

TOWN OF HOPKINTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting
Town, School District, Hopkinton Village and Contoocook Village Precincts
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
****Approved October 13, 2021****

CALL MEETING TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mark Zankel called the Meeting to order at 5:34pm immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Christa Scura.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT – There were 9 Members present and 1 absent.

Committee Member	Attendance	Committee Member	Attendance
Don Houston	Present	Rich Houston	Present
Norm Goupil	Present	Thomas Lipoma	Present
Ken Traum	Arrived at 5:48pm	Christa Scura	Present
Steve Reddy	Present	Mark Zankel	Present
Jonathan Cohen	Present	Janet Krzyzaniak	Absent

Mark Zankel welcomed those in attendance to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF August 11, 2021

Steve Reddy motioned, seconded by Norm Goupil, to approve the minutes of August 11, 2021.

Mark Zankel asked if there were any corrections needed.

A vote was taken to approve the motion for the approval of the minutes, as amended, of the Budget Committee meeting of May 12, 2021.

Committee Member	Vote	Committee Member	Vote
Don Houston	Approved	Rich Houston	Approved
Norm Goupil	Approved	Thomas Lipoma	Approved
Ken Traum	Approved	Christa Scura	Approved
Steve Reddy	Approved	Mark Zankel	Approved
Jonathan Cohen	Abstain		

HOPKINTON SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCIAL UPDATE – Norm Goupil

Norm Goupil began his presentation reporting on the building project stating that it will hopefully be complete by next meeting. We have finished what was promised to the community for this project. We will receive monies back and will put savings back into project. We are going over all the check and balances for this project and checking off the warrant list.

Norm Goupil stated that updated financial information is not available as yet. When complete, we will provide an overview of this project and it will be an extensive report.

Norm distributed a chart in response to Don Houston's question at the last meeting about the longevity of the roofs. We had some floods in the School District where people were wondering if it was associated with the facilities project. We delivered all that was promised to the Town on the roofs. The charts show which roof areas were replaced at various dates, expected future replacement dates, what will be needed to be looked at for CIP. These will pinpoint areas completed through the facilities project and if there is a leak, we can go back and get fixed under warranty.

Christa Scura questioned the term of the warranty. Norm Goupil stated 1 year after construction and then parts.

Jonathan Cohen asked about Maple Street and how it could be unknown when roofs were installed. Norm Goupil stated that the facilities committee has requested this information.

Norm Goupil moved on to the financial statements. He reported that there are no financial statements for July. He expressed appreciation to everyone involved for a successful start of the school year. A quarterly report is available and can be provided to anyone who wishes a copy.

Norm Goupil stated that School District will begin its' budgeting process in person in October. He highly recommended that the Budget Committee attend in person or watch online. It will be a very different process than in the last 2 years. He will provide feedback to the Budget Committee. The budget information will be provided much sooner for better communication. Should have figures at end of October or beginning of November.

Mark Zankel stated that there had been discussions about whether to hold additional Budget Committee meetings and how the Budget Committee can best engage with the School District. The Budget Committee is meeting 2nd week of October and 2nd week of November. Is there anything different to be done?

Norm Goupil stated that is about having the discussions and just wanting to answer all of the Budget Committee's questions.

Ken Traum asked whether the Budget Committee would review the School budget before the Town budget this year? Mark Zankel stated that there will be many budgets to get through and the Budget Committee will take them in the order they are provided.

TOWN FINANCIAL UPDATES

Ken Traum stated that the 2021 Budget Expense Summary and Revenue Summary were emailed to members, we are about 2/3 through the year, and there is not much change in the Revenue from last month.

Ken Traum noted that the town is anticipating an approximately \$100,00 surplus in state revenues. Christa Scura questioned what is driving the extra \$100,000. Ken stated that it is from Room & Meals Tax and the Highway Block Grant.

Next Ken reviewed the Expense Summary noting one item of interest – 4155 Personnel. He stated that \$80,000 is being returned from Health Insurance from the surplus. He stated that the under-spent funds are largely due to unfilled positions and moving forward with part time lower-benefit positions in the police department.

Ken Traum stated that the American Rescue funds clause calculates lost revenues. All money we receive can be considered lost revenue, so can be used any way we want. We have more flexibility than originally anticipated.

CONTOOCOOK PRECINCT FINANCIALS UPDATE – Don Houston

Don Houston reported the financial information stating that there is a lot of activity at the water treatment plant in trying to update equipment. He stated the Precinct is going to take from CAP reserve to continue with upgrade of the Plant and to keep it running smoothly.

HOPKINTON VILLAGE PRECINCT FINANCIALS UPDATE – Thomas Lipoma

Thomas Lipoma reported that the Village has not met recently. Nothing new to report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Zankel opened the public comment session and noted that there was one person online. Asked for any comments from this person. No comment. Mark closed the public comment session.

METRICS AND BENCHMARKS FOR BUDGET COMMITTEE – Thomas Lipoma

As was agreed at the last meeting, Thomas Lipoma collected and prepared Hopkinton demographic, economic and financial metrics and trends for consideration by the Committee. Thomas presented the data and metrics, noting that this is discussion material and focusing on Findings and Questions. Thomas Lipoma answered questions and received input on each metric, and will incorporate the feedback into a next draft of the metrics for future discussion with the Committee. He concluded his presentation by inviting suggestions for other metrics to be collected.

Mark Zankel and the Committee thanked Thomas Lipoma for all of the information presented today.

Mark Zankel stated that based on the discussions it would be helpful for the Committee to know what are the current tax relief programs available in our town, what are the eligibility requirements for each, and how many are taking advantage of these programs. Also, what is the cost to taxpayers and what is the potential to do more. He asked Thomas Lipoma if he could show changes in social security rates in the Income breakdown, and show property revaluation years in the Spending vs Property Values. This could be done with asterisk notation.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mark Zankel noted he had some other business to come before the Committee.

Position Opening

Mark Zankel reported that Janet Krzyzaniak, our esteemed colleague, is stepping down from her role on the Budget Committee. She has been a longtime member, incredible volunteer, and has provided great assistance and mentoring. He asked everyone to join him in expressing a deep gratitude to Janet.

Mark Zankel noted that the position will be posted and open through October 1. He asked that the Committee reach out to others to fill this vacancy.

Ken Traum and Norm Goupil reported on how the Town and the School District handle vacancies noting that the Budget Committee has authority to appoint someone.

Ken Traum noted that Deb Norris is interested and she has experience in Town business.

Following discussion, Rich Houston motioned, seconded by Steve Reddy, to appoint Deb Norris to the Budget Committee for a temporary position to serve through the 2022 Town Meeting. A vote was taken for approval of the motion.

Committee Member	Vote	Committee Member	Vote
Don Houston	Approved	Rich Houston	Approved
Norm Goupil	Approved	Thomas Lipoma	Approved
Ken Traum	Approved	Christa Scura	Approved
Mark Zankel	Approved	Steve Reddy	Approved
Jonathan Cohen	Approved		

Mark Zankel congratulated Deb on her appointment and on behalf of the Committee they welcome her!

In Person vs. Remote Attendance

There has been some question about in person vs. remote attendance at Budget Committee meetings. Mark Zankel stated that either is acceptable and asks that members notify him in advance if they plan to attend remotely. The reason is that we are required by law to have a quorum in person and he needs to know in advance if we may not have a quorum present. For the Budget Committee, we need 6 members in person to have a quorum.

Valuation Rate

Mark Zankel noted that last year, after some discussion, the Budget Committee voted to recommend that the Town and School Board utilize a 0.5% increase in the town’s baseline property valuation in estimating tax rate impacts of their respective budgets. The Town followed this recommendation. The School Board decided to use the baseline valuation with no increase. The Committee agreed to revisit and discuss this issue earlier in the budget cycle. After some discussion, the Committee decided to ask Neal Cass to provide the actual 2021 valuation and % increase from 2020, as well as the numbers of new housing and renovations that he expects will influence the 2022 town valuation. The Committee will use this information to determine whether to offer a recommendation this year.

Paper vs. Electronic Copies

Mark Zankel asked whether Committee members still want paper copies of the detailed monthly school financials. Committee members indicated that getting their School District information packets electronically rather than paper copies was acceptable in order to reduce expense and time. Norm still plans to provide paper copies of summary memos and materials. If anyone wishes to have the paper copy of the detailed financial report, please contact Norm and it will be provided to you.

Thomas Lipoma motioned, seconded by Ken Traum, to adjourn the meeting.

Norm Goupil stated that the minutes of the Non-Public Meeting held at the August 11, 2021 Budget Committee meeting had not been presented or approved. Mark Zankel stated that this was an omission and that the minutes will be forwarded to members and approval will be requested at the next meeting.

There being no further discussion, a vote was taken on the motion to adjourn.

Committee Member	Vote	Committee Member	Vote
Don Houston	Approved	Rich Houston	Approved
Norm Goupil	Approved	Thomas Lipoma	Approved
Ken Traum	Approved	Christa Scura	Approved
Mark Zankel	Approved	Jonathan Cohen	Approved
Steve Reddy	Approved		

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be on October 13.

Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Brown
Town of Hopkinton Budget Committee
Minute Taker