

Town of Milton
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
October 27, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Members: Humphrey Williams (Chair), Peg Hurd, Lisa Gautreau, Bob Carrier, Mike Beaulieu, Claudine Burnham, Larry Brown, Danielle Marique (via phone)

Public: Chief Richard Krauss, Doug Shute

Humphrey Williams, Chair, opened the session at 6:00PM.

1.) Pledge of Allegiance: Humphrey Williams, Chair, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.) Roll Call:

a. Mr. Williams, Chair, led the roll call of members to determine if a quorum was present.

Humphrey Williams (Chair), Peg Hurd, Lisa Gautreau, Bob Carrier, Mike Beaulieu, Claudine Burnham, Larry Brown, Danielle Marique A quorum was present.

b. Public participation: Chief Richard Krauss, Doug Shute

3.) Employee Retention Presentation – Chief Krauss:

Chief Krauss presented the Employee Pay and Retention Plan which has been developed over the past several months as an important step to address hiring and retention issues which the town has experienced in recent years. Mr. Williams thanked Chief Krauss for the presentation and the hard work and contributions from all involved with this undertaking.

Chief Krauss first gave a brief history and overview of what led to the development of this plan. Currently departments have hiring and wage plans at various stages of approval from the town. They have tried to develop plans in prior years, however, it has never moved forward. All departments had input into this plan and the departments all believe this plan will help alleviate recruiting, hiring and employee retention problems. All employees would know exactly where they fall in terms of grade and step, which correlates to salaries and planned increases. In addition, this will be a benefit to taxpayers as they would have correct information with future budget voting. Plans from neighboring communities, similar in size and demographics to Milton, were reviewed as well during the development stage.

It should be noted that the entire Board of Selectmen is in agreement with this plan and supports moving forward and advancing this to the Budget Committee.

Next step is to meet with Ernie Creveling, Town Administrator, to begin reviewing all positions within departments and assigning position grades and salary steps.

It should also be noted that this will be a Warrant Article for town vote in March to take effect in 2022. If passed, the plan would last for five years. At the end of that time, a formal review would occur to make any needed upgrades or changes to the plan for another vote.

Chief Krauss requested that if anyone from the committee has questions, concerns or comments to let him know. Educating the public will be paramount to success.

4.) Continued Review of 2021 Town Operating Budget Proposals:

Mr. Williams explained he recently met with Ernie Creveling, Town Administrator, for review of the proposed budget numbers. It is imperative that this information be forwarded to town residents to help increase understanding of the budget and effect on the town. The proposed plan is to post on the website for residents to review. However, the plan would not be finalized before the end of the year when insurance and benefits are completed.

There were some minor discrepancies between line items. Mr. Williams and Mr. Creveling will meet again to ensure all Default budget line-items agree. Discrepancies are mostly due to small variations and some math mistakes that will be corrected. The bottom-line: the Budget Committee will ensure the proposed budget will come in under the default budget which is what the town residents requested.

A discussion around the line items for outside appropriations occurred. Presentations to the Board of Selectmen occurred previously and those updated budget amounts were forwarded to the Budget Committee.

American Red Cross – \$200.00

Strafford CAP - \$5000.00

Homeless Center for Strafford County: \$500.00

Haven: \$250.00

Cornerstone VNA: \$4000.00

CASA: \$750.00

AIDS Response Seacoast: \$200.00

These had all been updated from the \$1.00 placeholder originally put into the budget.

Ms. Hurd expressed her concern that the requested amounts were decreased in the budget and questioned the ongoing impact on the town residents, especially in light of this past year. Ms. Burnham explained that many of the above organizations have access to grants and all services will continue to be provided.

It was also noted regarding that the two local food pantries have experienced a definite increase in affected residents utilizing services this year. Close to 130 families each week have benefitted from these organizations. Both We Care and Wakefield Food Pantries work together and will often donate to each other.

Ms. Hurd had a question regarding Insurance and benefits. Since the final rates will be available November 10th, what is the percentage put into the budget. Ms. Burnham stated she will get that information from Mr. Creveling.

Mr. Carrier expressed some dissatisfaction with the numbers and line items. Ms. Hurd also expressed the fact there is difficulty in voting for or against something when all the numbers do not agree. Mr. Brown reminded the committee that all departments gave very good and reasonable presentations regarding their budgets. The goal was to bring the proposed budget under the default.

Ms. Hurd recommended that all changes from Mr. Creveling be added into the budget. At that point, it will be possible for the committee to move forward with all current information. Mr. Williams stated that he would meet with Mr. Creveling and ensure all calculations do agree. He will then bring the Budget Committee together for final reviews and approval.

5.) School Expenditure Report:

This will be moved to future meeting.

6.) Review/Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

This will be moved to future meeting.

7.) Other Business that may come before the board:

Ms. Hurd reminded the committee that the school expenditures will be part of next meeting.

8.) Public Comments or Questions:

There were none.

10.) Next Scheduled Meeting:

November 12, 2020 (backup date: November 19th)

11.) Adjournment:

Mr. Williams stated he would entertain a motion to conclude the meeting.

Mr. Brown made the motion to adjourn at 8:25PM. Seconded by Ms. Marique.

Roll call vote: Mr. Brown, Ms. Gautreau, Ms. Marique, Ms. Hurd, Ms. Brown, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Carrier, Mr. Williams all voted Yes. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Weiss – Budget Committee Recording Secretary

Minutes approved – November 12, 2020