

TOWN OF HOPKINTON
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 7, 2017
APPROVED August 9, 2017 (as amended)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Janet Krzyzaniak, Don Houston, Ken Traum, Richard Houston, Deborah Norris, Amy Bogart, Ginni Haines, and Mark Zankel

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

John Wuellenweber, Matt Cairns, Matt Belanger

CALL TO ORDER

Janet Krzyzaniak called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm, at the Town Hall.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Amy Bogart nominated Janet Krzyzaniak to continue as Chair of the Budget Committee. Ken Traum seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. A vote was taken and all approved.

Deb Norris nominated Rich Houston as Vice Chair of the Budget Committee. Don Houston seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. A vote was taken and all approved.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 8, 2017, PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT MINUTES

Ken Traum moved to approve the February 8, 2017, Public Hearing Draft Minutes that include all the Town Budgets (Town, School, Hopkinton, and Contoocook Village Precincts). Don Houston Seconded. There were no changes. A vote was taken and all approved.

FINANCIALS:

SELECT BOARD

Ken Traum presented the Town's financials through the end of May 2017, explaining that the Town is five months into their calendar year. On the Expense side, Personnel, and Solid Waste, is a little high, because some of the payments are made in advance. There was a little scare with the April Fools' Storm, because it occurred on a Friday night/Saturday and that resulted in overtime wages paid for the Highway Dept. Director of Public Works Dan Blanchette, has asked staff to minimize overtime expenses throughout the summer, so that there is something left in case there are late fall storms. The fifth month Revenue report is not yet available, but at the end of the fourth month everything looked fine. Motor Vehicle revenue is running a little higher than expected at this time.

SCHOOL

There were no School Board representatives present.

HOPKINTON VILLAGE PRECINCT

The Hopkinton Village Precinct representative was not present.

CONTOOCOOK VILLAGE PRECINCT

Contoocook Village Precinct Representative Don Houston had no report.

Chairperson Krzyzaniak asked that all financial reports be ready for presentation at the September meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Amy Bogart motioned to resume Budget Committee Meetings on August 9, 2017, and that the month of July should be taken off. Rich Houston seconded the motion.

Discussion took place about having notice, 2-3 days in advance, of which representative from the School Board would be attending the meeting, so that questions or requests for information could be directed to the appropriate representative. It was agreed that Budget Committee Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month, until we need to meet more often in the December-February timeframe.

The Committee agreed that the School Board Representative should keep the Budget Committee up to date on the School Board, Buildings, and Facilities meetings, so that the Budget Committee has all the information needed to make sound decisions and to be able to ask questions when needed. There was no other discussion. A vote was taken to take the month of July off and to resume monthly meetings on the second Wednesday of each month, beginning Wed. August 9, 2017, until more frequent meetings are required. All approved the vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public attendees present.

OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Discussion took place regarding the interaction between the School Board and the public at the School Board's May 2017 meeting.

Discussion took place about the presentations given by the Special Education Department Head. In her presentation to the public, she stated that we are seeing an increase in complex educational needs/disorders, and we have educational problems that we've never seen in our students. Hopkinton has a higher percentage of Special Ed students attending our school system than the state average. The state average is 15% and Hopkinton has almost 19%.

Questions need to be asked and answered so that everyone has a clear picture of where and why money is being spent. Special Education funding has been rising twice as fast as regular education costs and the School Board needs to answer questions regarding that.

The Budget Committee thought that these questions should be considered:

- Where are we headed with our costs?
- What are our trends?
- Where are these students coming from?
- Are Special Education families moving to town because of what we provide?
- How much does it cost to educate a student?
- Where do we rank, in the state, with Special Education costs per student?
- How much does it cost to educate a Special Education student?
- Are we giving beyond what's required by law, to the Special Education students?
- Is our education philosophy out of reach for our tax payers?

Because the costs of Special Education are rising faster than the education costs overall, the Budget Committee feels a responsibility to the community to better understand the data around Special Ed in Hopkinton. Rich Houston motioned to form a sub-committee, to create questions that could be presented to the School Board, to help understand how Special Education needs impact the budget. Mark Zankel seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All approved the vote.

Mark Zankel, Rich Houston, and Deb Norris volunteered to be on the sub-committee. Amy Bogart will be on the sub-committee, if John Wuellenweber can't. The sub-committee will report back to the Budget Committee within 2 weeks or after the facilities meeting, which should take place at the end of June or at the beginning of July, with public notification.

Mark Zankel motioned to have Janet Krzyzaniak, as the Budget Committee Chair, reach out to the School Board Representative of the Budget Committee, to explore why the School Board accepts comments but not questions from the members of the public at its meetings. Don Houston seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All approved the vote.

Don Houston reported that the 2017 Town Report (blue pages 86 and 87 – c, e, f, h, and j) includes data that show that Hopkinton is growing at a much lower rate than the seven (7) surrounding towns, but our tax rate continues to rise, despite that.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Don Houston motioned to adjourn at 6:45 pm. Ken Traum seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

A vote was taken and all approved to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Clay