

TOWN OF DEERFIELD, NH  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
George B. White Building  
8 Raymond Road, Deerfield, NH 03037  
6:30pm Thursday December 8, 2016  
MINUTES

Call to Order 6:30pm

1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

2. Moment of Silence/Prayer

3. Roll Call

Present: James Spillane, Chairman; Bill von Hassel, Vice Chairman; Ian Scott, Kevin Verville, Steve Giovinelli, Karen Cote, David Carbone Members; Zach Langlois, School Board Rep Member; Andrew Robertson, Select Board Rep Member

Unexcused Absence: Troi Hopkins, Carol Levesque, Members.

4. Citizen's Comments

None seen

5. Approval of Outstanding Minutes

**Motion:** K. Verville moves the minutes of November 29<sup>th</sup> as written.

**Second:** A. Robertson

**Vote to approve the minutes of November 29<sup>th</sup> as written. Yay: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained: 0 – Motion Carries.**

Discussion about the minutes of November 22<sup>nd</sup> is tabled.

6. Old Business

Z. Langlois states that at the School Board meeting the previous night the request to add a new line to the budget with \$1 for Student Supplies was discussed and the School Board decided against adding the line.

Surplus information has been sent to the MBC Chair and has been distributed.

Regarding quantity and cost of Chromebooks in service, Z. Langlois states that there are 158 Chromebook currently in service that have been purchased over the past three years at a cost of \$200-250 per unit as well as an activation fee of \$25-30 per unit.

K. Verville asks if there are any other portable electronic devices that the students have access to.

Z. Langlois states that these are the only devices that students have access to with the exception of the first grade which has a small number of shared tablets.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks if the activation fee is paid annually or if it is a one-time fee for the

device.

Z. Langlois replies that the activation fee is paid one time for a device.

K. Verville asks Mr. Langlois for the make of the tablets in the first grade.

Z. Langlois replies that he will need to get that information.

Chairman Spillane states no board, committee, or department has ever refused to add a line when requested to make the budgeting process easier. He will check with the Municipal Association to regarding what can legally be done to require that the School Board add the line.

K. Verville asks if the previously requested information that had regarding the supply lists that were sent home will be provided.

Z. Langlois responds that the Administration had the list available for the School Board last night. The Administrator expressed that the staff was reluctant to provide the letters because they are personal in nature- teachers introducing themselves to the students, etc. They also include student names. The Board discussed it and they are not going to provide those lists as they currently exist.

K. Verville states that he appreciates that the School District may choose to redact non-germane portions of the documents. However, this request was made a long time ago and it was only discussed just last night. It seems that the School Board is a lot less willing to provide information to this committee. This committee is authoritative, not advisory and this information that was requested as necessary information for the budgeting process. He comments that the list of purchased items previously provided gave more information about the requester than what was requested. The pertinent information would have been what items were purchased rather than how much a grade level spent. The School Board is showing the Budget Committee a trend of non-responses. K. Verville comments that it is unfortunate that this process is being dragged out and that the Committee now has to wait until representatives from the SAU are in front of the Committee to make these same requests and get the information.

Vice Chairman von Hassel states that he agrees with Mr. Verville and that it is in the SAU's best interest to be forthcoming with this information not only for the MBC but for the residents of Deerfield.

Chairman Spillane states that the SAU will be more aware of what is legally required of them when a request is made by the MBC. The MBC is an authoritative committee. Once the MBC receives the School Budget it no longer belongs to the School Board. When the MBC makes a request for information from the School Board, for them to say that they will not provide it, is not an appropriate answer.

S. Giovinelli states that what the School Board sees as a problem with providing these lists would only be a problem if teachers were writing different lists to individual students.

K. Verville states that if he were to file a request for those documents under right to know, he would be able to get that information because they are public documents.

I. Scott asks Mr. Langlois if the School Board provided any other reasons for not providing the requested documents.

Z. Langlois states that this was a concern brought to the School Board by the Administration and the School Board then directed the Administration to not provide the lists as they currently exist.

I. Scott states that as a parent he received one of these letters and there was no personal information in these letters. He acknowledges that they may have varied from teacher to teacher and grade to grade but other than the student's first name there was nothing personal in the letter.

Chairman Spillane reiterates that redacting is easy process. These letters are public information. Any request from this Committee is a legal request.

Chairman Spillane will also ask the Municipal Association about further legal steps pertaining to the request of these lists.

A. Robertson states that he will scan and email the specs about the police cruiser to the Chair so he can send it out to the rest of the committee. Regarding the warrant article about the town being able to sell property. The Parks and Recreation Commission, conservation commission, and planning board review the sale only in an advisory capacity. The Board of Selectmen or Town meeting are the only entities

A. Robertson states that he does not yet have the answer about whether or not the MBC legally has the authority to weigh-in on a warrant article that do not have monetary value but do have an impact on tax and/or budget. He will get the answer and send it electronically to the Chair.

## 7. New Business

K. Verville states that on page 63 of the newly received packet the year-on-year percent increase. The 5.9% increase actually compares the 2017 Select Board's recommended budget to the 2016 budget passed by the voters. The 2017 MBC budget bottom line to the 2016 budget it represents a 4.3% increase. The MBC proposed budget for 2017 is 0.7% less than the originally requested by the Select Board. The 2017 MBC budget is a 17.5% increase to the actual of 2015.

K. Verville states that he asked the Highway Agent if he felt that the town was keeping pace, falling behind or moving forward relative to road maintenance. The Highway Agent indicated that he felt that the town was keeping pace. K. Verville states that he believes that the town is falling behind. HE asks Mr. Robertson if the Select Board has discussed a warrant article similar to that of the Winter Maintenance fund for funding road maintenance.

A. Robertson states that the Select Board has not discussed this type of trust fund. The Board relies heavily on the recommendations of the Highway Agent.

K. Verville asks Mr. Robertson when he thinks he may be able to have a response from the Select Board for the MBC.

A. Robertson states that he believes that he should be able to have a response by the next MBC meeting since they will have a Board meeting on Monday.

K. Verville states that depending on how the Board responds, he may request that the Highway Agent come back in front of the Committee for some more Q & A.

Members of the Committee receive the School Board budget. Z. Langlois states that this a working budget still in draft form and that they have a few more meeting when they will finish working on the budget. He comments that there were some changes made to the budget at last night's meeting which he will review with the Committee.

Chairman Spillane comment that there is not any back-up provided in the budget. This is information that is typically relied on heavily. Information such as class sizes, classroom distribution.

K. Verville states that this is very atypical for what has historically been received by the Committee.

**Motion:** K. Verville moves that the School Board Representative review packets submitted to the Committee in previous year and demand that the School Board submit a budget with back-up information that historically conforms with the historical precedent.

**Second:** Vice Chairman von Hassel

Chairman Spillane agrees that the information lacking from the presented budget is very surprising.

Z. Langlois explains that this is still a work in progress and that the purpose of providing this budget was so that the MBC could have an idea of what the School Board is working towards.

K. Verville states that he is aware that many of the documents that are typically submitted with this budget are in existence because they were distributed at School Board meetings. Historically the budget is delivered in total. Much like the Select Board that submits the budget and back-up and then perhaps

make changes that they then present to the committee. Those changes are presented as recommendations because the once the budget has been received, the MBC is not required to make any of these suggested changes.

Chairman Spillane states that typically the complete list of staff, salaries, years of service, steps. All of this information was used to create the budget so it should be provided to the Committee.

K. Verville states that the calendar for receiving budgets has been consist for the past several years. The MBC meeting that was to have been held this past Tuesday to receive the School Budget was pushed to tonight allowing for an extra School Board meeting to work on the budget.

**Amendment to the motion:** K. Verville amends his motion that the information will be received at the next MBC meeting on Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Second:** S. Giovinelli

A. Robertson states that there have been times since he has been on this committee when the back-up information has not been received until Christmas. He asks Mr. Langlois if he anticipates bringing the back-up information to the next meeting regardless.

Z. Langlois replies that he plans to bring the back-up at that time

**Vote to amend the motion to include “at the MBC meeting on Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016”. Yay: 7, Nay: 0, Abstained: 2 –Motion Carries.**

S. Giovinelli requests back-up information pertaining to the criteria for the default budget. He is making this request because he wants to verify that there isn't an error which would lead to the narrow gap between the default and the requested budgets.

**Vote to demand that the Representative from the School Board review school budgets submitted in previous years and provide similar back-up pertaining to this year's requested budget. Yay: 7, Nay: 0, Abstained: 2 –Motion Carries**

I. Scott asks Mr. Langlois if the School Board typically provides all bids of purchase, all 3 bids, all multiple bids, RFPs.

Z. Langlois states that historically the School Board has not had a formal purchasing policy until recently. He will request that the summary pages of the bids that were published be included in the back-up  
Chairman Spillane states that historically information about bids received have not been included but rather information about bids and purchases that were not planned on but came up.

Vice Chairman von Hassel asks Mr. Langlois that he noticed that larger bids seem to go through the SAU and therefore the only information is what the end bid was. It does not have the information about how many bidders and at what bids were received. He would like this information provided.

Z. Langlois states that he believes that information will be provided. He states that the summary sheets can be pulled easily. The SAU is the School Board's bidding office. Large items this year were the phone system, the stairs up to the field, transportation, landscaping, and plowing.

K. Verville asks when it is anticipated that the Superintendent, SAU Financial Officer, and School Administration will begin attending MBC meeting to be available for questions.

Z. Langlois defers the question to the Chair and asks when he would like to have these staff members asked if they can make themselves available.

K. Verville states that with the information provided so far, it may not be worth their time to attend the next meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>. K. Verville suggests they attend the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Chairman Spillane agrees that the 13<sup>th</sup> may be too soon but that the 20<sup>th</sup> is very late.

S. Giovinelli states that if the staff was to attend the meeting on Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup>, perhaps they could aid in the presentation of information.

K. Verville agrees.

A. Robertson suggests that there may be questions regarding IT and that the IT person would be a good person to have attend as well.

Chairman Spillane states that SAU and Administrative staff that typically attend, are asked to attend the meeting on Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup>.

S. Giovinelli states that the increase year-on-year is 3.5%

K. Verville states that 3.5% increase is much larger than usual. Typically, it is a 2% increase or less.

Vice Chairman von Hassel comments that he would be surprised if many residents of Deerfield received a 3/5% salary increase.

Z. Langlois states that there was an increase in the Teacher Retirement line item of \$106,330 which is a down shift from state. The rate increased from 15.67 to 17.36. Special Ed line increased as well which they are required to fund.

#### 8. Citizen's Comments

Ms. Harriet Cady states that she has been bothered for a while about the vote of abstention.

Abstentions are for when there is a conflict of interest or due to absence. She sees people abstaining for no reason. That is not proper parliamentary procedure. She is upset at the idea of having money being put into trust that some will never see the use of. One reason that Deerfield doesn't get grant money is because it shows that the town has money. If roads need to be built, bond them.

Ms. Cady states that it is very difficult to follow the meeting without a packet. There should be a few copies made available to the citizens that attend.

Chairman Spillane states that Ms. Cady is correct, there have been packets provided to the audience in the past and he will look into it.

In reference to his previous request to Mr. Robertson regarding the Select Board discussing a warrant article to fund a trust for road maintenance K. Verville tells that he would not be opposed to the idea of a bond for the road maintenance.

#### 9. Adjournment

**Motion:** K. Verville moves to adjourn

**Second:** Z. Langlois

A. Robertson states that the Select Board voted to accept the commercial copier from Capital Copier which had been secured by Chairman Spillane. It comes with a maintenance contract and the town will put it to good use.

**Vote to adjourn: Yay: 9, Nay: 0, Abstained 0: - Motion Carries**

*Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:30pm at the George B. White Building.*