

# Advisory Budget Committee

## Minutes

October 10, 2023

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

Members Present: Steve Saunders, Michael Houst, Scott Shephard, and Bill Irving

Alternate Members Present: Peter Royce (acting member)

Members Absent: John Morris

Others Present: Conner MacIver and Amy Doherty

Steve Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:40pm.

Steve Saunders asked that the Town Administrator present a budget introduction. The group will decide officer roles at the October 17, 2023 meeting when all members are able to attend.

Conner MacIver shared details of the budget development process which was similar to previous years. This process included department head budget submissions, review by the Finance Administrator and Town Administrator, and budget proposal finalization. Details of the initial budget proposal is included in the 300-page budget binder. Additionally, the budget binder is available electronically at [www.barrington.nh.gov/2024budget](http://www.barrington.nh.gov/2024budget). Conner asked if there were any questions about the process or organization of the materials provided. There were no questions.

Conner MacIver used a [PowerPoint presentation](#) to provide an overview of the budget proposal. The group discussed demographics and the economy. The members felt that Consumer Price Index (CPI) data could be unrepresentative of the economy because it excludes food and energy. Steve Saunders offered to research data available to factor in food and energy for the cost of living adjustment data. The group discussed unassigned fund balance and the town's policy of maintaining a 12.5% midpoint. The ABC feels that maintaining 12.5% is very important. Conner explained that there is more unassigned fund balance available this year (15.3%), but also a higher-than-average list of warrant article requests. Steve Saunders proposed dedicating a portion of the November 7, 2023 meeting to discussing the warrant articles. Conner encouraged members to review the [Analysis of Warrant Article Tax Rate Impacts - Town Meeting 2023](#).

Conner MacIver explained that the proposed budget in 2024 shows an increase of \$774,385 or 9.28%. The primary budget impacts come from wage and benefit related categories under Fire, Highway, Recreation, Building, Police, and other staffing changes to include census updates, merit and COLA increases, benefit cost increase, and added hours for the four elections in 2024. The group asked for a copy of the Recreation Administrative Assistant job description to better understand the role as it relates to programs. The group discussed the added .5 FTE in the Building Department and wants to review a possible rate increase for building permit fees. It was asked whether multi-family fees covered the added costs of complex reviews. The group discussed the added cost for police accreditation. Bill Irving spoke to the importance of well established and

followed policies and procedures. Steve Saunders asked if the Police had asked for enough resources to address potential changes in the demand on law enforcement.

Conner MacIver explained that the 2024 revenue is expected to remain stable including the largest local revenue sources: motor vehicle revenues and building permit revenues. The group suggested that the Conservation Fund could fund the entire Richardson Pond Dam project. The members want to invite the Conservation Commission to meet with the Advisory Budget Committee to discuss.

The group reviewed the budgets which the Town Administrator is responsible for in more detail. Steve Saunders noted an error in the narrative which showed a \$110,000 incident fund request when the actual request was \$50,000. Conner MacIver will update that document. There were no additional questions.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Conner MacIver.

DRAFT