

**Joint Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop  
October 13, 2015; 6:30 PM**

**Minutes**

**Adopted 10-22-15**



*Attending: Chairman Steve Beckert, Vice Chairman Roland Fernald, Selectmen Rebecca Davis and Bob Pomerleau; Budget Committee Chair Donna Murphy, Budget Committee Members Denny Lentz, Jim Tessier, Ed Strong, Brad Hughes, Town Manager Dana Lee, Finance Director Becky Bergeron. Absent with Notice: Selectman Jack Murphy. Absent without Notice: Budget Committee Phil Lytle*

Chairman Beckert opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and took attendance. He asked the Town manager to walk the group through the discussion points.

The Town Manager first discussed the budget schedule. He noted that the schedule was some 30 days tighter than usual due to the addition of a Citizen's Option procedure that needed to be accommodated. He also noted the need for a "Reconciliation Meeting" after the Citizen's Option meeting.

Other scheduling ideas and concerns raised: Which budgets will be presented first? Discussion was on easier ones first, or harder (larger dollar) ones first. Ultimately, it was decided to present harder budgets first: 1 or 2 Public Work-based budgets, Administration, Capital Improvements, Police and Revenues first. At the second presentation meeting, the other budgets will be presented, allowing the PW Director to have time between his five budgets.

Following each Town Manager departmental presentations, questions would be formulated to be addressed when Dept. Heads attend.

The Town Manager then discussed what to expect in the Budget Books. He said the budget will be fully "gross budgeting" based, including all program expense and revenues from Community Service Department (Youth Bound and Kids Play). He noted that the CSD budget will look much larger – but so too will the revenue side. He re-iterated the importance of the revenue side of a gross budget.

The Town Manager also pointed out that there would be several "operating budgets," and a capital improvement budget to include additions to reserve accounts. The Town Manager noted that he and Finance worked hard to present a "master wage and benefit sheet." This was noted by most to be a great help and to continue to do so.

When he asked what other information may be sought or expected, the group discussed historical comparatives of budgets (14-15 Budget and Actual, 15-16 Budget and Year To Date, 16-17 Request) They also like supporting documentation for budget requests, and to have current financial account status reports. It was also asked to provide digital versions of the detailed

account status report. They may also want some audit pages and information regarding current and target fund balance and a history of local revenue losses due to State action.

Selectman Davis (and others) asked some questions about school finances, budgets, Form 279, etc. The Town Manager said he does not focus nor control such things.

With regard to the format of information to go to the voters, given the new referendum style voting, the group had several ideas, including having 3 or 4 sub categories for each article / budget request (wage/benefits, operating supplies, contractual...etc.) The group discussed a joint handout explaining differences in recommendations and possibly noting the vote count (e.g. 3 to 2 in favor). Selectman Pomerleau noted that the Ordinance defines the form of the ballot and sub-categories would not be permitted unless changed, but that on a joint BC / BOS mailer sub categories could be used.

Lastly, the group discussed overall allowable tax increases. Two Selectmen and virtually the entire Budget Committee supported no wage increases for non-union employees and no tax increase at all as expectations. The Town Manager said the projected LD1 additional allowable tax amount may be \$73,000.

Selectman Davis and Pomerleau (and several BC members) stated that their goal was to have an overall no-increase tax year, including the school budget.

The Finance Director expressed concern about the impact on those non-union employees and their sense of value. Chairman Murphy noted that no increase was not a reflection of the staff work or value.

Selectman Pomerleau spoke at length about no increases for recipients of Social Security and Medicaid, the CPI is 0%, and many people are fixed income and we should not have increases of any sort.

It was asked if the actual LD 1 number can be produced before the old "no sooner than December." The Town Manager said he felt sure we could tell that number well before December.

The Town Manager noted he will be unlikely to recommend much for Social Service and Outside Agencies. The group seemed to understand that was a low priority.

The group noted that we should remain non-personal, do our homework, stick to timeframes, listen to each other and be courteous. They thought having joint presentations to both groups would be helpful. They committed to getting questions to the Town Manager / Department Heads in a timely fashion so staff can respond in a timely fashion.

It was noted that any replacement pages need to be clearly dated and numbered.

Selectman Fernald made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM. This was seconded by Selectman Pomerleau and was so voted unanimously.