

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 2016

PRESENT: Wendy Juchnevics-Freeman, Brian Somero, Paul Termin, David Lage, Joanne Meshna

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 at the Town Office.

Wendy made a motion to appoint Paul Chairman of the Committee. David seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Wendy made a motion to appoint Brian Vice Chairman of the Committee. David seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Wendy stated she would like to change the focus from not so much on what has been spent on the last couple of years but rather looking forward with the development of five year budgets, not one year budgets. Every year there is something that comes up that has to be done this year, it is not in the budget and was not planned for, not something known beforehand. Wendy found this frustrating. David noted the Department Heads are only required to put together a one year budget and that is all the Budget Committee can ask for. What Wendy is asking for is the Capital Improvement Plan which is being worked on at this time. Two members of the Planning Board, Deidre Daley and Bert Hamill, are working on it and when it is presented to the Planning Board Deidre has suggested inviting the Budget Committee to the presentation. Wendy further stated the Budget Committee cannot ask Department Heads to look at five year budgets and their priorities, but the Selectmen can. Paul stated the big ticket item in a budget is manpower. There should be a better way to manage manpower or manpower reductions than at a Budget Committee meeting stating they need to hire another person.

Paul agreed they should be looking at more than one year. Wendy questioned if the Selectmen would support a 5 year plan. David stated he would not and the purpose of the Budget Committee is to focus on the upcoming budget. If the Budget Committee wants to focus on a 5 year plan or go through the Capital Improvement Plan for strategic planning, they can but he did not want to have the Department Heads preparing a one year and five year budgets. Wendy added all she was trying to do was eliminate the one year spike in a budget line. David stated the Budget Committee should be focused on what the responsibility of the RSA states.

Wendy stated she was really frustrated. She came on to the Budget Committee and wanted to change the way the budget was put together. Zero based budgeting was discussed but never came close. David disagreed stating that is what departments do and they have backup supporting their budget. Staffing was discussed. Paul questioned if level staffing was required for 12 months or can departments get by with other types of staffing. David stated it is hard to get full time staff for departments. He stated the purpose of the Budget Committee according to the RSA is to review the budget handed down from the Selectmen. The operation of the department is reviewed by the Department Head and the Selectmen.

Wendy stated if the Budget Committee does not have a context for the budget being presented by the Selectmen perhaps the Budget Committee should approve 80% of it and then let the Town decide.

Wendy suggested next week's meeting be a review of revenue, property tax base, comparable towns, setting a tax rate and basing the budget on that. The Budget Committee would then give a target to the Board of Selectmen and the Selectmen can then work with the department heads. The Selectmen can then come back to the Budget Committee with what they can live with and what they cannot. David stated the tax rate should not be used to determine the Town budget, but it should be the costs for providing the services that are required, and that is what the Budget Committee should be working on. Wendy responded she would back into a total budget number based on revenues and tax base. Joanne will provide the estimated revenue and actual revenue and the MS-1 (property tax base).

Joanne distributed a list of important dates. She discussed scheduling of departments and the fact that three Mondays are holidays and the Ambulance and Library are being scheduled this year. Departments have been asked to have their budget and backup to her the Monday before the meeting. She moved the time of the meetings to 6:00 p.m. Wendy noted it would be hard for her to get here at that time. Joanne added the schedule is heavy because of time constraints and the addition of the Ambulance and Library. The meeting time was left at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Meshna, Town Administrator