

**Town of Eliot
Budget Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 20, 2024**

1. ROLL CALL

In attendance in person were Jeff Leathe, Chair; Brad Swanson; Jim Latter; Gene Wypyski; and Donna Murphy, and remotely via zoom was Diane Holt, Secretary. Reggie Fowler, Vice Chair, was excused. The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

2. 10-MINUTE PUBLIC INPUT SESSION (Community Participation is Encouraged)

The Chair opened the floor to public input. There was no public input.

3. CONTINUED REVIEW of TOWN MANAGER'S FY2025 BUDGET

The Chair directed members to the worksheet he had provided them and asked members to review the numbers and fill in the columns. The Chair emphasized that he wants to ensure that the Budget Committee has the same number as the Town prior to voting on the numbers. Conversation was small scale as members used the meeting as a working meeting to review the budget line by line and compare and verify final numbers between Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025.

Members asked how they report their recommendations to the Select Board, particularly on the sewer numbers and LD1. Members discussed that the sewer costs are ratepayer funded, meaning only those residents who use the sewer system pay for the sewer system. Ms. Murphy said that even though those who incur sewer costs are a subgroup of taxpayers, they still are Town residents, and the Budget Committee has an obligation to them. She added that the Committee needs more information on how the Town came up with the sewer rate and reserve account. Mr. Swanson and Mr. Leathe asked Ms. Murphy if the Budget Committee has acted on the sewer in the past. Ms. Murphy answered that the Committee has voted to recommend or not recommend LD1. Mr. Leathe said he will speak with the Town Manager about LD1 and the Sewer Department.

Members discussed the format and procedure for voting. Ms. Murphy said the Committee votes on each article and not on line items. She added that funds cannot be moved from approved line item to approved line item but can be moved within the article if not approved as a line item. The Chair said there are two ways to approach voting: either the Chair can go to the Town Manager and ask how the Town Manager wants the Committee's vote or the Committee can act independently and vote on the numbers. He added that if the Committee agrees with the articles, then that is fine, but if the Committee does not agree with the articles, then it gets complicated.

The Chair noted that the 1.8% increase in the Town budget was very small and concerned him. He said the Committee should understand why the increase is only 1.8%. Members shared their opinions on the 1.8% increase and budget size in general.

The Chair asked the members how they wanted to approach their voting on the budget at the next meeting. Mr. Latter suggested voting department by department which means voting on 28 to 30 items. The Chair asked members to look through the departments prior to the next meeting so any questions or concerns can be hammered out quickly. Mr. Latter said he would like to see the articles as they will appear on the ballot so he may be clear as to what he is voting on.

4. BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBER INPUT: REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS AND/OR ANY OTHER COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS/QUESTIONS

There was no member input.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES

There was no review or vote on the minutes from the last meeting.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

8. SET AGENDA AND DATE FOR NEXT MEETING

- a. Continue FY25 Budget Review
- b. Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 @ 6:00pm

9. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Ms. Swanson moved, and Mr. Latter seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Leathe, Chair

Date Approved: March 27, 2024

Diane Holt, Secretary