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Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2022

Present: Jenn Walsh; Lynn Cavicchi; Frank DelVecchio; Michael A. Trowbridge; Sara Walsh; and Walter Wilk were present virtually via GoToWebinar

Also Present: Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director; Edward Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations, and Teresa Murphy, Superintendent

Jenn Walsh was not present at the start but joined the meeting at 6:09PM.

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1. Call the Meeting to Order AT 6:00 PM

Ms. Sara Walsh, Chair called the Budget Subcommittee meeting to order at 6:06PM.

2. Acceptance of meeting minutes from October 27, 2021

Motion: To accept the meeting minutes from October 27, 2021. (Trowbridge/Wilk)

Roll Call Vote:

Wilk – Yes DelVecchio – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Cavicchi – Yes S. Walsh – Yes

Passes 5:0

3. Update on high level budget projection

Mr. LaCasse began by stating that the preliminary budget was posted on the Towns website for January 1st as required by the Town Charter. He stated that the Governor released the first cherry sheet and it appears that the Town will net less than \$200,000. He then noted that he and Mr. Dumas have started going through requested budgets from each department and are looking harder to see what items can be cut. He also noted that currently he has not assumed using rescue funds. The committee members asked questions and made a few comments.

4. Inflation/supply chain expected impacts for current projects and operating budgets

Ms. Sara Walsh asked how the Town and School budgets are being impacted by inflation and supply chain issues. Mr. LaCasse responded that some departments have made sure the FY23 budgets reflect inflation costs, and noted the increases to fuel costs for FY23. He then added that supply chain issues are being addressed by pre-ordering materials for upcoming projects and he anticipates having to ask the Finance Committee for a transfer.

5. School department review timeline and process

Ms. Sara Walsh stated that the School budget has been drafted and reviewed by the School Committee. Superintendent Murphy confirmed that in January they presented the budget to the School Committee and it has been posted on the Schools website. She stated that typically this would be presented to the Finance Committee and that there will be a public hearing. Mr. Trowbridge suggested that the Schools present to the Budget Subcommittee like Town Departments, so that all three boards could attend if they chose and the information could be heard all at once. Ms. Walsh agreed that it could be added on instead of having them come to the Finance Committee and proposed a tentative date of March 23rd.

6. School Choice

Mr. Donoghue stated that school choice has been discussed due to the decrease in class sizes. He noted that there is opportunity to fit additional students in ninth and tenth grade. He continued by stating that lots of districts are shrinking across the state. He believed there would be room to add fifty students in ninth and tenth grade as early as next year. Mansfield would receive about \$5,000 per student from the state and receive special education costs from the sending Town should a student have a special education plan. Superintendent Murphy noted that in the lower grades the number of students per grade is increasing, but at some point, school choice would need to be considered to be able to maintain staffing and offer the variety of courses that the community is looking for. Ms. Cavicchi noted that it is all about enrollment management and she further noted that School Committee has not voted on the item. Ms. Sara Walsh thanked them for discussion this with the group and agreed that further discussion should happen when and if it is approved by the School Committee.

7. Upcoming budget meetings: schedule, process, format

Ms. Sara Walsh stated that Mr. LaCasse had put together a schedule for three nights and now they were possibly adding a fourth night on March 23rd for the schools. Ms. Sara Walsh asked Mr. LaCasse how to best prepare to make the best use of the time. Mr. LaCasse responded that the schedule does not include some of the smaller departments and the schedule is for the major departments beginning with February 9th on Wednesday evenings every other week at the Public Safety building at 6PM in person. Mr. LaCasse stated that he plans to send a report on each department prior to the meeting and the more questions he receives ahead of time the more time there will be at the meeting.

8. Committee discussions on Special Education Reserve and Budget Subcommittee Charge

Ms. Sara Walsh stated that the proposed revision to the charge of the special education reserve fund was revised by the School Committee and she asked Ms. Murphy to explain. Ms. Murphy stated that the School Committee Policy Subcommittee met and proposed some changes. The first is that the order of Boards listed should be changed to read Select Board, School Committee and Finance Committee in each of the appropriate sections. Ms. Murphy also asked to remove the acronym of SPED and spell out the words and lastly to update Mr. Donoghue’s job title. Ms. Murphy also added that she would like Ms. Cavicchi and Ms. Jen Walsh to weigh in on whether or not the procedure should be included as part of the policy on how the funds would be moved. Ms. Cavicchi agreed that the steps should be included because it is a different stabilization fund than others because it does not need Town Meeting or the Finance Committee to move funds. It’s a request to the Select Board from the School Committee. She also added that it was important to keep a level of privacy around special education as this affects a small number of students. Mr. LaCasse referred back to when the special education reserve fund was created and noted that it states that the disbursement would happen only after a majority vote of the School Committee and a majority vote of the Select Board and recommended tweaking item number two of the policy to include this language. Ms. Sara Walsh asked Mr. LaCasse to work with Mr. Donoghue to make the changes.

Ms. Sara Walsh then discussed the Budget Subcommittee charge and noted that the Finance Committee had recommended that the words “shall be appointed on an annual basis by their respective committee chair” to be added after chair “or committee consensus.” Ms. Sara Walsh then asked if the Select Board had any changes and Mr. DeVecchio stated that the Select Board was leaving the language as is because they believed each committee could work it out and ultimately the chair could appoint or the chair could ask for the committee consensus. Mr. LaCasse then stated that he believed the word also needed to be deleted from the last sentence. Ms. Cavicchi then stated that the School Committee did not take a vote because they believed that there should be language that addressed that a chair and vice chair should provide guidance on who starts the process each year. Ms. Sara Walsh asked if Mr. LaCasse could add the language to address those items.

9. Items not known within 48 hours meeting

There were no items.

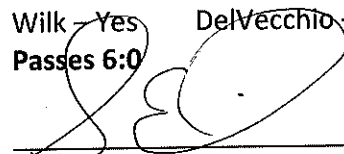
10. Meeting Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the January 26, 2022 Budget Subcommittee meeting at 7:02PM. (Trowbridge/DelVecchio)

Roll Call Vote:

Wilk – Yes DelVecchio – Yes Trowbridge – Yes Cavicchi – Yes J. Walsh – Yes S. Walsh – Yes

Passes 6:0



Signature

4/13/22

Date