**BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Minutes**

**November 10, 2016**

**7:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Jorge Mesa-Tejada, Emily Reschberger, John Skidmore

**ABSENT**: Steve Londrigan

**VISITORS:** Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times

1. **Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mesa-Tejada at 7:05pm in the Selectmen’s Office, Hampstead Town Hall. John Skidmore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Approval of Minutes - October 13, 2016**

 Motion by John Skidmore to approve minutes. Seconded by Emily Reschberger. Chairman Mesa-Tejada pointed out that a signature from the Secretary was missing on the minutes. This will be added.

 **VOTE: YES: 3 NO: 0 Abstain: 0.**

**3. Visitor’s Comments:** None.

**4. Discussion: BudCom actions pertaining to School Board going forward**

 Since the Hampstead School Board does not recognize the Hampstead Budget Committee, no agendas, meeting packets or information is provided to the Budget Committee. A recommendation or vote of the Budget Committee will not appear on the ballot. Chairman Mesa-Tejada stated that the committee can analyze information and offer an opinion on the School budget items because they impact the tax rate. John Skidmore remarked that the committee can analyze the data and talk about the items but not make recommendations. Emily Reschberger stated that there will be several warrant articles on the School warrant due to contracts, the school construction project and the school budget itself; Budget Committee members can observe, collect information about the School budget and ask questions during visitor comments but not vote on items. Chairman Mesa-Tejada agreed that the Budget Committee can dissect and discuss School Budget items and Town budget items as a service to the tax payers of the Town.

**5. Discussion: Town and School Budgets**

 Included in the packet are the revised Town budget numbers, with account numbers. Not all salary numbers have been finalized, but they will be available towards the end of November. Included in the budget draft is money for the MS4 permit process. Chairman Mesa-Tejada will ask Selectman Chairman Sean Murphy for clarification about the $125,000 figure allotted for the MS4 permit. The Town currently does not have the ability to test for water quality, which is one of the steps in the process to apply for the MS4 permit.

 Chairman Mesa-Tejada distributed handouts of draft minutes of the 10/18/16 School Budget Work Session along with copies of School budget planning power point notes dated 10/25/16. Included in the packet are the October 2016 NESDEC projected enrollment figures by grade for Hampstead, part of SAU 55. After 2018, total projected enrollment numbers start sliding below 1300 students. Feeder grades now at HCS are no longer above 100 but are more in the 70s to 80s range. HMS replacement classes will be smaller going forward. Timberlane has discontinued the use of NESDEC numbers because the Superintendent does not believe they are accurate.

 Hampstead started using information from NESDEC in 1991. Prior to that time, student population projections were made using the cohort method. The cohort method did not account for students attending private school or leaving the district. These small errors compounded over time. NESDEC numbers reflect the housing capacity of the towns; school population projections take into account cohorts and maximum build-out of the towns. The figures have an accuracy rate of 1% one year out and 3% five years out. The information provided by NESDEC is free. Jorge Mesa-Tejada expressed the opinion that the School Board should continue to use NESDEC numbers and not follow Timberlane’s example. In 2001 the Facilities Committee found out that the Town of Hampstead was essentially 95% built out. Hampstead is in a replacement market; some land is coming on line off Main Street.

**6. Members comments**

 Regarding the Town Manager Committee, Chairman Mesa-Tejada gave a status report that their recommendations will be brought to the November 28th Selectmen’s meeting. The current draft is a recommendation to change the job title and description of the current position, to better reflect responsibilities and tasks. Members of that committee interviewed Town department heads individually to gather feedback. Emily Reschberger noted that Town department budget presentations went smoothly. No information regarding the three School staffing contracts is available at this time. John Skidmore stated that Town budget numbers are all up-to-date. Chairman Mesa-Tejada informed the committee that he had requested a public hearing regarding the restraining order issued in January 2016 by Superintendent Metzler. There has been no reply by the School Board to date.

**7. Next meeting agenda items**

 Updated Town and School Budget numbers. Warrant articles. School contract information. MS4 permit clarification.

1. **Schedule next meeting date**

 Budget Committee members agreed to hold the next meeting on December 15, 2016

1. **Visitors Comments:** None
2. **Adjournment**

On motion by Emily Reschberger, seconded by John Skidmore, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily D. Reschberger