

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday, December 19, 2013

Present: Ann Howe,

Steve Londrigan, Matt Murphy, Proctor Wentworth

Absent: Chris Howe

Visitors: Penny Williams

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by Mr. Murphy at 7:00pm. Mr. Wentworth led the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Murphy had originally hoped the meeting would be attended by the selectman and heads of departments but none were in attendance sighting.

Mr. Murphy went reviewed key upcoming dates for the committee. January 8th is the final town meeting for the budget to be reviewed. The committee will meet on January 9th at 7:00pm to vote on the recommendation as Mr. Wentworth indicated that there may be changes made during town meeting. On January 6th is the school budget review which Mr. Murphy encouraged the liaisons to attend.

Mr. Murphy indicated we will approve the meeting minutes from the previous month at the January 9th meeting. Mr. Wentworth pointed out that the committee has failed to approve the meeting minutes from the past several months. Mr. Murphy indicated we will approve all of the past months meeting minutes in the upcoming meeting and requested Mr. Londrigan to gather up all of the previous minutes and that members are to review them before the meeting.

Ms. Howe mentioned that the annual budget and bonds meeting is set for January 14th.

Mr. Murphy opened the floor for member comments. Ms. Howe stated her appreciation to the police for delaying purchase of a cruiser and to use the detail fund but some questions on this item remain. Ms. Howe also stated her disappointment on how the budget committee has little role beyond being an audience member in the process. She was concerned that some department heads were not well prepared didn't have a good handle on remaining expenses and seemed content with the status quo; rolling the numbers from one year to the next. Mr. Murphy also expressed his disappointment with the lack of knowledge of expenses remaining in the year.

Mr. Murphy indicated in previous years was that budgets used to be gone through one line at a time with the committee. He went on to express some line items went way over and he would like to see the budget committee be more involved and have a consultation period with the department heads. He is very concerned with the impact of healthcare in the coming year. Mr. Murphy indicated it is difficult to make major changes because we are either unwilling or unable to address the higher cost items. Ms. Howe indicated the committee set out to do this in October but received a poor response.

Mr. Wentworth commented about the unpaid bills mentioned previously that departments heads may not have this information as some circumstances (such as ground keeping and snow removal) may be beyond their control. Mr. Murphy felt they still should be better prepared for items that are within their control which Mr. Wentworth agreeing that it could be better.

Mr. Murphy indicated he had sought to go through each budget line by line looking for ways to save money and provide tax payer relief but this did not happen this year.

Public Comments

Penny Williams commented that the budget committee is advisory so its authority is limited.

Mr. Murphy went on to complain about the lack of oversight with the school in regard to its building project. There has been minimal oversight and the school board has failed to present any of these plans with the budget committee.

Mr. Murphy sought a motion to adjourn which was made by Mr. Londrigan moved to adjourn and Mr. Wentworth seconding the motion with the motion passing unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05.