

Joint Workshop
Eliot Select Board and Eliot Budget Committee
Revisions to Election / Referendum Town Meeting / Budgeting Processes
August 4th at 6:00 PM
Big Meeting Room, Town Hall

MINUTES

Attending: Selectman R. Davis, R. Fernald, J. Murphy and B. Pomerleau. Budget Committee members D. Murphy, B. Hughes, J. Tessier, E. Strong, D. Lentz. Also Town Manager Dana Lee and Finance Director Becky Bergeron.

Absent: Noah Lemire and Steve Furbish with Notice

Public: Grant Hirst

1. Roll Call: Chairman Davis opened the meeting and asked the Town Manager to present the issues. Each group had a quorum.
2. Presentation of Budget Process Improvement Ideas: The Town Manager read through the ideas and suggestions for an improved budget process, noting many similarities to staff recommendations (see attached). The Town manager then reviewed the ideas and suggestions sheet prepared by staff, noting the need for starting the process earlier, following the Charter and Referendum Town Meeting ordinance, and the importance of staying on budget schedule deadlines.

Several members of the Budget Committee expressed concern over a staff recommendation not to have digital copies of an unprotected master budget workbook being emailed around. Against staff recommendations, the unprotected master budget document will be made available to all who request it. The Town manager asked that no one ever email it back. The suggestions was made to 1) never email it back and 2) name the “public” copy something very different to avoid confusion.

The staff requested that both groups give us the COLA for wage adjustments up front because of any changes to said pay increase having significant work implications for the budget workbook and all the pages changing slightly. They agreed and the federal COLA amount was discussed as a benchmark (determined in November?)

Budget Committee members asked if they too could get revenue and expense reports monthly through budget season. Staff agreed.

The Town Manager then reviewed the draft Budget Calendar. D. Murphy suggested combining a couple of meetings early on and that was agreed to by all (combine proposed 9/15 meeting with 9/29 meeting and make it a joint workshop to hear departmental needs / issues and Removing a 10/11 meeting and rolling it into a joint workshop on 10/20 for part II of departmental presentations.

Also taken as a good suggestion was to have some sort of informational document prepared for the citizen Option Meeting with ballot questions, followed then by BC and SB recommendation(s) and why. The is document would likely be the “bones” to the final informational brochure that would be mailed to each house with both sets of recommendations on a ballot question – by ballot question format.

B. Pomerleau said that overall year one's roll out of this new process went well.

3. Adjourn: B. Pomerleau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm. This was seconded by J. Murphy and so voted unanimously.