

Eliot Budget Committee
Minutes
July 10, 2012

Members – John Reed, Bill Jacques, Jeff Pelkey, Ed Strong; Rebecca Davis, Bob Fisher, Roland Fernald.

A significant number of residents, including Grant Hirst, Bob Pomerleau, Donna Murphy, Andy Dudek, Roseanne Adams and others who've become regular attendees, were seated in the audience.

The regular meeting of the budget committee, called by chairman John Reed following the June election, opened at the new time of 6 p.m.

Returning members congratulated newly or reelected members including Reed (-1 year); Davis, Fisher and Fernald (3 years).

Reed called for election of officers. Davis was nominated for chairman by Jacques, second by Strong. She was elected by a majority.

Reed was nominated and elected vice chair. As former chair, Reed turned the meeting over to Davis who quickly presented a number of agenda items for discussion. Jacques accepted the position of secretary.

Major discussions concerned the immediate need for an early start on the 2013-14 budget including a review of the success and failures the current budget year beginning July 1, 2012.

Former select chair Fernald was asked for and presented a thorough review of the Eliot budget committee, advisory to the select board. Budget Committee recommendations that may differ from the Selectmen's are now printed on the town warrant which why it is so critical that its differing recommendations reach the town clerk in a timely manner.

Eliot's committee is advisory, unlike many local towns, such as York where the budget committee has total and dominant control over the budget that actually goes to the voters.

There was also some considerable, discussion of returning to the procedure followed by some past budget committees, and remembered by some earlier members present, of reviewing department budgets at regular or special meetings of the committee rather than at joint meetings with selectmen as has become a recent practice.

Further discussion concerned the need for setting priorities, immediate attention to developing standard format for department heads to use in developing and presenting the five department budgets. It was suggested that the format presented for 2012 by Joel for

the transportation department worked well and might be a standard requested for all departments.

This will be determined at the next meeting July 24 to be requested, discussed and explained completely to department heads.

Other discussion concerned zero-based budgeting, the immediate need to set up a schedule of committee meetings and reviews with department heads, the probability of necessary special meetings of the committee.

Gathering a history of Eliot's municipal budgets was also discussed as a means of determining exactly what has been happening through the years. Every tax bill is printed with the % breakdown of municipal, county and school rates, although it appears residents really look at these.

For the current tax year, with property taxes increased for most residents at least as much as \$70. The 2012 % break is county 5%, town 30%, school 65%. This compares to 2002, which was 5%, 22%, 73%

In 10 years, despite definite resident thinking and committee discussion to the contrary, SAD 35 (STATE formula) is reduced 8% while town has gone up by 8%.

Discussion is expected to continue on July 24 about possible changes to the school district state formula since Eliot's smaller number of students was allowed to reduce Eliot's SAD35 budget favorably in 2003.

The need for more meetings and meetings in the larger room to accommodate the recently increased and appreciated resident interest was also discussed. The July 24 meeting and future regular meetings will be held in the big meeting room at the requested new time of 6 p.m.

Discussion also concerned the TIF sewer, significant questions that still remain and how to get answers to those questions for the committee and prior to the November elections with an early upcoming deadline.

Additional discussion concerned getting timely and necessary information on the previously missing auditor's management letter and a breakdown, never received, of the community service department.

Submitted,

William T. Jacques, Secretary