

Minutes
Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting
September 26, 2013

Members Present: Chet Batchelder, Donna Danis, Anthony Dumas, Korey Ferland, Michael Koester, Jason Marcotte, James O'Brien, Jackie Snow, Jeff Wheeler, Mark Carpenter – BOS, Peter Perron – School Board

Other in Attendance: Secretary Dawn Wirkkala

Chair Batchelder called the meeting to order and introductions were completed.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by Mr. Carpenter, second by Mr. Marcotte to approve the August 15, 2013 minutes as amended.

Vote: 9 – 0 in favor, 2 abstained

Budget Workshop Review/Update: Chair Batchelder asked for a review of the Budget Workshop meetings.

Ms. Snow felt the workshop was worthwhile and provided some relevant real life perspectives. Mr. Dumas felt there were clear explanations about the actual “job” of the committee. Mr. O'Brien stated it provided a better understanding of the process.

Chair Batchelder stated the key note speaker was excellent, however information about upcoming healthcare changes were a little off topic. Mr. Perron asked if they reviewed the effects of the Affordable Care Act. Chair Batchelder stated the information provided didn't appear relevant, there was a lot of unknowns, and wasn't practical for Budget Committee members, information that was more relevant was changes in the retirement process.

Ms. Danis asked if new material was presented. Chair Batchelder stated there are new statutes regarding budget planning for multi-year projects. Mr. O'Brien stated it appears to be an option to fund a multi-year project without using the capital reserve fund process. Ms. Snow stated one warrant article would cover planned payments for one project up to five years; one warrant article budgeting funds for the time of the project.

Chair Batchelder stated good samples of documents that other towns are using were provided.

Calendar Review: Ms. Wirkkala stated the NHMA indicated the calendar information would come in the next three weeks. Chair Batchelder asked if there were any conflicts for the Town or School. Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Perron stated the calendar timeline as presented is workable.

Mr. Perron stated the School Board is inviting Budget Committee members to their Wednesday, October 2 meeting at 7:15 pm.

Chair Batchelder stated a statement was made at the workshop about limiting contracts to a one year limit to deal with the continuing changes with healthcare and it could impact future educator contracts. Mr. Perron stated the current contract has three years remaining before a new contract is needed. Mr. Perron stated minimal discussion has taken place about the how health care changes may impact the school budget because there are still so many unknowns; information will be determined by the SAU and provided to the School Board.

Mr. Marcotte stated there is the possibility of exemption if they offer their own insurance plan. Mr. Perron stated it may be something considered.

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Mr. Koester asked if there has been discussion on a state level between teacher's unions regarding healthcare. Mr. Perron stated there are too many separate teacher contracts with each district with too many variables to try and merge everything into once contracts.

Sub-Committee Members: Chair Batchelder reviewed prior members of sub-committees and the purpose of the CIP Committee and the Default Budget Sub-Committee.

Mr. Marcotte volunteered to be on the CIP Committee. Mr. Perron asked if there would be value for the Budget Committee to review the CIP information and requests. Chair Batchelder stated there would be value and requested the information be provided as early as possible.

Mr. Perron stated the School Board has reviewed the school CIP proposals. Chair Batchelder requested a review of the CIP plan at the next meeting.

Mr. Koester asked if the Budget Committee could suspend the Default Sub-Committee because of the cooperation and detailed work the current School Board is doing with the default budget and supporting documents. Mr. Ferland stated he agrees with the idea to suspend the sub-committee and asked how the school establishes the default budget. Mr. Perron stated there can be changes made to the default budget numbers, despite the intent against doing so; there must be specific reasons why a line items would be increased more than the intent. The School Board reviews the default budget line by line and would be willing to provide the detailed explanation sheets for the Budget Committee to review.

Ms. Danis stated she doesn't disagree with the suggestion, but part of the reason for the default sub-committee is to help newer members get familiar with the budget process and should the Budget Committee make a decision about taking or not taking budget actions based on the work taking place with the current School Board members; to give the process consistency and prevent possible conflict.

Chair Batchelder stated he agreed with the opinion of Ms. Danis, despite both positive and negative experiences with different School Boards and the default budget process. If the Budget Committee doesn't complete the process, does it prevent needing to in the future? In addition, it is good for new members to participate and review the process and budget information before having to review the presented material.

Mr. Koester asked if it would be a benefit to provide a default budget presentation to the Budget Committee as a whole group, providing the same education experiences with a line by line review, but eliminating the need for sub-committee meetings.

Mr. Wheeler stated the sub-committee also can provide potential budgetary conflicts that may be encountered by the school if the default budget is used.

Chair Batchelder requested a presentation reviewing the default budget process.

Discussion took place about School Board sub-committees which may need a member; the new space needs sub-committee is planning for possible future needs of new and additional spaces at the school, there is also an additional sub-committee to review the actual bus routes for possible changes.

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Discussion took place about transportation and the expectation from the current and prior Transportation Sub-Committees. Chair Batchelder stated the Budget Committee had hoped the School Board had already been reviewing alternatives for transportation savings. Chair Batchelder stated it appears committees have been working on transportation and possibility of improving the contract with the bus contractor; the Budget Committee wanted to review the suggestions made by the prior and current transportation committees. Discussion took place about the transportation committee reviewing options for efficiency and cost savings and Mr. Perron stated the sub-committee would be reminded. Ms. Snow asked if the sub-committee would have a summary report available by the first presentation of the school budget and Mr. Perron stated it would not; the sub-committee hasn't met. Ms. Danis asked to have the results from the prior sub-committee. Mr. Perron agreed to provide the information.

SCHOOL REVIEW: Mr. Perron stated the School Board has started the budget review process, and expressed their expectations to the administration. The School Board established that improving education and academics over the last two year will be the primary budget concern and replacing text books will be significantly increased; the History books are 10 years old. Priority building issues will be addressed, but the focus is academics and increasing the educational results.

Ms. Danis stated she has heard media discussion expressing concern regarding the Common Core program based on schools that have been using the program for the past few years. Ms. Danis asked if Common Core is a program Nottingham School is going to utilize for the long term or will an alternative program be presented in a year or two. Mr. Perron stated the State of NH has made a decision to use the Common Core program. Where other NH school have phased into it over the past couple of years, Nottingham is not and is starting implementation faster.

Mr. Perron stated the Technology Plan is being updated and there is going to be a consideration of individual PC's or tablets for each student. Implementation of the program can differ and will be something the school board needs to establish. Ms. Danis asked if there should be a reconsideration of buying books if individual electronic technology is going to be implemented. Mr. Perron stated books are going to be required because the technology process will take a few years to implement and can't wait.

Ms. Danis asked to receive the technology plan in time for the budget process. Mr. Dumas stated he is on the technology sub-committee and there are significant infrastructure issues that need to be corrected prior to addressing the idea of individual's technology. Ms. Danis asked for a presentation of the available material.

Mr. Marcotte stated he hopes there is consideration of technology earlier versus later so Nottingham doesn't fall behind. Mr. Dumas stated he asked about a bulk purchase contract with software. Mr. Perron stated he hasn't seen anything.

TOWN REVIEW: Mr. Carpenter reviewed the deadlines and stated the process for budget guidelines and town process is similar to last year. Mr. Carpenter stated there are changes coming at the Recycle Center, but keeping the process more honest with annual stickers and try to raise awareness with the cost savings with increased recycling. General discussion took place about the Recycle Center.

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OTHER BUSINESS: Chair Batchelder review the upcoming agenda for October 17. Mr. Perron stated the new bookkeeper will start soon for an interim basis but a decision has been made to hire one individual person at the SAU for accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll, hopefully first quarter financials will be ready.

ROUNDTABLE:

Mr. Dumas asked about the Towns technology plan. Mr. Carpenter stated there aren't many and the plan is informal; there may be too many printers. Mr. Dumas stated he has a lot of experience and is willing to help the process and asked about upcoming Police Department technology requirements. Mr. Carpenter stated the new requirements have been discussed and are being review by Detective Oberlin.

Mr. Perron stated he is putting together information about tax rate trends and would like to present it to the committee. Ms. Snow asked to receive the information ahead of time. Mr. Perron stated once it was complete, and the goal is to try and show how the Town stays attractive in brining in new people. Chair Batchelder agreed to the presentation.

Mr. Koester offered commendation the person who put the guidelines together.

Mr. Carpenter already distributed the objectives for the Recycling committee.

Chair Batchelder stated the budget process is a growing process as numbers start to come in and work starts with the default budget. If there are suggestions for improving the process they should be submitted.

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

8:43 PM **Motion:** by Mr. Marcotte, second by Ms. Danis.

Vote: 11 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Wirkkala