

Town of Milton
Town Budget Committee
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
Minutes

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:00PM by Chairman Humphrey Williams

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Mr. Humphrey Williams – Chair; Mr. Tom McDougall – Associate Chair; Ms. Peg Hurd; Ms. Danielle Marique; Ms. Claudine Burnham; Mr. Mike Beaulieu; Ms. Lisa Gautreau and Mr. Larry Brown via phone. Justin Bellen was excused. A Quorum was present.

Public Attendance

Lynette McDougall

By Laws - continued

The Committee continued discussion and update of the By Laws.

There were minimal changes to the By Laws and those changes noted are:

- 1) The Posting of the meeting minutes will be noted as 5 business days and not 5 days.
- 2) Request of Ms. Marique if the budget committee would be allowed to put dates on the time line for budget information. Mr. Williams noted yes and will be drafting something to send to the Board of Selectmen for dates.

Mr. McDougall made the motion to accept the bylaws as modified with adjustments noted and to be voted on at next budget committee meeting. Seconded by Mr. Beaulieu. Roll call vote – Ms. Hurd – yes; Mr. Beaulieu – yes; Ms. Gautreau – yes; Ms. Burnham – yes; Mr. McDougall – yes; Ms. Marique – yes; Mr. Brown – yes; and Mr. Williams – yes. The motion passed 8/0.

Budget Process

Looking at September 12th or the 19th to review the budget with town but there is a need to accelerate the process.

Mr. McDougall recommended that it would be prudent to present the budget to the town's people so that the recommendations of the budget committee would pass rather than fall to the default and the public's questions can be presented to the town departments. Mr. McDougall suggested that a meeting with BOS so that this information can be presented to the public, even if it was above, at, or below the default budget. It is important to get towns people confidence.

Mr. McDougall read the letter that would be presented to the BOS. A copy of the letter is enclosed here within.

It was asked what does the tax cap include. It was noted that they have had department heads ask specifically for direction and have not received any. Ms. Marique asked if the default was approved

and that the need to have the default budget available prior to a presentation. Ms. Burnham asked if there was a proposed date. Mr. Williams noted that the default budget was ready now and the Town Administrator could discuss this with the department heads, various boards and committees. This is the budget after all the questions have been answered. This should be available by October 1st.

Mr. Brown noted that voters have not attended Budget Committee meetings and small numbers have attended the deliberative sessions. This should be presented to the Board of Selectmen with an analysis and ask the attorney what the details of the tax cap are. It is important to get the tax cap rate information. Mr. Williams noted that this past year the voters voted down many warrant articles. It is the intent of the letter to go forward so that the budget comes in at or below the default budget cap. Voters will vote it down once again. Need to give the public an opportunity to speak to the department heads and committees so they can ask questions directly. Mr. McDougall noted that the point is we need to come at or under the default budget but more importantly we must have a budget that we understand and stand behind. Mr. Williams – this is why we are suggesting the October 1st date, and then we can go forward to the public. Ms. Hurd noted that the school district is different as the new year starts in July. Mr. Williams noted that this document is only for the town. Ms. Marique noted that there should be one for the school as well. Mr. McDougall noted that the committee needs to get the information out, be it coffee and donuts at the town hall or meet at the police station.

Mr. Williams noted that he met with Mr. Doug Shute, Chair of the School Board, who advised that the Board would not be ready by October 1 due to Covid-19, it may be closer to December 1st.

Mr. Brown asked that the question be raised to the Town Attorney how the tax cap is applied. There should be a commitment to support \$500,000 in the DPW to compensation for the \$250,000 that was voted down last year.

Ms. Lynette McDougall noted that the Planning Board has been trying to get departments to fill out their CIP. How do you address this if they don't show? Mr. Williams noted that this needs to be part of the presentation to the budget committee, that all departments, boards and committees present their budgets at that time. Mr. Beaulieu asked how does the committee capture the population of Milton. In the past there were flyers sent out but none of the public shows. Suggestions were set up something at the transfer station, post on Facebook maybe.

Mr. Williams suggested having the budget presented with questions answered for this October 1st budget. Mr. Brown noted that Mr. McDougall's letter may be too detailed.

It is important to have the budget presented by the Board of Selectmen at the Budget Committee – Board of Selectmen joint presentation with all questions answered. Ms. Marique asked if the default budget information would be included in the letter as well. As this is a bottom line budget, we do not need to go over every line item. Ms. Hurd reminded everyone regarding the previous meeting with presentations that there were changes made without explanations at subsequent meetings.

Ms. Hurd made a motion to send the letter to Board of Selectmen with modifications suggested by the committee. Seconded by Mr. McDougall for discussion. A suggestion was made by Ms. Hurd to change salutations to be the Milton Board of Selectmen and signed Respectfully from the Milton Budget Committee. There is no need to list all the departments. Mr. Williams will request

that this be included on the agenda at the next Selectmen meeting and that he and Mr. McDougall will present. Mr. Williams will add the July 29, 2020 date and all Budget Committee members will be copied. **Roll call vote – Ms. Hurd – yes; Mr. Beaulieu – yes; Ms. Gautreau – yes; Ms. Burnham – yes; Mr. McDougall – yes; Ms. Marique – yes; Mr. Brown – yes; and Mr. Williams – yes. The motion passed 8/0.**

Expenditure Reports

Mr. Williams provided the committee with a presentation as to how the reports are formatted.

TOWN – Mr. Williams will send questions from the Budget Committee to the Town Administrator and request answers regarding anything 50% over expended. There were 91 line items that are over expended through June. Mr. Williams will ask for the reports prior to the Budget Committee meeting. He will get answers back and summarize these. He asked how would the committee like to go over all of these. Break it out and have committee members take a section.

Ms. McDougall asked if there was any way this could be simplified so anyone can read it. Mr. Williams noted that the committee has been working through this. Mr. Brown suggested a one page single summary each month that explains the outlier events.

SCHOOL – Mr. Williams explained that the data was sorted by elementary, middle and high school and the intent is to be able to look at the data for each area. The committee would receive the detailed school budget at the next meeting.

Minutes

Ms. Hurd made the motion to approve the May 26, 2020 minutes with corrections noted. Seconded by Mr. McDougall. Call for vote. Ms. Hurd – yes; Ms. Gautreau – yes; Mr. McDougall – yes; Mr. Brown – yes; and Mr. Williams – yes. Mr. Beaulieu and Ms. Marique abstained. The motion passed 5/0/2.

Ms. Hurd made the motion to approve June 23, 2020 meeting minutes with corrections noted. Seconded by Ms. Gautreau. Ms. Hurd – yes; Mr. Beaulieu – yes; Ms. Gautreau – yes; Mr. McDougall – yes; Ms. Marique – yes; Mr. Brown – yes; and Mr. Williams – yes. Ms. Burnham abstained. The motion passed 7/0/1.

Ms. Hurd made the motion to table the July 16, 2020 minutes at this time. Seconded by Ms. Marique. Roll call vote – Ms. Hurd – yes; Mr. Beaulieu – yes; Ms. Gautreau – yes; Ms. Burnham – yes; Mr. McDougall – yes; Ms. Marique – yes; Mr. Brown – yes; and Mr. Williams – yes. The motion passed 8/0.

Other Items to be Brought Before the Committee

Mr. Williams has heard nothing more from Justin Bellen regarding the water district's presentation of their budget at this time. There was a thank you to Mr. Castle for providing all the information regarding the teachers' contract figures etc. at the July 16th meeting.

The Board wishes to thank Ms. Gaesser for her service as recording secretary to the Budget Committee and they wish her well in her endeavors.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment

Ms. Hurd made the motion to adjourn at 7:46PM. Seconded by Ms. Marique. Roll call vote – Ms. Hurd – yes; Mr. Beaulieu – yes; Ms. Gautreau – yes; Ms. Burnham – yes; Mr. McDougall – yes; Ms. Marique – yes; Mr. Brown – yes; and Mr. Williams – yes. The motion passed 8/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Gaesser – Budget Committee Recording Secretary

Approved by the Budget Committee on August 25, 2020

Budget Committee Letter to the Board of Selectmen

July 29, 2020

To: Milton Board of Selectmen,

It is well known that the town of Milton has traditionally waited until nearly the last possible moment to present a budget to the townspeople. This has resulted in an inability to hold any additional sessions for the public to be introduced to the budget and for them to ask questions out of the normal public hearings and meetings. You will also note that in recent memory there have only been two times where the proposed budget passed vs the default budget and that was because the proposed budget was actually below the default budget. Not only have we been faced with multiple years of default budgets but this year a tax cap article has been passed limiting the town to a 2% increase.

The Milton Budget Committee, hereafter referred to as the BC, has noticed a decided lack of action on the part of the BOS to address the budget concerns that will face the town in the coming budget season when direction was requested by Department Heads. Given the lack of noticeable action, a presumed desire to not adopt a default budget, and the tax cap, the BC recommends the town budget presented to the BC not exceed 2% over the current budget and we strongly recommend it come in at or lower than the default budget. We need to have the budget presented to the BC, with all questions answered from the September Joint Board of Selectmen-Budget Committee budget presentation meeting, by October 1st with the understanding that there are still some final costs that will be unknown such as health insurance. Having a budget presented to the BC that meets these requirements and ideally is below the default will not only make the BC job much easier but will show the voters that the BOS has heard and understood their desires. Having the budget presented by October 1st gives the BC time to review it and for it to be introduced to the voters particularly if it is not equal to or less than the default budget.

The town budget is comprised of multiple department budgets. For the overall town budget to not exceed 2% over the current budget, the individual department budget increases must be no more than 2% over their current budgets. This will be challenging and may require one or more departments to lower their budget so another may increase and still maintain an overall budget that meets the requirements set forth by the voters.

In summary, the voters demand a budget no more than 2% of the current budget, the BC strongly recommends a budget equal to or less than the default budget and the BC needs to have the budget by the 1st of October. If the BOS and the BC are seen as working together with each other and the town departments it will go a long way to convincing the voters that the budget presented in March is a fair and prudent budget.

Respectfully,



The Milton Budget Committee, Humphrey Williams, Budget Committee Chair

cc: Andrew Rawson, BOS Chair, Ernest Creveling, Town Administrator, Humphrey Williams, Budget Committee Chair