



Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING September 20, 2016

Call to Order: 6:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Dennis Heffernan, *Chair*
Francine Hart, *Vice Chair*
Sam Cafiso
Laurie Milette
Tricia Holt
Scott Sullivan
Lisa Lambert
Dean Nifakos
Martha Sumner, *excused*
John Sherman, *Selectmen Ex-Officio*

Also Present: Sean Fitzgerald, Town Manager

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Scott Sullivan

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

★T. Holt moved, second by F. Hart, to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2016 meeting. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 9-0-0 U/A.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS

All the members went around the table and introduced themselves. Each told how long they have been in town and on the Budget Committee (BudCom).

OVERVIEW OF BUDGET PROCESS w/QUESTIONS

S. Fitzgerald gave an overview explanation of how Plaistow reviews budgets. He noted that the Department Heads prepare their request. Those requests are then reviewed and approved but the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and then move on to the BudCom for acceptance and eventual approval. Each budget is presented to the by the Department Heads, making them available to explain or answer questions about their budgets. It was noted that because the budgets are being prepared before the end of the year, not all values are based on actuals, some are based on three-year trends. The Public Hearing on the Budget is held in early-mid January and then there is Deliberative Session sometime at the end of January or early February.

D. Heffernan noted that each department budget is reviewed as much as five (5) different times. He added that the BOS review/approval schedule is approximately one (1) week ahead of the BudCom schedule.

F. Hart asked of budgets were approved line-by-line. It was noted that the budgets are reviewed line-by-line but each is approved as a whole department.

S. Fitzgerald explained the difference between the operating budget, which captures the day-to-day operating expenses of the town, and the Warrant Articles, which is how larger capital items are approved by the voters. It was noted that Plaistow is an SB2 (Senate Bill 2) town, which means there is a Deliberative Session and then a modified Town Meeting vote in March.

REVIEW OF CURRENT BUDGET

It was noted that the wrong budget review form had been given to the members. The current form will be emailed out the members on the next day. (Parking Lot Item).

J. Sherman noted that the BOS had approved 8-10 department budgets at their last meeting. He explained that the BOS votes to approve each budget, with the option to revisit it if questions come up at a later time. It was noted that this is different than the BudCom procedure which is to accept each budget for consideration and then approve at the Public Hearing once any revisions have been made. He added that he and S. Fitzgerald take comments or questions from the BudCom back to the BOS if needed.

D. Heffernan requested that Parking Lot items be added to the agenda each week.

REVIEW OF BUDGET SCHEDULE

There was a review of the proposed BudCom review schedule. CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) was moved out one week as it was scheduled for November 08, 2016, which is Election Day and the Committee does not meet that day.

There was a discussion of what the CIP is and how it is developed and updated. It was noted that it is key to the development of Warrant Articles each year.

S. Fitzgerald noted that the BudCom and the BOS have always worked cooperative to revise the schedule as needed if there are delays in review of additional information is request. It was also noted that the Department Heads are very responsive to requests for information or to answer any other questions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Safety Complex Building Committee (SCSB)

D. Heffernan noted that they have been meeting every other Thursday morning and that there is action starting on the construction site. He added that there will soon be monthly progress reports, including budget reports, available for public review.

It was noted that a first week of October groundbreaking ceremony was being planned.

There was discussion on some of the issues that had been encountered including a protected species of bats and finalization of the construction schedule.

S. Fitzgerald noted they were using a design/build methodology instead of a design/bid/build process. This allowed them to move forward at a faster, more efficient pace.

D. Heffernan also noted there was a Facebook page for the project.

S. Fitzgerald added that the link will be posted to the Town's website and that pictures showing the progress would be updated frequently.

There was discussion about current progress on the site, including the loss of some trees to allow for additional parking.

D. Heffernan noted that the Police Chief and Fire Chief had originally been the chair and vice chair of the SCBC, but new officers have been elected. M. Sumner is now the chair and D. Heffernan is the vice chair.

OLD BUSINESS

S. Cafiso asked if the Handbook new Elected Officials that was supposed to be completed earlier in the year was ready.

S. Fitzgerald noted that final edits were being done. He was asked to report on the status at the next meeting. (Parking Lot Item)

D. Heffernan reminded all Committee members that they are required to conform to the Right to Know Laws under RSA 91-A. He cautioned about using the "reply all" function on emails that could possibly create an online discussion.

J. Sherman added that any discussion that may occur should be reported at a regular BudCom meeting.

CIP Update

J. Sherman noted that the CIP is close to finalized. He added that Chairman Tim Moore was updating a lot spreadsheet and the Committee will be meeting once for to finalize any changes. He added that the text document that is the backup to the spread sheet was basically complete.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no additional matters before the Committee and the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Dee Voss
Recording Secretary