

Advisory Budget Committee

Minutes

September 7, 2021

This meeting was at the Barrington Town Hall with remote participation available.

Members Present: Steve Saunders, Peter Royce, John Morris, Michael Houst, and Scott Shephard

Alternates Present: Dannen Mannschreck and Robert Hackett

Others Present: Conner MacIver and Amy Doherty

Steve Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:34pm.

The group introduced themselves and welcomed new members.

Steve Saunders requested the group discuss roles within the group.

Steve Saunders requested to stay in the role as chair. The group supported this.

Peter Royce remains as Vice Chair.

The group discussed the calendar, budget binders, important dates, and important documents.

Conner MacIver let the group know that budget binders will be available no later than September 16th.

Steve Saunders spoke to the group about the overall process. Each meeting the group discusses a department budget, come up with questions, and pass along the meeting minutes to the department head for review prior to the Select Board meeting. The committee will talk about COLA and step increases throughout the budget process.

Conner MacIver spoke to the group regarding the budget as a whole and explained that the current budget increase is about 6-7%. Wages and benefits are the majority of the budget increases based on staffing increases in Fire, Highway, Police, Election, and Library.

Conner MacIver, Robert Hackett, and Dannen Mannschreck exited the meeting at 5:39 pm.

The group discussed the proposed staffing increases in the police and fire department. The group came up with a list of the following questions for each department:

Fire:

- Can you provide a picture graph of staffing coverage for what it is currently and what it would look like if this staffing coverage is approved?
- Succession management is mentioned in the presentation. How does this have to do with this proposal?

- What are the types of day calls vs. night calls and the statistics behind them? What are the type of calls you are responding to? What are the 5-year trends? Where is the staffing need based on the data?
- Based on the presentation, it appears you are really looking to add 2 2/3 staff? The hours added per week are more than 2 full time schedules.
- What are the offsetting costs with additional ambulance transports?
- Can we use some of the ambulance receivable income to help offset the costs?
- Can you give us statistic on mutual assistance? How many calls does the town respond to and vice versa?
- Have you thought about soliciting other towns for per diem employees to help fill positions for one of the full-time positions?
- What impact will staffing increases have on other parts of the budget? i.e. uniforms, training, etc. Is the included in the budget?
- How many ambulances are running?
 - What is the expected revenue increase for increased staffing?
- How much is the towns stipend compared to other towns?
- The group would like to invite Richard Walker to the September 28th meeting when the committee discusses the fire budget.

Police:

- Will this increase cause any administrative and space requirements?
- Does the town have enough vehicles to add 2 full time employees?
- Is there an increased liability to the town if we don't have enough staffing?
- What are the details of the discussion with the road agent in regard to the "new traffic control process"?
- What impact will staffing increases have on other parts of the budget? i.e. Uniforms, training, etc. Is the included in the budget?
- Please address the COVID pandemic and the hardship in finding staff. Do you anticipate having any issues hiring?
- The group would like to invite George Joy to the October 19th meeting when the committee discusses the police budget.

Scott Shephard suggested coming up with a checklist or a form for department heads to complete when they are asking for staffing increases.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Doherty.