

# 9c-Budget Committee Minutes 02/08/2007

## Hopkinton Budget Committee Meeting Minutes February 8, 2007

Present: Karen Irwin, Chair, Jane Bradstreet, Patrice Gerseny, Danny Coen, David Lancaster, Bob Carpenter – CVP Rep., Tom O'Donnell, - HVP Rep., Peter Russell – Selectmen Rep.

Absent: Barbara Unger, Marshall Rowe – School Board Rep.

The meeting opened at 6:35 pm. The minutes of 02-07-07 were reviewed. Budget Committee [BC] member Bradstreet moved to accept. Seconded by BC member Lancaster. There was discussion and minutes were accepted with changes.

No one from the school was present, so the assumption was made there were no new petition warrant articles. SB member Rowe tried to forward the Schools MS 27 emails were received without any attachments.

BC member Bradstreet reviewed past history of the BC and school budget cuts. Last year the BC arbitrarily cut \$300K from Regular Education line and stated this year the BC needs to make a saleable argument to the voters at the annual meeting that the cuts the BC recommends are coming from line items that have a 3 year history of having surplus. If the BC does not make a great argument the school board is likely to promote the 'emotional cuts' – like MS sports, no assistants, no artist in residence.

BC member Lancaster noted that if the BC recommended amount of cuts goes through, the School Board will leave the artist in residence and sports alone.

SB member Russell recommended that Chair Irwin contact the school moderator and asked to be placed first on the annual meeting agenda.

The BC then reviewed accounts where there has been surplus. A few of the surplus accounts considered are Special Education, Building and Materials, Repair & Maintenance.

BC member Carpenter suggested looking at the surplus lines removing those lines that cannot be touched then remove 60% of the rest. This leaves some extra in each of the accounts. BC member all agreed this was a good idea. The BC has identified areas that have fat and maybe level funding to '06 levels athletics without touching salaries and benefits.

Chair Irwin requested that all BC members be present at each of the annual meetings in March.

BC member O'Donnell noted the School Board looks good because of its revenues. The run away locomotive is on the expense side. The cost of the school budget is driving people out of town.

The BC then discussed the Schools Capitol Improvement Warrant. BC member Russell stated his opinion that facilities warrant was kept together for a purpose and that if it

passes in its entirety as a one year deal, it would make it easier for the school board to recommend a bond for larger projects that may require to be financed with a bond. The philosophy being - you are used to paying X amount of extra dollars. The 'small' facilities project was not bonded and was paid for in one year. Since tax payers are used to paying this extra amount, they [School Board] will propose some large improvement project possibly requiring a bond with payments equal to this years Facilities Warrant Article.

BC member Russell stated that he once asked Superintendent Blake what it would cost to build a new campus for all schools. Dr. Blake's' response at the time was around \$30M. Mr. Russell then suggested using the current school buildings for commercial purposes. BC member Lancaster mentioned the town does not own Maple Street School property and the property would revert back to the previous owners of the land.

BC member O'Donnell asked what the town plans to do with the big red barn on the Houston property. BC member Russell said that all they did was weather-proof the barn. It was being used for storage.

BC member O'Donnell objects to the blanks left in the town budget.

Chair Irwin suggested the next meeting be April 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. BC member Lancaster recommends meeting quarterly so the BC can get a handle on town and school progress using the budgets that are passed at the annual meetings.

All of the Budget Forms available were signed by the BC members present. The School MS 27 and the others will be available for signing tomorrow at the town hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Clark  
Secretary