents, start charging for school rentals, close the town pool, conduct energy audits of town and school buildings, take a town volunteer off of health insurance, redistrict the elementary schools to eliminate two to four teaching positions, and defer \$300,000 in debt payments.

The committee also suggested moving retired employees from active health insurance plans to Medicare Part B and Medicare supplemental plans. The change, which the committee estimates would save the town \$200,000 to \$300,000 over the long term, would require a vote at Town Meeting.

Though these are only suggestions, Tichnor said, "The Board of Selectmen will do anything we can to implement them and keep them moving ahead."

Some of the suggestions are already under way, such as more aggressive collection of unpaid taxes. At the selectmen's meeting, Town Administrator Fred Turkington reported the town had collected \$115,000 in back taxes in the past four months.

Other suggestions will be left to the appropriate boards and administrators to decide whether or not to implement.

In its quest to save money, the committee hit some dead ends along the way, finding, for example, that the town's part-time jobs are too dissimilar to be combined.

Other potential cost-saving areas, committee members said, remain ambiguous and will require further research. But those areas will no longer be explored by the committee, which was dissolved at its own request.

Selectman Bill Whitney was not convinced the committee should be retired completely. [\[continue\]](#)

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