

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes - Approved

November 15, 2023

Meeting called to Order: 6:35pm

Attendance:

- Members and Staff Present: Ed Sims, Andy Tolman, Ellen Jane Schneiter, Marty Hanish, Eric Dyer
- Members and Staff Absent: Christine Sammons (excused), Anjelica Pitman (excused), Teresa Shaw (excused)
- Members of the Public / Invited Participants: None.

Communications:

- None.

Election of Officers:

- Motion to appoint Andy as Chair made by Ellen and seconded by Marty - Unanimous
- Motion to appoint Marty as Vice-chair made by Ellen and seconded by Ed - Unanimous
- Motion to appoint Ellen as Secretary made by Andy and seconded by Ed - Unanimous

Old Business:

- The Board will need to approve minutes from their last meeting in March / April at their next meeting.

New Business:

- The budget and warrant schedule were discussed with particular attention to changes made relative to past years, notable the addition of a new graphic calendar of Select Board, Budget Committee, and joint meetings; and the addition of a second informational Public Hearing.
- Select Board goals were discussed briefly and summarized as intending to finish projects that have been planned or started, focusing on open space and recreation, and minimizing mil-rate impacts.
- Budget Committee goals were discussed in detail. They included the following:
 - Detail capital projects to include their cost, timeframe, and funding sources; and further provide detailed timelines of when funding needs will arise for specific projects planned for the upcoming fiscal years.
 - Keep the mil rate impact to a minimum, recognizing that we smoothed impacts in the prior year through increased use of reserves.
 - Continue to manage reserve balances and encourage their use where appropriate.

- Carefully consider the Fairgrounds project following the development of a final plan, including review of revenues and expenses and ensuring that project construction makes no use of local tax dollars.
- Ensure that the budget reflects the fiscal resources needed to achieve the planned and approved needs of the Town.
- Provide additional notice and communication around Budget Committee meetings by using email notification, adding more public comment time, and ensuring Zoom participation is available.
- Promote constructive discussion between all participants in the Budget Process (staff, committee members, members of the public, and Select Board) by holding each other accountable when participants are unprepared or uninformed.
- Carefully consider the proposal for a new Community Programming Coordinator position by ensuring due diligence is completed and budget impacts are fully addressed.
- Work to ensure clarity around the revised chart of accounts and accounting system.
- Support the Select Board in considering and clearly presenting Capital Expenditure and Non-Profit Contribution warrant articles.

Other Business:

- A summary of “budget buster” items was requested, which should include items like large capital projects, potentially significant fee increases from third-party service providers, expenses and revenues with high amounts of uncertainty, etc.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:40pm

Draft minutes prepared by Eric Dyer on 11/16/2023, approved 01/24/2024