

TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN
Budget Committee
16 School Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275

Minutes of Budget Committee Workshop held on May 19, 2011

Present at the meeting: Tom Irzyk, David Coolidge, Don Chaput, Jon Richardson, Lisa Komm, Jerry McKenney, Fern Bissonnette, Larry Anderson, Penny Touchette, Carol Merrill, Jason Tardiff, and Mike Frascinella

Others present: Richard Caruso and Patricia Caruso

Ms. Touchette opened the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Appointment of New Members.

Ms. Touchette noted that it had been her understanding that Sted Holton wanted to be appointed to the Budget Committee however he was not present. Addressing Mr. Caruso, she said that if after observing this meeting, he decided that he was interested in becoming a member of the Budget Committee; he could contact her to let her know. She added a reminder for committee members to keep the open seat in mind should they know anyone who might have an interest in serving their town.

Minutes.

Ms. Touchette had the Minutes from the Budget Committee's Public Hearing held on January 13, 2011 as well as the Minutes of the April 21, 2011 Budget Committee Meeting for approval. Mr. Richardson requested a small change to the January 13 minutes, after which Mr. Anderson made a Motion to approve the Minutes of January 13, 2011 as amended. Mr. Chaput seconded the Motion. All were in favor, and the Motion passed.

Budget Committee Strategy for 2011.

Ms. Touchette reviewed the reason for this workshop, which was to come together to develop some ideas toward what they'd like to do and to strategize ways to make working with the other departments a smoother process.

There were several items mentioned at the last meeting that committee members felt would very helpful to have prior to hearing the other departments' proposed budget presentations. Addressing those items, Ms. Touchette said she had requested a listing of Town Employees from Mr. Apple but had not yet received it. She also had requested a list of chemical costs from the Sewer Department but as yet had not received that, either. She said she would e-mail these to everybody once she received them. One item that had been procured was the Expenditures Listing as of May 16, 2011.

Ms. Touchette asked if anyone had an idea or thought to get things going. As part of the committee's effort to avoid surprises (and confrontations) by preparing ahead of time for department presentations, Mr. Anderson asked Mr. Tardiff if it would be possible to get a ballpark figure of what the default budget was going to be, so that they might begin with that in mind. Mr. Tardiff suggested requesting an estimated default budget figure from Mr. Apple, saying that if it was possible, he would be the one who could provide that. Mr. Anderson also asked Mr. Irzyk if he would be able to provide the final numbers, once agreed upon, for the teachers' contract, as well as the tax impact of those numbers.

Mr. Tardiff opined that the Budget Committee should *not* use an estimated default budget figure when drawing up a budget, citing that they should be working the budgets for what they are. He said his feeling was that if the Budget Committee started with an end goal (knowing the default figure and aiming below it), they would be paying too much attention to the numbers and not enough to the needs of the individual department. Finally, he said if they wanted to go ahead and ask Mr. Apple for the figure, that was fine, but if all committee members do not want to see it, that would better serve their purpose.

Conversation turned from less-than-desirable ways to decrease a budget's bottom line to the decrease in Allenstown's population over the past decade. A recent Concord Monitor article was quoted as stating that Allenstown had seen a 700-resident decrease according to the latest Census Bureau calculations. Another pertinent fact mentioned was that Allenstown has the fifth-highest tax rate in the state. Everyone agreed that the 51% of Allenstown that is taken up by Bear Brook State Park makes a huge, negative impact on that rating due to its nontaxable status. All of this led to the sobering fact that Allenstown has a tax base that can't sustain the number of services being offered by town departments. The difficult question that follows is what services should be cut? How might we convince the taxpayers, and get them to agree as to which services they can do without?

Subcommittees.

The next order of business was to appoint volunteers to subcommittees for each department. There are generally two Budget Committee members on each subcommittee, and their job is to attend the Select Board meeting at which their appointed department will present their proposed budget for the following year.

The subcommittees are as follows:

- Selectmen (Executive): Jon Richardson, Carol Merrill
- Police Department: Jerry McKenney, Larry Anderson & Dave Coolidge
- Fire Department: Penny Touchette & Michael Frascinella
- School:
- Sewer Department: Don Chaput & Fern Bissonette
- Highway Department: Jerry McKenney & Penny Touchette

Schedule Next Budget Committee Meeting.

Ms. Touchette asked Mr. Tardiff when the due date was for the Department Heads' budgets to be submitted. He told her they were already receiving direction from the Select Board and working on their budgets, and he expected them by late August. With that, it was decided to schedule the next Budget Committee meeting for Thursday, September 8, 2011 at 6:15 p.m.

Adjournment.

Mr. Tardiff made a Motion to close the meeting. Mr. McKenney seconded the Motion. All were in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Date approved: _____

Penny Touchette, Chair
Allenstown Municipal Budget Committee