

Advisory Budget Committee

Minutes

September 27, 2022

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

Members Present: Steve Saunders, Peter Royce, Michael Houst, Scott Shephard (partially virtual)

Alternate Members Present: Bill Irving

Others Present: Conner MacIver, Amy Doherty, Dannen Mannschreck

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:31pm.

Steve suggests the topics of discussion are as follows: the Town Administrator will present a budget introduction; the group will talk about warrant articles and the incident fund.

The group discussed State revenue sources. Conner explained that 2023 State revenue is expected to remain level.

Conner let the group know that the electronic budget binders will be ready by Wednesday, September 28, 2022 and can be found at www.barrington.nh.gov/2023budget.

Conner presented an overview of the budget. The group discussed unassigned fund balance and the towns policy of maintaining a 12.5% midpoint. The ABC feels that maintaining 12.5% is very important. The proposed budget in 2023 shows an increase of \$649,237 or 8.49%. The primary budget impacts come from wage and benefit related categories under Fire, Library, Police, and other staffing changes to include census updates, merit and COLA increases, benefit cost increase, and a custodian position. 2023 revenue is expected to remain stable including the largest local revenue sources: motor vehicle revenues and building permit revenues. Interest on investments will increase as interest rates rise. Interest and penalties on delinquent taxes has continued to decrease as more residents are paying their taxes on time. Conner noted that this is a positive trend, but results in reduced revenue. The group discussed the budget increases that are unavoidable such as electric, vehicle fuel, winter contractors, and salt and sand. The significant decreases in the budget are from general government contracts and leases, vehicle maintenance, bulky waste, recycling, general assistance, and bond interest.

Scott entered the meeting in person at 4:50 pm.

Conner addressed John's e-mail that was submitted prior to the meeting:

1. *There is concern on my part with the \$58K increase for a regrade of a library position. With the current financial uncertainty that everyone is facing, that is roughly 8% of the overall increase for 2023*
 - a. The group agreed to further discuss the Library budget ahead of their budget presentation in November.
2. *Transparency is and correct allocation is one thing that I believe we need to maintain, and the \$60,000 in the incident fund line for the wage survey should be allocated at the department level.*

- a. Conner explained that if/when the Select Board adopts the recommendations of the Wage Study, those budgeted funds will be distributed throughout the budget. Conner expects a decision from the Select Board by mid October.
3. *Unassigned Fund Balance: The projection for this is not favorable as it has been in the past. We mentioned the need for us as a group to prioritize in order what we think is most important. Based on the sheet, it does not look like we will have much of a balance to fund more than one of the larger requests to maintain a balance in the 12.3-12.5% range. I believe this might need to be the year that we do not allocate any funds (increasing the reserve more) and having these all funded by taxes.*
 - a. The group collectively agreed with this sentiment and plans to focus on this approach throughout the process.

The group reviewed the budgets which the Town Administrator is responsible for in more detail. The group requested a five-year history of usage of the incident fund.

2022: Building Inspection Vehicle (\$25,500), Public Safety Building Feasibility Study (\$25,000).

2021: Overlook Drive Engineering Evaluation (\$10,340), Poll Pads (\$9,375), Police Cruiser Down Payment/Pre-Order (\$10,000).

2020: Cybersecurity Audit Equipment Purchases (\$10,000); Electronic Time and Attendance Implementation (\$8,000); Tax-Deed Repurchase/Auction (\$17,750 – Offset by Revenue).

2019: New Managed Services Provider (\$55,000); Police Renovation Designs (\$4,000); Compensation Study (\$15,000); New Tax Office Printer/Copier (\$5,000); Transition to Teams Phone (\$14,000).

2018: Police Contract Buyout (\$11,000); Planning Plotter (\$10,000); O365 Licenses (\$5,000); Fiber I-NET Connection (\$6,000).

The group discussed increasing the 2023 incident fund budget to help give the Select Board more control over the uncertain expenditures in 2023.

The group is interested in seeing updated expenditure reports during the last quarter. Conner explained that he would ask Department Heads up update their year-end expenditures after the end of the third quarter.

The group discussed winter maintenance budgeting and the available Emergency/Road and Winter Maintenance account. The group asked what expenses would be allowable from that account.

In 2015, the Town established an Emergency Road Repair and Winter Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund (warrant article #13). The purpose was 'for emergency repair of roads and winter maintenance'. The current account balance is \$208,000.

The group discussed the general government building section of the budget. The group had previously discussed the major changes related to electricity, vehicle fuel, and changes from moving into the new Town Hall.

Steve Saunders let the group know that he will be attending the selectboard meeting on October 3rd and invited the other members to attend in person or virtually.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Doherty.