

Budget Committee

11 Main Street, Hampstead, New Hampshire 03841-2033

Minutes November 30, 2023

A meeting of the Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 30, 2023, at the Hampstead Town Hall, 11 Main Street, Hampstead, NH. This meeting was broadcast live on HCTV 16.

PRESENT: Robert Weimar, Lewis Eaton (Ex-Officio), Lilli Walsh, and Steve Bates.

- 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room

- General Discussion

Weimar began his review of the 2023 Budget Committee summary document and commented that 50% of the budgets are salary and noted that police and school are bound by contracts. Eaton commented that the HPD contract will be finalized this year. Weimar stated he accessed a report the State of NH has compiling salary data for cities and towns to do a comparison. Eaton stated that salary increases work in steps, as an example, the town hall offices based on education and type of work.

Weimar asked the other members if they had any comments. Weimar is looking for feedback on the summary document, he stated his intent was to provide a document detailing the goals of the Budget Committee and a framework going forward.

Library, Weimar stated he would revise the library section to be consistent with the State RSA. Weimar commented that the library is a good resource to help with communication. Walsh agreed with his comments. Weimar stated he hasn't compared the Hampstead library to other towns to see if comparable. Eaton stated that town to town libraries are apples to oranges based on population and other factors. Bates asked about utilization rates at the library. Weimar stated he has numbers on file from the Libraries strategic plan. D. Soucy commented that they can run any number of reports for utilization you simply need to ask.

School, Weimar stated he gave the school section to them for their review and comment. Weimar stated his concern with the school budget is that folks don't understand the components of the budget. Weimar stated that approximately 22% of the population needs special services. Weimar stated there is a report with details.

Weimar stated he would like the committee members to review each department/committee budget to make their individual recommendations. Bates stated he wants the data/research that shows how Pre-K and K services would alleviate the need for special services.

Weimar stated the CIP needs for the school will be forthcoming.

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Moving on to the Fire Department, Weimar complimented Chief Carrier on the thoroughness of the details of his budget and needs. Weimar indicated that the HFD needs more consistent and permanent staff. Weimar stated that the HFD relates everything back to the requirements of the State.

Department of Public Works (DPW), Weimar felt it was important to explain what the BOS has done by hiring a DPW Director; he is a professional person reviewing and understanding the needs of the department. Weimar added that Storm Water Management (SWM) is another part of the budget.

Solid Waste & Recycling, Weimar and Walsh met with Ellen Cabral prior to this meeting and she requested some changes in wording to the document. Weimar and the DPW Director are meeting with NRRA to see if they could help with any alternative ideas for Solid Waste & Recycling.

Weimar stated there are no significant salary increases as far as HPD is concerned. Weimar stated spoke about vehicle replacement.

Weimar indicated he still needed to complete the section for Other Departments/Committees and stated that most budgets are static, if more detail or discussion is needed simply let him know.

Walsh stated that the Cable Committee costs are covered by a contract with Comcast, the reimbursement is based on the number of Comcast users in Hampstead.

Walsh stated she is still researching the health agencies and is trying to determine the level of service provided to the residents of Hampstead. Walsh indicated that some of the agencies have merged, changed names, etc. Walsh stated the individual dollar amounts are nominal, however, in total it amounts to \$60K.

Walsh feels these agencies should come before the BOS and town meeting to explain what services they provide. Walsh feels that each one of the agencies should be a separate warrant article. Walsh added that some of these agencies also get funding at the County and State level. Walsh suggested the Budget Committee develop a questionnaire for these agencies. Bates wants to know what benefit Hampstead residents get from these agencies; quantify the need.

Bates is concerned with the re-assessment cost increase, it is only performed once every five years however, the Town only received one RFQ. Weimar suggested a different process for RFQ's.

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- Minutes 11/16/2023

MOTION: L. Eaton made a motion to accept the 11/16/2023 minutes as presented

SECOND: L. Walsh

VOTE: 4-0

- Call for candidates – 2 members needed

Weimar mentioned the Budget Committee is looking for additional members, he hoped maybe someone with an accounting background would be interested.

- Adjourn

MOTION: L. Walsh made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 P.M.

SECOND: S. Bates

VOTE: 4-0

Minutes prepared by Debbie Soucy, Secretary