

Budget Committee (BC) Meeting Minutes  
June 2, 2021

A. Call to Order

- Vice-Chair Bill Cole acting as chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

B Pledge of Allegiance

- Vice-Chair Bill Cole led the Pledge of allegiance

C Attendance

Vice-Chair Bill Cole, Bob Guessferd, Shawn Murray, Ted Trost, Kathy Leary, School Board Liaison Diana La Mothe, Board of Selectman Liaison Brett Gagnon, Finance Director Lisa Labrie, and Clerk Alejandro Urrutia.

Members not Present: Chairman Rich Weissgarber (excused) and Bob Clegg (excused)

D Interviews and appointment of open Budget Committee position

There were three applicants Hassan Goode, Grace Hopkins, and Normand Martin. Mr. Goode withdraws his application; Budget Committee members interviewed first to Mr. Martin and second to Ms. Hopkins. After listening to the answers and remarks of the candidates, the Budget Committee members voted as follows six votes for Ms. Hopkins and two for Mr. Martin. Grace Hopkins is appointed as a member of the Budget Committee until March 2022.

E Public Input

None

F Acceptance of minutes of April 7 and May 5 meetings

Mr. Guessferd made the motion to accept April 7, second by Selectman Gagnon the motion pass (5-0-0)

Mr. Murray made the motion to accept May 5 minutes, second by Mr. Guessferd the motion pass (5-0-0)

Both motions pass with minor corrections by Ms. La Mothe and Mr. Guessferd.

G Reports from Liaisons

a. Select Board.- Selectman Gagnon reported that the Board of Selectman had a default budget workshop. The Board of Selectman follows the recommendations by the department heads and

the town administrator. The information is provided in a package given to the Budget Committee.

b. School Board.- Ms. La Mothe spoke about the rededication of Wilbur H. Palmer Career and Technical Education Center, highlighting that it is an asset to the town that we all should be very proud of and will benefit generations to come. Ms. Lamothe offered to arrange a visit to the Palmer for any interested member.

Because the school and the town should communicate more, there is a plan for a combined school and town boards meeting, and they are looking for dates that can work for all participants but will happen sometime in August.

A proposed Capital Committee has officially formed. The school district will put together a plan, a very similar one to the Capital Improvement. Still, from the school perspective, many people with different backgrounds, like finance, education, construction, legislation, and more, will oversee it, which is another opportunity to get community input drafting a warrant article.

Ms. La Mothe addressed the question from the previous Budget Committee meeting about the \$500,000 held by the school food service; she explained that money would go back to the year-end balance. However, it probably will not happen. In the unusual circumstances of last year, the projection is of a negative fund balance, and no one recalls when that happens before in the food services fund. The food service fund is apart from the general fund.

Aside from the federal fund, revenue from sales support the food operations and usually is leftover money going to the following year. The federal government extended the Free meals to the Students program this year, but the standard rate the school gets reimbursed is not covering the costs; in the past, the a la carte items corrected the shortfall. Unfortunately, this year resulted from the pandemic, the parents and students not buying lunch or putting money into the student's fund account. The final amount that needs to be transferred from the general fund to the foodservice fund is unknown yet, but \$500,000 is a conservative amount.

Another unusual circumstance on April 19, the Governor issue an executive ordering the schools to go back full time, forcing the school district to hire staff to finish the year, the food needs to the students, additional purchases required each day. The school district will have an accurate final number that will report.

Mis. La Mothe reminds us that the monthly Budget committee meeting occurs before the School Board meeting.

Mr. Murray asked if the school has decided in what projects the unexpended funds will be used; Ms. La Mothe answered that the decision was not made yet the school district needs more time, so the numbers are completed and accurate. Ms. La Mothe read a list with the dollar amount of projects the school is intended to do:

Life Skills classroom renovation at Alvirne High School anticipates cost is \$84,000, the back parking lot at HO Smith estimated to cost \$50,000. Train control upgrade HVAC system control at Hudson Memorial \$70,000, three-bathroom countertops replacements one Hill Garrison \$17,000, Hudson Memorial \$12,200, and Nottingham West \$32,000, Safety Radios will be around \$200,000, but this amount is not finalized yet.

#### H. Discussion on FY22 Town Default Budget Workshop

Selectman Ganon recap the Town Default Budget workshop using the document already in possession of the Budget Committee and the public. During the Board of Selectman meeting on 6/1/2021, it was decided what expenses need to be cut. Selectman Gagnon indicated that all

heads of the town departments were present, but not all of them spoke during the meeting, but they all have peace of the document that is self-explanatory.

Selectman Gagnon made reference to page seven of the document/package (General Fund Default Budget Fiscal Year 2022)

The page is divided into descriptive columns, including departments, descriptions, Default Reductions, Founded Amounts, and on the extreme right, there is a column with recommended actions.

All of those numbers, selectman Gagnon explained, are what the department's head asked for increase the budget from the previous year of \$773,621 because the default budget did not get that, so the department heads cut expenses, moving money around as was necessary. In the founded amount list, there are some zeros with comments to the right; also, there are money transfers explained. With these actions, they come total funded amount of \$486,036 with an unfunded difference of \$287,585.

Mr. Forrence spoke about different possible cuts like close the Bensons bathrooms from June 1 to July 30 due to the frequent misuse of the bathrooms, reduce cut in mulch, park flowers, and other things nice to have but not necessary when the town under is under default budget.

Ms. La Mothe clarified to what selectman Gagnon commented,

"wherever we returned to the taxpayer, says Ms. La Mothe, will not change what the town is able to spend the appropriation, and the default budget will not change what the town will be able to spend regardless of what the school does but will impact the tax rate.

Ms. La Mothe asked Ms. Labrie if it is possible to use the contingency budget of \$75,000 to cover some of the expenses described on page seven; Ms. Labrie indicated the is reserved for emergencies.

Acting Chair Cole asked Selectman Gagnon about what is the plan to cover the unfounded difference of \$287,585 for the items that have the \$0 amount are expenses that the town will not be able to do that will take care of the unfunded difference of the \$287,585 explained Ms, Labrie and Mr. Guessferd.

Acting Chairman Cole elaborate, saying that the" Default Budget is an inconvenience but the voter vote that way.

I. Final Comments.

The next meeting will be on August 4, 2021

J. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Leary second by Mr. Guessferd motion pass (5-0-0) at 8:29 PM