

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

April 9, 2019

Call to Order: 6:34 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Bob Hamilton, *Chair Elect*
Lisa Lambert, *Vice Chair Elect, excused*
Dennis Heffernan, *Budget Committee*
Sam Cafiso, *Budget Committee*
Laurie Milette, *Budget Committee*
Jay DeRoche, *Budget Committee*
Katie Ingalls, *Budget Committee*
Peter Bracci, *Budget Committee*
Maxann Dobson, *Budget Committee*
Greg Taillon, *Selectmen's Representative*
Francine Hart, *Selectman's Representative Alternate*

Agenda Item 3: Pledge of Allegiance

B. Hamilton led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item 4: Introduction of New Members:

B. Hamilton congratulated D. Heffernan for his 3rd term with the Committee.

B. Hamilton welcomed P. Bracci and M. Dobson as new Committee members.

B. Hamilton congratulated and welcomed G. Taillon as the new BOS Representative.

B. Hamilton offered a Thank You to L. Lambert for her time as the Committee Vice Chair.

B. Hamilton thanked the Committee for having a great attendance record and participation for the prior budget season.

D. Heffernan congratulated and commended B. Hamilton for his time as Committee Chair.

Agenda Item 5:

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes for January 8, 2019:

G. Taillon offered that his name was spelled incorrectly on Page 4.

- *S. Cafiso moved, second by D. Heffernan, to approve the January 8, 2019 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 7-0-2 (P Bracci and M. Dobson abstaining).*

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes for February 2, 2019:

- *D. Heffernan moved, second by J. DeRoche, to approve the February 2, 2019 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 7-0-2 (P Bracci and M. Dobson abstaining).*

Agenda Item 6: Budget Related Public Comment:

There was no Budget Related Public Comment.

Agenda Item 7: Re-Organization:

a) Selection of Chair:

- *J. DeRoche moved, second by D. Heffernan, to nominate D. Heffernan as the Budget Committee Chair. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 2-6-1 (B. Hamilton, S. Cafiso, L. Milette, K. Ingalls, P. Bracci, and M. Dobson opposed and G. Taillon abstaining).*
- *S. Cafiso moved, second by K. Ingalls to nominate M. Dobson as the Budget Committee Chair. There was no discussion on the motion. The vote was 6-2-1 (D. Heffernan and J. DeRoche opposed and G. Taillon abstaining).*

b) Selection of Vice Chair:

- *B. Hamilton moved, second by M. Dobson to nominate S. Cafiso as the Budget Committee Vice Chair.*

Discussion: S. Cafiso accepted the nomination. D. Heffernan moved, second by J. DeRoche to nominate L. Lambert as Budget Committee Vice Chair however the motion was rescinded because the Committee agreed that they were unsure if L. Lambert accepts the nomination to be the Committee Vice Chair for another term.

The vote was 8-0-1 (G. Taillon abstaining).

The Committee changed seating position, with M. Dobson as the new Committee Chair and S. Cafiso as the new Committee Vice Chair.

c) Committee Assignments:

M. Dobson offered a review of the current Committee assignments.

- Capital Improvements Program (CIP):

Current Assignment:

B. Hamilton

S. Cafiso

J. DeRoche - Alternate

New Assignment:

M. Dobson

J. DeRoche

B. Hamilton - Alternate

- Public Works Building Committee:

Current Assignment:

S. Cafiso

J. DeRoche

D. Heffernan - Alternate

New Assignment:

The assignments will remain the same.

- Town Report Committee:

There was discussion that L. Lambert expressed her desire to remain the BC Representative for the Town Report Committee.

New Assignment:

L. Lambert

M. Dobson - Alternate

- Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission:

There was a discussion that it may be beneficial for a Committee member to be present at the Recreation and Conservation meetings even if not acting as a voting member.

L. Milette offered that it may be beneficial to have the Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes posted on the Town website.

Agenda Item 8: Filling of Vacancies:

There are no vacancies at this time.

Agenda Item 9: Meeting Schedule:

B. Hamilton offered the suggestion that last year's Committee Meeting and Workshop Schedule be used as a guideline for this year's meeting schedule.

D. Heffernan offered that the Committee Chair and Vice Chair meet with the Town Manager and the Finance Director to determine the appropriate Committee Meeting Schedule.

a) Budget Committee Training:

- NH Municipal Association Budgeting Workshops:

B. Hamilton offered that he sent an e-mail to the Committee with last year's Budget Committee Meeting Schedule. He made the suggestion that the Committee Use last year's schedule as a guide for this year's schedule.

There was a brief discussion about listing the training classes offered by the NH Municipal Association as part of the Budget Committee Meeting Schedule once their schedule becomes available.

- September 2019 Workshops:

There was a discussion regarding the workshop sessions that were offered last year which included Department Heads, Town Staff, and other Town Committee members.

D. Heffernan offered that the Budget Committee Chair and Vice Chair work with the Town Manager and Finance Director to establish this year's meeting schedule.

b) Budget Committee Fall Meeting Schedule:

There was a discussion about having a few extra meetings toward the beginning of the schedule and working in the NH Municipal Association Training Sessions and Workshop Meetings with the Department Heads as they become available.

D. Heffernan suggested using October 1, 2019 as the tentative start date for the Budget related meetings. He also suggested not having any meetings in July and August to allow the Committee Members to take vacation.

There was a discussion to possibly start workshop meetings starting in May or June with the understanding that they are not mandatory, but that it could be beneficial for the Committee members to attend.

B. Hamilton offered that he would like to see more presentations regarding expenditure information for review and discussion. He offered payroll as a topic of discussion considering the fact that payroll makes up approximately forty (40) percent of the budget.

G. Taillon suggested that the Committee keep the workshop meetings short, consisting of one (1)

presentation and two (2) or three (3) agenda items.

There was a discussion that the Committee didn't get into the actual budget related meetings until October last year. It was discussed that the Committee start discussing where the budget should be earlier which would allow the Committee to create a starting point to present to the Town Manager and the Finance Director. This will allow the preparation of the budget while focusing on meeting budget goals.

D. Heffernan offered that it would be helpful for the Committee to hear from the Town Manager and Finance Director regarding line items that they are seeing as significant.

G. Taillon offered that he met with the Town's Interim Police Chief who is working to reduce the Police Department Budget.

L. Milette suggested that the Committee make a recommendation to the Town Manager and Finance Director to reduce the 2020 budget by 5% off the 2019 operating budget. This would be a starting point reduction of approximately \$496,000.

There was a discussion regarding prior years recommendations made to the Town Manager and Finance Director to reduce the budget. It was discussed that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) can direct a reduction, but the Committee can only make a recommendation. It was suggested that the Committee work with the BOS, Town Manager, and Finance Director together to see how much of a reduction can be made.

L. Milette offered that the 2018 End of Year Surplus was \$326,360 and revenues were under-estimated by \$238,893 per Pages 66 and 67 of the Town Report. She suggested that these figures be taken into consideration for discussion.

There was a discussion and review of the Tax Rate Calculation handout provided to the Committee and an explanation provided of the Anticipated Tax Rate Calculation. It was discussed that the 2018 Anticipated Tax Rate was \$6.09. However the Tax Rate ended up being \$6.33 which is the current Tax Rate. There were some factors discussed that may have lead to the increased tax rate.

D. Heffernan offered a Tax Rate Calculation History review from the handout provided to the Committee. He brought the 2018 Fund Balance Voted from Surplus where the figure was (\$783,655) compared to past years where the next highest of (\$100,000).

L. Milette offered that she has done a review of tax rates from some surrounding towns with populations close to that of Plaistow and from her research, Plaistow had the highest tax rate.

P. Bracci offered that it needs to be taken into consideration that when assessments are down, tax rates are up, and when assessments are up, tax rates are down.

B. Hamilton offered a review of the budget increases from 2010-2017 according to the Town Report.

- ***L. Milette moved, second by B. Hamilton to recommend to the Town Manager and Finance Director to reduce the 2020 Operating Budget by 5% of the 2019 Operating Budget with the reduction of \$496,609.***

S. Cafiso recommended that the motion be made and then the appropriate parties meet with the Town Manager and the Finance Director to see how feasible the figure is as a starting point for the reduction of the budget.

There was no further discussion on the motion. The vote was 6-0-3 (J. DeRoche, D. Heffernan, and G. Taillon abstaining).

Agenda Item 10: Review and discussion of the 2020 Budget and the budgeting process:

Agenda Item 11: New Business:

There was a discussion regarding RSA 32:22 which gives the Budget Committee access to review any information regarding invoices and expenditure information. It was stated that this was confirmed with the NH Municipal Association. It was discussed that some members of the Committee would like the ability to review monthly financial reports such as the Accounts Payable Manifest. It was discussed that B. Hamilton will look into whether or not the BOS can give approval for the Budget Committee to receive the report at least a couple days before a Budget Committee Meeting so that the Committee has time to review and discuss it. It is understood that the information can only be reviewed by the Committee, and not challenged.

It was then discussed that rather than the Accounts Payable Manifest being sent to all members of the Committee, that B. Hamilton and P. Bracci will work together to review the report and offer a review to the Committee at a scheduled meeting.

L. Milette suggested the possibility of also reviewing the Detail Report from the General Ledger as well.

D. Heffernan offered that he has provided a copy of a sample ballot in the Committee packets for review.

B. Hamilton suggested the possibility of simplifying the budget form itself, such that some items that can be consolidated be eliminated. He offered the example of Conflict of Interest being consolidated into the Administration Budget. He also suggested that line items that reflect payroll be identified in some manner.

There was discussion about a consensus for the creation of a Budget Committee Subcommittee so that members of the Committee can review information and report back during scheduled meetings.

M. Dobson stated that she will review the RSAs to see if creating a subcommittee for the Budget Committee is allowed.

Agenda Item 12: Old Business:

There was a discussion about starting the Budget Committee Workshop Meetings in May 2019. It was discussed that the Workshop Meetings would be scheduled at 7:00pm.

M. Dobson will work with the Town Manager, Finance Director, and Francine Hart from the BOS to see when they are available in May.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Samantha D. Cote
Recording Secretary