

Town of Plaistow Municipal Budget Committee
Operating Procedure Overview
Adopted October 25, 2016

The **responsibility** of the Plaistow Municipal Budget Committee (BudCom) is to develop and present to the legislative body (Town's voters) a "statement of recommended appropriations...". Specifically "to confer with the governing body or bodies and with other officers, department heads and other officials, relative to estimated costs, revenues anticipated, and services performed to the extent deemed necessary by the budget committee" and "to assist its voters in the prudent appropriation of public funds". All Budget Committee activity is governed by State Law -RSA Chapter 32, the Municipal Budget Law. NOTE: This procedure is for the Municipal Budget Committee only and does NOT govern the appropriation of funds for the local public schools that are part of the Timberlane Regional School District.

There are nine **(9) at large members** of the Budget Committee. Three members are elected at the annual Town meeting for staggered three year terms. If an opening appears during the year, it is the Budget Committee's responsibility to fill that opening within a 5-day period. A one or two year position will be added to the Town Warrant to fill out the remaining years of that opening, as necessary.

Each year, an **Organizational meeting** is scheduled (usually in mid April- after the annual meeting) of the BudCom at which time the Chairman and Vice Chairman are selected by the members present. Any appointments to other committees are made by consensus. These other committee assignments may be to standing committees –such as the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) or to other, temporary committees, as requested.

Based on a **schedule** created by the BudCom Committee Chair (working with the Town Manager), meetings and agendas are scheduled for Tuesday Nights, usually starting in late September and continuing into January. The purpose of the meetings may be to either- receive, review or approve requests and/or Warrant Articles.

The **Board of Selectmen (BOS)** appoints one of its members to serve as a member of the Budget Committee. The purpose of this representative is to represent the BOS to the BudCom and from the BudCom to the BOS. This BOS representative votes based on the BOS position, NOT on the representative's personal preference. This BOS representative attends all meetings and has a designated alternate to serve in the representative's absence.

The **Town Manger** attends all BudCom meetings and supports the BOS budget as presented to the BudCom. He also functions as the Dept Head and present budget requests, as necessary.

A BudCom **Clerk** will be assigned by the Town Manager. The Clerk is responsible for preparing all meeting agendas, minutes and correspondence including e-mail delivery of the departmental requests. In addition, the Clerk will prepare, update and present an Action Item List for items that cannot be resolved during the current meeting.

The **budget process** starts in late summer/early fall with the various Dept Heads meeting with the Town Manager and agreeing on the amount to be requested. Each **Budget request** is presented to the BOS by

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the Dept Head and/or Town Manager, as appropriate. The request is in a standard format that includes: Account #, Account Title, Account Description, previous 3 year's actual expenditures, last year's request, this year's actual to date and this year's request. These requests then go to the Board of Selectmen for either their approval or revision. After approval by the BOS, each departmental request is sent to the BudCom - usually one week before the request is to be considered by the BudCom. NOTE: the BOS reserves the right to change their vote on any Warrant Article or budget request as new information becomes available.

Each **Budget request** is presented to the BudCom by the Dept Head and/or Town Manager, as appropriate. The BudCom may ask questions about any line item in the request and/or may request additional information to be presented at a later meeting. NOTE: The BudCom will consider each budget at least three times: they Accept (take under consideration) when is first presented, they Review it later at a budget review meeting and Approve it during their approval meeting.

Once all the budget requests are reviewed by the BudCom, the Town Manger will prepare a complete worksheet to allow the BudCom to see the potential overall affect of each individual request on the upcoming Operating Budget. Also, a Comparative Statement is produced comparing this year's total budget request to the previous year as approved at Town Meeting.

The Town Manager prepares a DRAFT Warrant per the proscribed State format that includes the Operating Budget request (along with the Default Budget amount). Additional Warrant Articles are generated by the BOS, typically submitted for larger one-time requests and for requests that must be submitted in the form of a Warrant Article, such as deposits to, and withdrawals from, Capital Reserve Funds. Warrant Articles may also be submitted for non-monetary issues, such as zoning changes

In addition to the departmental requests, the BudCom will be asked to recommend or not the financial **warrant Articles**. The numeric vote result on each Warrant Article by both the BOS and the BudCom will appear on the Town Warrant, but the BudCom only votes on the monetary articles.

Public Hearing- "the budget committee... shall hold at least one public hearing... not later than 25 days before each annual or special meeting... and after the conclusion of public testimony shall finalize the budget to be submitted to the legislative body" (at the Deliberative Session). The BudCom is responsible for presenting and explaining each financial item on the Town Warrant and this is posted as a regular BudCom meeting.

Deliberative Session- As Plaistow is an SB2 Town, a Deliberative Session is scheduled as the first part of Town Meeting. The BudCom participates in the presentation and explanation of each financial item on the Town Warrant and this is posted as a regular BudCom meeting to allow the BudCom the opportunity to re-vote any financial Warrant Article based on the discussion at the Deliberative Session.

Plaistow Budget Committee Vacancy Policy and Procedure

Adopted September 26, 2017

In the event of a vacancy on the Plaistow Budget Committee the following procedure will be used to fill that vacancy:

- The Chair shall direct that the vacancy shall be posted on the Town's Website at www.plaistow.com as well as on the Town Hall Bulletin Board. The posting shall contain information regarding the appointment process including: where Candidates should submit their information; what documentation a Candidate should provide; deadlines for submissions; as well as any interview process.
- For documentation a Candidate should submit a *Letter of Interest*, which should include:
 - o Name; address; contact telephone number; and email address
 - o Applicable background and/or experience (employment, municipal or other government)
 - o Letter(s) of recommendation
 - o Any additional information the applicant feels would help the Budget Committee in its selection process
- If deemed necessary, the Budget Committee may conduct interviews. Applicants will need to be available if an interview is requested.
- Any person appointed to a mid-year vacancy shall serve until the next Town election at which time the voters will determine who fills the remainder of the vacant term. A member who is appointed to fill a vacancy may run on the ballot to be elected to fill the remainder of the term.

It should be noted that the Budget Committee is not required to fill any vacancy. All vacancies shall be filled in accordance with NH RSA 32:15.