



Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee
145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 25, 2008

CALL TO ORDER: 7:08 p.m.

PRESENT: Jan Penta, Ron Hayes, Normand Bouchard, Michele Conte, Kristen Lewis Savage, Richard Latham, Joyce Ingerson, Catherine Willis, John Sherman

EXCUSED: Bernadine Fitzgerald, Martha Sumner, Dan Hooper

J. Penta calls for a nomination for Chairman of the Budget Committee

- Motion by R. Latham to nominate Jan Penta as Chairwoman of the Budget Committee; Second by R. Hayes.

Vote: 9-0-0

J. Penta calls for a nomination of a Vice Chairman of the Budget Committee

- Motion by J. Penta to nominate Ron Hayes as Vice Chairman of the Budget Committee; Second by K. Lewis Savage

Vote: 9-0-0

J. Penta states the next order of business is obtaining volunteers for CIP, Highway Garage, Open Space, and Safety Complex. States they need two volunteers for CIP and one each for the others.

R. Hayes states he will be a volunteer for CIP

N. Bouchard states he will be a volunteer for CIP

R. Latham states he will be an alternate.

J. Penta states they are nominating Dan Hooper for Highway Garage.

R. Hayes states he will be a volunteer for the Safety Complex.

11:55:26 AM

Budget Committee Meeting
March 25, 2008

Michele Conte states she will volunteer for Open Space.

Minutes:

- *Motion by R. Latham to approve the minutes of January 9, 2008; Second by R. Hayes*

Vote: 6-0-3 (Motion carries)

Abstaining: J. Ingerson, K. Willis, R. Hayes

J. Penta states there are two things to address at this meeting which are how they operate as a Budget Committee for new members and J. Sherman's presentation on the school budget

J. Penta reads what the Budget Committee is responsible and not responsible for.

J. Penta states the Budget Committee puts together appropriations and revenues for voters and the legislative body.

J. Penta states what is not addressed as a Budget Committee is funds and fees. States the Budget Committee meets on weekly basis minus Thanksgiving and Christmas. States the Committee looks at each budget three times. States the first time the Committee reviews it, Department heads or the Town manager come in; the second time the Committee reviews it, it is a quick review of all the Budgets, and the third time is for individual approval.

J. Penta states the Committee presents the final budget at public hearing in January. States no monies may be added unless amended at Deliberative session.

J. Penta encourages new members to go to LGC classes. States the Committee has funds in the Budget for these classes. States there is also a Conflict of Interest ordinance in the Town.

J. Penta states there is a Right to Know Law. House has approved a right to know law change and has been sent to the Senate concerning electronic communications outside of meetings. States anything that is typed in emails should be verbally stated at the next Budget Committee meeting.

J. Sherman states they should not make decisions via email and avoid discussions. States email is only used for communication. States it is a practical line.

J. Penta states if the Committee members use terminology the new members are not familiar with please let others know.

R. Latham states he believes every member should have a copy of the booklet from LGC.

K. Lewis Savage states that LGC puts out new copies every year. States she suggests not ordering them now and waiting until the conference in September and orders the new ones at that point.

K. Lewis Savage suggests the next meeting should be September 9, 2008.

J. Sherman states he believes that is too early to meet.

J. Penta states it will either be September 9 or September 16. States she will meet with the new Town Manager and see how the budget season is going to go.

M. Conte asks when we expect the new Town manager to start

J. Sherman states the deadline for a applications is March 28, 2008.

J. Penta asks approximately how long it took to hire the last candidate

J. Sherman states it took approximately two months assuming they can find one good candidate and that they are looking at the June time frame.

J. Penta asks J. Sherman to present the School Budget.

J. Sherman states he would like to present information so it does not get lost. States this presentation comes from the School Distribution Budget report as well as the supplements.

J. Sherman states the capital costs of the school district are apportioned based upon the equalized assessment of the four towns whereas the operating costs of the budget are apportioned based on the average daily membership (ADM). States Section A in the reference data compares the equalized valuation of the four towns.

J. Sherman states Plaistow and Atkinson are very close in assessed valuation. States if you added up Danville and Sandown it is almost equal to either Plaistow or Atkinson. States 1/3 is paid by Plaistow, 1/3 by Atkinson, and 1/3 by Danville and Sandown, based on round numbers. The school attendance is a different situation. States the four towns are close when it comes to ADM. States Danville and Sandown pay 50% of the operating costs because their population is a lot closer than their assessed valuations.

J. Sherman states the second page is a summary for Plaistow. States they are projecting if the operating budget passed, which it did, then the apportioned of the \$59,000,000, which is the total budget, then the portion to be paid by Plaistow is \$14,334,948.

J. Sherman states the next column shows a 73 cent increase per \$100,000 of valuation.

J. Sherman states he presents it only from an informational point of view. States based upon the Warrant Articles that passed; there will be a \$219 increase in the tax bill.

J. Sherman states they did not include Capital Reserve Fund or Middle School renovation. States that since those passed, there will be a little more of an increase. States the 73 cents only spoke to the School Operating Budget.

J. Ingerson asks if J. Sherman knows how much more of an increase there will be.

J. Sherman states that at this point, he does not have those figures.

J. Sherman states he did include the other Towns, just for reference.

M. Conte states it is interesting to note that the enrollment in all the Towns, with the exception of Danville, is going down. States she would have thought it would have been just the opposite.

J. Sherman states what is interesting is overall the enrollment has gone down the past two years. States Danville was the only one that went up.

J. Penta states we do not really know what the reason is for that decrease.

K. Lewis Savage states property in Danville is cheaper to buy than in the other three towns.

J. Penta asks J. Sherman if there was any feedback based on the way the Sample Ballot was distributed in the Carriage Town News.

J. Sherman states he has not received any feedback.

J. Sherman asks if there was any discussion on Town Meeting or how the vote went in regards to vote on articles and budgets.

N. Bouchard states he would like to bring up a point for next year. States there was a question asked at the Candidates night on how the Town does Warrant Articles and when it is put into the Budget. States if there is a Warrant Article again, he would like to see it as two Warrant Articles with the first Warrant Article being to pass the dollar value amount and the second Warrant Article would be to put it into the next year's budget.

J. Penta asks if they were specific about which Warrant Article it was.

J. Sherman states it was not specific. States it was only one person that asked that question. States it is certainly an approach that could be taken.

R. Hayes asks how the Town did with the cost distribution of the Town Report

J. Sherman states they saved money on it and he did not hear any complaints.

K. Willis asks if the Town Report is made available to people, like the elderly, who cannot get out to get it.

J. Sherman states that it is. States that if anyone did not receive a Town Report and would like one, to contact the Selectmen's Secretary Ruth Jenne.

K. Lewis Savage states there she would like to see a post card sent out to let people know when the Town Report is available.

J. Penta states it was on the sample ballot in the Carriage Town News.

K. Lewis Savage states she never saw it and receives the Carriage Town News every week. States she believes it is short money to send out a postcard to let the town's people know it is available.

J. Sherman states it is always available a week before Town Meeting.

J. Penta states she has distributed all the various departments and budgets with the preceding years approved budget, their expenses for the year, the current year approved, and the proposed budget for 2008, for the new members of the Committee.

J. Penta states that when some of the Committee members meet with the Town Manager, she would like to request a five year history of preceding budgets.

R. Hayes it would behoove the new Town Manager to keep the format they have now.

J. Sherman states he believes what was handed out was excellent.

J. Penta states she would recommend saving the previous year's budgets so you have something to review.

ADJOURNEMENT:

Adjourns meeting at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

*Selwa Moured
Recording Secretary*