

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WAREHAM BUDGET REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: January 28, 2011

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator
Elizabeth Zaleski, Town Accountant
Brenda Eckstrom, BOS
Donna Bronk, FinCom
Frank Heath, FinCom
Geoffrey Swett, School Committee
Dr. Barry Rabinovich, School Superintendent

Members Absent: Cara Winslow, BOS
Rhonda Veugen, School Committee

III. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Mr. Andrews noted this meeting & subsequent meetings of this committee will be open meetings.

A. Meetings.

Mr. Swett stated that Ms. Winslow has indicated she prefers morning or afternoon meetings. He noted morning & afternoons work well for him as well & that meetings during the day would be best. Ms. Bronk concurred.

Mr. Andrews noted if the committee is to hold neighborhood meetings, they should be held in the evenings & a schedule can be set for these meetings.

NOTE: Ms. Bronk discussed an email she received relative to a facilitator of the meetings. As she had understood, this committee was formed so that various entities could work together & present results together to the public. She stated Claire Smith, Town Moderator is not present at this meeting due to this email.

Mr. Swett stated he understands the discomfort w/ Ms. Smith being part of these meetings. He agrees w/ Ms. Smith's decision not to attend. He noted Ms. Smith suggested either David Straus or Jack Kelsch as others who could facilitate the meetings.

Ms. Eckstrom stated concern had been expressed prior re: these meetings being open & the fact that, for instance, if collective bargaining issues were discussed, the committee would need to go into Executive Session. She stated Selectman Holmes & Selectman Donahue are adamant about these meetings being open to the public. She noted, under the Open Meeting Law, these meetings need to be open.

Ms. Eckstrom stated as for the facilitator/mediator/moderator for these meetings, the budget is the Town Administrator's. She feels the Town Administrator should lead the meetings. If there is an impasse, then it should be the Town Administrator's decision on how to proceed, for example, to obtain the services of Mr. Straus, which may prove difficult.

Ms. Bronk stated it is not only the Town Administrator's budget, but it is the citizens' budget.

Mr. Heath stated this committee was formed so the entities involved w/ the budget could work together. He doesn't see a need to have a facilitator. Everyone involved needs to work together. He doesn't feel that bringing in a moderator/facilitator will help & it is not needed. The entities involved were brought together to discuss in a small group what was impossible to do in a large group. He reiterated again that he doesn't feel adding a third party is the right thing to do. He noted the townspeople expect all entities involved to work things out.

Mr. Swett concurred w/ Mr. Heath re: the budget. He stated the School Committee has a legal responsibility re: their portion of the budget. For everyone to get behind the budget at Town Meeting would be positive.

Mr. Swett feels Mr. Andrews & Dr. Rabinovich could share facilitating duties of the meetings.

Mr. Heath feels the reports that will come out of these meetings as well as the communication is very important & a way to relay information. It is important to get this information out.

Dr. Rabinovich stated he is in favor of having the FinCom representatives run the meetings vs. Mr. Andrews & himself having this responsibility. There are two budgets (school & Town) that both entities are passionate about. Again, he feels the FinCom representatives should run/facilitate the meetings because they are the ones who have the least investment relative to what the numbers are.

Ms. Eckstrom noted that Mr. Andrews & Dr. Rabinovich have staff to follow up on matters needing attention, but the FinCom does not.

Ms. Zaleski stated it seems the Town is always split between the Town & School Dept. It should be one, not two separate matters. It should be one financial package & one whole community. She noted the Town Administrator & the Town Accountant have the

ultimate financial responsibility to DOR & the residents of the Town. She feels the Town Administrator should take the lead relative to the meetings.

MOTION: Ms. Eckstrom moved to have Mr. Andrews serve as Chairman of the Wareham Budget Sub-Committee. Dr. Rabonivich seconded.

VOTE: (6-0-1)
Mr. Andrews abstained

Discussion ensued re: where to hold the meetings.

Mr. Rabinovich stated the Middle School auditorium can be utilized. Ms. Zaleski stated a new meeting room has been created in the Multi-Service Center which will be available.

Mr. Swett stated the days & times of the meetings should vary to allow for public & member attendance & he noted they could also be televised.

Mr. Andrews suggested bringing the committee meetings to neighborhoods & holding the meetings at different schools, for example.

Mr. Heath expressed disappointment in not having anyone on the committee that is on the labor/employee side. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Zaleski stated if union members are brought in, anything that comes before the committee from the union side would need to be negotiated. She doesn't feel it is appropriate at this time to bring them in.

Ms. Eckstrom noted "turf wars" between departments & if an employee from a department is brought into the committee, this may increase the "turf wars".

Mr. Heath feels employees would like a voice.

Ms. Eckstrom stated employees could be invited to the meetings. Mr. Andrews stated a "parking lot" of ideas & suggestions could be set up & the employees could come in at a later date.

B. Members.

Ms. Zaleski asked who has been appointed from each entity. The information is as follows:

Finance Committee: Donna Bronk, Frank Heath, & Sam Gray, Alternate
Board of Selectmen: Brenda Eckstrom, Cara Winslow, Steve Holmes, Alternate
School Committee: Geoffrey Swett & Rhonda Veugen
Administration: Mr. Andrews

School Department: Dr. Rabinovich

C. Voting.

Discussion ensued re: voting w/ an eight-member committee.

Ms. Eckstrom feels the Chairman of the Committee would only vote if there is a tie w/ a vote. Brief discussion ensued re: Robert's Rules on this matter.

Mr. Swett would like to think six out of eight members should agree w/ what comes out of all this. Dr. Rabinovich feels there should at least be a consensus of the committee. Mr. Swett again stated he would like six out of eight members supporting an issue.

Mr. Andrews stated he will check w/ Town Counsel relative to the legality of voting. Dr. Rabinovich added that anything brought forward at these meetings will be brought back to each individual committee (FinCom, School Committee, etc.) to sell the ideas. He noted this committee is not voting & telling the Town Administrator what to do or to do anything. A consensus of the Board would be best. Mr. Swett doesn't feel the Town Administrator should not vote.

Mr. Swett feels the committee's goal should be for a motion to pass. A 5-3 vote would be best or even a 6-2 vote would be even better.

C. Length of meetings.

Discussion ensued re: what the length of meetings should be.

Mr. Andrews suggested the meetings be approx. one hour long. Mr. Swett feels an hour and a half would be the maximum. Ms. Bronk & Dr. Rabinovich concurred. Mr. Swett noted the only time a meeting may exceed this timeframe is if, for example, the meeting is a neighborhood meeting.

Mr. Heath also suggested the meetings commence once a quorum is reached. The committee members concurred.

D. Departmental Budget Meeting.

Mr. Andrews spoke re: the proposed one day departmental budget meeting w/ departments & the FinCom, as was done last year. He would like this committee to join this meeting to gain a perspective. It would be held during the day. The committee members concurred. Mr. Andrews stated the date for this departmental budget meeting is yet to be determined.

E. Next Meeting Dates.

The committee concurred to meet on Fridays at 10:00 A.M. for now. The next meeting date will be February 4th at the meeting room in the Multi-Service Center & on February 11th at the Middle School.

It was stated if a member cannot attend the meeting, they should contact Susan Green in the Administrator's office or Kelly Barrasso in the Planning Dept. The meetings will be posted on the website.

Mr. Heath stated he would like to have the previous week's meeting minutes submitted prior to the next scheduled meeting.

NOTE: Ms. Zaleski departed at this time.

IV. DISCUSSION OF MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Andrews would like the mission statement to help the public understand what the budget document is & how it is developed.

NOTE: Dr. Rabinovich would like an understanding of what the numbers are.

Mr. Swett stated that numbers are key. He feels there should only be one set of numbers. He would like Mr. Andrews & Ms. Zaleski to be the keepers of the numbers & have these numbers be sent out before each meeting.

Mr. Swett would like the School Committee budget request placed in the whole budget right now & then the committee can work from there relative to a working document/working paper. It should be labeled as such as well as noted it is a draft document. Ms. Eckstrom stated it should be marked "working product".

Ms. Eckstrom stated if the school side wants to put their requested figure(s) into the budget now, the Town Administrator has other budget scenarios w/ for example, 7% more in it & he should be able to do this. Mr. Swett stated the school side will accept any numbers the Town Administrator proposes & he would like the present school side requested figure(s) to be utilized to start.

Ms. Eckstrom noted the Governor's budget is out. Mr. Andrews clarified that the House 1 numbers are defined as the Governor's numbers.

NOTE: The discussion went back to the Mission Statement.

Ms. Eckstrom noted the BOS Mission Statement for all departments. She stated this statement could be utilized & tweaked to fit this committee's goals.

Mr. Swett suggested Ms. Eckstrom & Mr. Andrews draft a Mission Statement & submit it for review at the next committee meeting.

V. BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Andrews stated everyone should have the cherry sheet for House 1. He asked that any budget discussions be held at the next meeting.

Mr. Andrews discussed briefly what he is hearing up at Beacon Hill. Brief discussion ensued re: some of the preliminary numbers coming out from House 1.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Eckstrom moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 A.M. Ms. Bronk seconded.

VOTE: Unanimous (7-0-0)

Attest: 

Approval Date: 2/4/11

Date copy sent to Town Clerk: _____

