

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Workshop Meeting: September 17, 2019

Call to Order: 7:00p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Maxann Dobson, *Chair Elect*
Sam Cafiso, *Vice Chair Elect*
Dennis Heffernan, *Budget Committee, excused*
Lisa Lambert, *Budget Committee*
Laurie Milette, *Budget Committee, excused*
Jay DeRoche, *Budget Committee*
Katie Ingalls, *Budget Committee*
Peter Bracci, *Budget Committee*
Bob Hamilton, *Budget Committee*
Greg Taillon, *Selectmen's Representative, excused*
Francine Hart, *Selectman's Representative Alternate, arrived at 7:30pm*

Also present was: Jill Senter, Trustee of the Trust Fund

Agenda Item 3:

Review/Approval of Budget Committee Minutes for September 10, 2019:

M. Dobson offered that the review and approval of the Budget Committee Workshop Meeting Minutes would be postponed until the next meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation of Capital Reserve Funds Review and Update presented by Jill Senter, Trustee of the Trust Fund:

J. Senter provided the Committee with a copy of the "MS-9: Report of the Trust Funds of the Town of Plaistow for the Period 01/01/19 thru 07/31/19". She provided a brief review of the report.

M. Dobson asked J. Senter for a review of the process for the Town taking money out of a Trust Fund.

J. Senter provided a review of the process that is followed for the Town to take money from a Trust Fund.

S. Cafiso asked for clarification on the deadline when the Trust Funds are to be funded.

J. Senter provided clarification on the deadline for funding the Trust Funds. She stated that if a warrant article does not say to “raise and appropriate” then the deposit does not have to be made until December 15th.

B. Hamilton asked if Greg Colby, Finance Director will be available to attend the next Budget Committee Workshop Meeting.

S. Cafiso asked if all deposits are made into one (1) account at a financial institution.

J. Senter offered that yes, all deposits are held with a Financial Advisor at Fidelity.

There was a discussion on how the Financial Advisor is paid.

B. Hamilton asked how often the Trustees are provided with a report and how does the rate of return compare to last year.

J. Senter offered that a report is made available monthly and that the rate of return is roughly the same as last year.

There was a discussion as to whether the Trustees are content with the services of the Financial Advisor.

J. Senter offered that there have been discussions with the other Trustees and all of them seem to be content with the way things are set up.

S. Cafiso asked how many Trustees of the Trust Fund are there.

S. Senter offered that there are three (3) Trustees of the Trust Fund.

S. Cafiso asked how often the Trustee Board has meetings.

J. Senter offered that the Trustee Board meets as needed. She also stated that the Trustees can call Fidelity at any time and ask questions.

M. Dobson asked if the money is tied up in a bond.

J. Senter explained that the money is not “tied up” and that it can be made available as needed.

J. DeRoche asked what the percentage of management fees are paid to the Financial Advisor.

J. Senter offered that she believes that the management fees are simply 1/2 percent quarterly based upon the interest accrued in the account.

There was a brief discussion regarding the cemetery and the number of plots left available. It was discussed that the Cemetery Sexton is the person who can answer questions regarding the cemetery and perpetual care.

J. Senter offered that only the interest in the Perpetual Care Trust Fund can be used and it can only be used for maintenance broken down per plot. There is never enough interest in the Perpetual Care Trust Fund to cover everything.

F. Hart arrived at 7:30pm.

J. Senter offered that the court can be petitioned to release funds from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund, but it doesn't happen very often. She offered that the Town doesn't add money for perpetual care anymore. It used to be that \$250 per every plot sold went toward the principal in the Perpetual Care Trust Fund. However, that is not done anymore.

M. Dobson asked if the Committee had any additional questions.

J. Senter asked if the Committee would like an update of the M-9 Report come November or December.

M. Dobson offered that the Committee would like a copy of the M-9 Report in November.

J. Senter offered that she would provide the Committee an updated copy of the M-9 Report in November which will show end balances as of October 31, 2019.

M. Dobson gave a review of RSA 35:12 regarding appropriations.

F. Hart stated that she will ask the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and Greg Colby, Finance Director, when funds will be deposited into the Trust Fund.

M. Dobson stated that the Trustees may want to review the portfolio objective at Fidelity to adjust for market risk.

Agenda Item 5: Committee Reports:

There was a brief discussion that there is a new Building Capital Reserve Fund being created within the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to replace the old Building/Building Systems Capital Reserve Fund and there is also an Information Technology Capital Reserve Fund being created.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Town Report Committee. It was discussed that F. Hart is the Chair and K. I galls is an alternate. There was a vote for "turning the page". A spreadsheet will be provided to the department heads to fill in updated information. A dedication still needs to be determined.

Agenda Item 6: New Business:

The Committee was provided with a handout of “2019 Values by Location”.

It was discussed that assessments are completed by calculating 98% of a property’s market value. There only needs to be three (3) to five (5) property sales to get the basis for assessments.

M. Dobson asked what a property owner would do if they disagreed with an assessment.

F. Hart offered that a property owner would need to bring in documentation to justify applying for a property tax abatement.

M. Dobson asked when assessors are sent out.

F. Hart offered that unless there is a real estate boom, there shouldn’t be a need for additional assessments where they are already valued within 98%.

B. Hamilton offered that the Pentucket Mall at 58 Plaistow Rd. is being turned to condos.

B. Hamilton asked why Walmart has decreased in value.

F. Hart offered that she will look into why Walmart has decreased in value.

J. DeRoche offered that if there is a question regarding assessments, that the BOS can ask the Assessor directly. However, if a resident has a question they will be directed to the Assessor’s office.

Agenda Item 7: Old Business:

F. Hart offers a brief discussion regarding the goal to decrease to 2020 budget by 5%. She stated that Mark Pearson, Town Manager has been asked to work on a 2-1/2% reduction to the budget, which will contribute to getting the Municipal portion of the tax rate down, and the remaining 2-1/2% is to come out of the warrant articles.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Capital Reserve Fund for the Health Department Budget with regard to mosquito control. It was discussed that the Town has sprayed three (3) times this year. Mosquito control has always been part of the budget and the \$33,000 is broken down quarterly.

B. Hamilton asked the Committee how the Municipal Tax Rate is calculated. He stated that he understands that G. Colby has a precise formula for estimating the tax rate.

F. Hart offered that there are tax rate calculations available on Page 72 of the Town Report.

M. Dobson asked if the Committee had any additional questions.

F. Hart offered that she will work to get a copy of the budget to the Committee once it has been reviewed by the BOS.

B. Hamilton stated that last year Christina Cruz, Recreation Director, Care before the Committee to discuss PARC. He asked what is to happen now Christina Cruz is no longer working for the Town.

F. Hart offered that \$16,000 of Impact Fees have been earmarked to go toward the ball park. It will be M. Pearson's decision, while working in conjunction with the Recreation Commission, if he wants to hire a full time Recreation Director or just make it a part time position.

B. Hamilton offered that there was a warrant article years ago to make the Recreation Director a full time position, but the warrant article was declined.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Samantha D. Cote
Recording Secretary