

**Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2023**

Present: Ms. Diana Bren; Mr. Michael Trowbridge, Ms. Sara Walsh, Mr. Walter Wilk, and Mr. Steve Schoonveld were present at the Public Safety Community Room at 500 East Street.

Also Present: Mr. Barry LaCasse, Ms. Teresa Murphy and Mr. Ed Donoghue

Not Present: Ms. Jenn Walsh

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MANFIELD
MASSACHUSETTS

1. Open Meeting

Mr. Barry LaCasse called the Budget Subcommittee meeting to order at 6:05PM with five members present.

2. Re-organization

Mr. LaCasse then asked for a nomination of Chair.

Motion: To nominate Sara Walsh as Chair. (Trowbridge/Wilk) **Passes 5:0**

Ms. Sara Walsh then asked for nominations of Vice Chair.

Motion: To nominate Walter Wilk as Vice-Chair (Trowbridge/Schoonveld) **Passes 5:0**

3. Consideration to Approve Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2023

Motion: To approve the meeting minutes of April 26, 2023. (Trowbridge/Bren) **Passes 4:0:1** (Schoonveld Abstain)

4. Discussion of Meeting and Budget Planning Schedule and Process

Ms. Sara Walsh opened up the floor for discussion on the calendar, schedule and process for this years budget. Mr. LaCasse stated that it was his intention to follow a similar process like last year. He explained that he would be asking department heads to put their salary sheets and data into MUNIS and then in November he would be meeting with them one on one to better understand that requests. He stated that the preliminary budget will be posted by January 1st which is required by the Charter.

Mr. Wilk then asked who would be filling Mr. LaCasse's position and Mr. LaCasse stated that no one has been hired but the job is posted and hoping to have overlap, however his last day is scheduled for January 3rd.

Mr. Donoghue stated that his goal is to submit the budget to the School Committee's Budget Subcommittee at the end of November and present to the full School Committee on December 5, 2023 and expects a vote by the School Committee on the budget by December 12th. Ms. Murphy stated that this was the same process as last year. Mr. Schoonveld commented that historically the December 12th is a best estimate number and not an inflated, padded number. Mr. LaCasse stated that by January he receives the requests and it is not padded but it is a best guess as to what the State will give us and then in January or February there are cherry sheets and a better picture of what can be done. This also gives us the data from 2nd and 3rd quarters because there are many moving data points. Mr. Donoghue further noted that health insurance rates are typically not received until March and that is a huge part of the budget.

Mr. Wilk then asked if there are any major anticipated needs. Mr. Donoghue responded that last year it was electric rates and stated that the new boilers are installed and hopes that there is significant savings that will be seen this winter. Ms. Murphy stated that there will be a new math program which will be expensive. Ms. Walsh stated that it sounds like a meeting should happen in November and then at the end of January or early February for Budget Subcommittee and then another for March depending on how things go. Mr. LaCasse agreed and stated that last year was a challenging year and more meetings were needed unlike this year.

5. Discussion and Agreement on Data Requests

Mr. LaCasse stated that on the town side the website will be used like last year and frequently updated with changes as they happen and that he would like to use the same presentation structure as last year because it worked well. Ms. Walsh agreed on the presentation format being consistent because it made it easier to compare the Town and School. Mr. Schoonveld asked if there is a column for actual and wanted to know if the schools should be aiming to turnback more dollars at the end of the year because they are currently only turning back about \$300,000 to \$600,000 which is one percent of their budget. Ms. Walsh stated that there are variables and Mr. Wilk stated that the Town does not have as many variables and provided an example that the schools have to have a certain number of teachers where the police could go a few months down an officer. The Committee then spent a few minutes discussing the educational space study that was just done of the schools.

6. Budget Parameters for Planning

Ms. Walsh stated that last year we planned with a level services budget and wanted to discuss what this year's parameters were. Mr. Trowbridge stated that there should be a level services budget and then a second one that's "a la cart." Mr. LaCasse stated that the Town always asks for departments to do level services and that means no new staff and asks for a separate list of additional items and sometimes they ask for something that really should be a CIP item. Mr. Donoghue commented that the schools have more EL needs and are still dealing with a reduction of enrollment. Ms. Murphy stated they have 212 in Kindergarten this year and noted that they look at the birth rate to predict what the number of Kindergarten students will be and it is usually pretty close to the mark. She then stated that school choice brought in about \$114,000 this year and it covers the cost of a high school teacher. It was then asked if the students are coming from a particular area and she stated they were from all over and thought maybe it could be parents who work in Mansfield. Ms. Bren asked about the assessments for the regional schools and how last year there were unexpected increase. Mr. LaCasse stated it is difficult because they just send a bill. It was stated that Bristol Aggie was budgeted for \$68,000 and the assessment almost double. Ms. Walsh in conclusion stated that it will be a level services and asked for better word of the separate needs and wants list and the word "enhancements" was brought forward to use.

7. Tri-Board Meeting Planning

Ms. Sara Walsh stated that the Tri-Board meeting is scheduled for September 27th at 7PM here at Public Safety. She stated that the plan will be to talk about what was just agreed on. It will provide an opportunity for the new committee members ask questions and all three committees to be on the same page. Mr. Schoonveld asked if it was too soon to discuss the school study at this meeting and Ms. Murphy responded that she would like to speak with Mr. Dumas and Mr. LaCasse along with the School Committee before talking at the Tri-Board meeting.

8. Any Items Not Known within 48 Hours

There were no items.

9. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the Budget Subcommittee meeting of September 13, 2023 6:58PM. (Trowbridge/Bren)

Passes 5:0

Signature

11/16/23

Date

Minutes prepared by Carrie Champagne