

Town of Plaistow ♦ Budget Committee

145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Workshop Meeting: October 15, 2019

Call to Order: 6:32p.m.

ROLL CALL:

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

Also present was:

Agenda Item 3:

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

Discussion:

From October 8, 2019 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:

S. Cafiso noted that on Page 4 of the September 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes it was stated that “ S. Cafiso offered that if there is a question regarding assessments, that the BOS can ask the Assessor directly.” He stated that it was not he who said that statement, but rather J. DeRoche.

J. DeRoche offered that he did not remember making the statement noted. Therefore, it is unknown as to who actually made the statement.

From October 8, 2019 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:

P. Bracci stated that he did not make the statement on Page 8 that states: “P. Bracci expressed concern about reassessing commercial property. He asked if doing reassessments would open the Town up to new lawsuits.

It was discussed that this statement would be removed from the Meeting Minutes.

From October 8, 2019 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes:

P. Bracci offered that when the Highway Department cuts the grass that it should come from the Highway Department funds, not the Recreation Department.

It was discussed that the statement needs to be corrected to state:

P. Bracci offered that when the Highway Department cuts the grass that it should come from the Recreation Department funds, not the Highway Department.

- **S. Cafiso motioned, second by B. Hamilton to approve the Budget Committee Meeting Minutes for October 8, 2019, as amended. There was no further discussion on the motion. The vote was 6-0-3 (G. Taillon, D. Heffernan, and J. DeRoche abstaining).**

Agenda Item 4: Committee Reports:

J. DeRoche offered an update regarding the Highway Garage.

B. Hamilton offered that last year there was supposed to be a Open House, but it was delayed because of construction. He offered that there is to be an Open House within the next couple of months.

S. Cafiso offered an update on the street light replacement project. He offered that the project is expected to be completed by November 2019.

M. Dobson offered that per the discussion at previous meetings it looks as though some departments are running over budget. However, it needs to be understood that some expenses need to be paid up front, but the budget will level out by the end of the year.

M. Dobson offered a brief review of the “2020 Town of Plaistow: Town Manager’s Budget”.

G. Taillon offered that the Board of Trustees has met with Cab Vinton, Library Director.

There was a discussion regarding the Library Budget and the plan for a 2-1/2% reduction in the budget. There is a surplus for the purpose of taking care of the water softener system.

B. Hamilton offered that the Library has requested money from the Contingency Fund, which has already been approved.

M. Dobson offered that it may be beneficial for Cab Vinton to come to a Budget Committee Meeting so that the Committee may ask some additional questions.

D. Heffernan asked if the Committee knows what revenues have been received.

It was discussed that the Highway Block Grant was not included in the budget and that Mark Pearson, Town Manager, is trying to find a way to itemize revenues.

G. Taillon offered that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) has had a discussion about the possibility of putting revenues in as line items. However, in his opinion it would be better to add revenues in as footnotes and possibly color code areas in the budget where appropriate.

M. Dobson offered that Epping does something interesting with their budget to show revenues. It might be helpful to talk to Greg Colby, Plaistow Finance Director, and see if Epping's method for showing revenues can be used as a guideline.

B. Hamilton initiated a discussion regarding the Hazardous Waste Program. He offered that there is one (1) pick up day in the Spring and one (1) in the Fall. Plaistow hosts the one in the Spring. He offered that the Town that hosts the pick up determines what the cost is and distributes the cost amongst other Towns involved. He asked if Plaistow's portion is only determined to be \$3,500, then why is the Town budgeting budgeting so much money?

G. Taillon offered that the amount budgeted for the Hazardous Waste Program is a total and does not show revenue offsets. There are revenues that should be included as a footnote.

M. Dobson initiated a brief discussion regarding the Trash & Recycling Committee. She offered that they are still trying to get trash and recycling figures.

S. Cafiso offered that in 2021 the Town will be looking into new contracts for trash pick up and recycling.

B. Hamilton initiated a brief discussion regarding Safety Impact Fees. He offered that some Impact Fees will be applied to Debt Services which can be applied toward long term bond interest.

M. Dobson offered that Page 2 of the budget document is missing for the Executive section.

L. Milette offered that some additional questions have been given to M. Dobson to look into regarding the Trust Fund.

There was a discussion that the Committee will be provided a copy of the 2020 budget once it is available after the BOS reviews it. The budget will be split in half to make it easier for the Committee to review and F. Hart will gather any questions so that the Budget Committee doesn't have to duplicate efforts.

S. Cafiso offered that he has reviewed the "2020 Town Manager's Budget" slideshow document, but can't seem to find the percentages for budget cuts for each department. It is understood that the Library is expected to be 2-1/2%. However, there doesn't seem to be figures for other departments.

G. Taillon offered that the budget was done with all departments together. Some departments had much deeper cuts than others. The Library has decided to do their own budget and they have their own Board of Trustees. M. Pearson has no control over that budget.

There was a brief discussion that when it comes to deciding where reductions are to take place it is up to the Town Manager to decide, not the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee can make a motion to recommend a reduction, but that is all.

There was a brief discussion that the Library Budget is approximately \$600,000. The reduction of 2-1/2% is only \$15,000. It was discussed that according to the Operating Budget Summary it looks as though the Library has spent 100% of their budget. It was discussed that this doesn't look accurate and may be put in as a placeholder. M. Dobson offered to look into this.

J. DeRoche asked if the Library Budget is a default budget.

G. Taillon offered that when the budget is voted on, it will be voted on as a whole, including the Library's budget.

B. Hamilton reminded the Committee that the Library Budget is unique based upon the fact that they pay their own electric, insurance, etc. In other departments, some of these expenses are included in the Executive portion of the budget.

M. Dobson offered that looking at the expenditure sheets will help the Committee to see if departments are overspending and to see what departments are reaching 100%.

J. DeRoche asked if there are any estimates available for surpluses.

G. Taillon offered a brief discussion regarding surpluses. He offered that the Committee really needs to wait until the end of the year to see what the final figures will be, as some expenses are back loaded. If the Committee looks at figures before the end of the year, the only way to get accurate figures would be to meet with each department to see what their expenses are and what they will be.

B. Hamilton offered that G. Taillon was correct in his explanation of surpluses. However, there have been surpluses in the past. Upon looking at the previous five (5) years, it looks as though surpluses have been tightened up. He stated that there would have to be a study done of previous years to pick out trends.

G. Taillon offered that there is truly no definite way to get an accurate look at the figures until the end of the year. He offered that G. Colby has an accurate approach to taking care of contingencies. He offered that different Town Managers spend money differently and that money is now spent a lot differently than it was in the past.

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

G. Taillon initiated a discussion regarding response times for the Fire Department. He offered that there needs to be people on call at the Fire Department, who are paid hourly, to reduce response times. He suggested that the Committee ask the active Fire Chief to come in to talk about the adjustments being made and if there are alternatives available, and answer any additional questions that the Committee has in detail.

There was a discussion that the Committee has questions as to how many fires there have been or calls that have come in.

P. Bracci offered that if the Committee is looking into response times for the Town, he would suggest also looking into what the response times are for Atkinson.

B. Hamilton suggested that the Committee look into response times for Hampstead also.

S. Cafiso asked if the Town is in the process of hiring a Fire Chief, how it would be possible for the Interim Fire Chief to answer questions accurately.

G. Taillon offered that the Committee would need to speak with M. Pearson and the current active Fire Chief.

B. Hamilton offered that traditionally when positions have been added, it has been in the form of a warrant article, which increases the budget.

J. DeRoche initiated a brief discussion regarding the increase in the Assessment budget.

M. Dobson offered that if the Committee has any additional questions that need to be looked into to forward questions to her.

Agenda Item 5: New Business:

D. Heffernan asked if M. Pearson and G. Colby will be available during the meetings where the Budget Committee reviews the Budget.

J. DeRoche offered that he will not be in attendance for the November 5, 2019 Budget Committee Meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Old Business:

There was no Old Business presented.

There was no additional business presented and the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Samantha D. Cote
Recording Secretary