

Budgetary Transfers in Statutory Towns

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Issue

In a municipality without a charter or board of finance, can the first selectperson reallocate funds in an adopted budget from one line item or department to another?

The Office of Legislative Research is not authorized to provide legal opinions and this report should not be considered one.

Summary

For municipalities without either a charter or board of finance, the law does not specify the process for making budgetary transfers between line items or departments. While the law does not specifically prohibit the first selectperson from changing budgeted appropriations, it appears that authority to do so likely lies with the board of selectmen.

For the aforementioned towns, the board of selectmen is the budget making authority ([CGS § 7-381](#)). The board of selectmen is responsible for making the annual budget (subject to the town meeting's approval), sending out supplemental tax bills to cover deficits, and approving the treasurer's payments ([CGS §§ 7-12](#), [7-83](#), [12-122](#) & [12-123](#)). The law does not give the first selectperson authority to exercise these powers independently ([CGS § 7-12a](#)).

(For municipalities with a board of finance, the law specifies the process for supplemental appropriations to a town department. Generally, the law requires the board of finance to approve supplemental appropriations. Depending on the amount needed and previous requests by the same department, the appropriation may additionally need the town meeting's approval ([CGS § 7-348](#)).)

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