

Draft minutes from the ABC: April 3, 2019

Attending: Brad Bogue, Dale Sylvia, Steve Saunders, Peter Royce

Absent: George Bailey

Also attending: Conner MacIver, Deputy Town Administrator

The meeting began at 4:00 pm at the Town Hall.

The minutes from February 3, 2019 were approved as written.

Members of the ABC make the following recommendations to the Select Board.

1. We recommend the Board determine its goals and objectives prior to the first budget session (September 23). Included in this request is to establish what percent increase is proposed and what major projects are envisioned for the 2020 budget? Obviously, this will require some of the Select Board's time prior to that meeting.
2. We recommend the Select Board offer comments and tentative opinions as budgets are presented. Last year's procedure of total review in one session at the end of the process had two problems: that procedure took a tremendous amount of time; and members of the ABC felt their efforts were diminished by the Board reserving comment until the end. We believe that ongoing discussion would prove to be more useful. One possible solution would be the ABC continue to review budgets before they are presented. As we have done in previous years, our minutes would be shared with the Town Administrator and the department head. Most department heads answered questions posed by the ABC either in advance of the budget meeting or incorporated the answers into their presentation to the Board. We then recommend the Select Board comment on presented budgets at the next Board meeting.
3. There was some discussion on the time allocated to budgets. Among the subjects were if budgets could be the only items on the agenda or if more budgets could be presented in one meeting with Board business dealt with in other meetings. Conner presented some reasons why this recommendation may not work well.
4. The members of the ABC recommend the Board establish priorities for warrant articles. We are of the opinion that not all articles should be funded from surplus, and we continue to recommend that some surplus should be considered for tax relief when there is substantial fund balance.
5. Continuing with item #4, when budgets are presented, the warrant articles should be included. Members of the ABC have consistently asked for year-end projections, and we believe this information can assist to know what funds are available to apply to warrant articles.
6. Members of the ABC request a new organization of the budget folder. Among the suggestions are an Excel format, space for comments by department heads, and information be grouped together.
7. While we recognize that revenues are not directly applicable to the budgets, we do believe that knowing revenues assists in the evaluation of existing fees and policies.
8. While we recognize the value of the Board having a member on the ABC, we believe that person should be a non-voting member.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.