

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: _____
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee
68 School Street, Effingham
April 9, 2019

Members Present: Dave Strauss (chair), Leo Racine (vice chair), Theresa Swanick, Chuck Fuller (selectmen's rep), Jory Augenti, & Tom Hart.

Members Absent: Tim Eldridge

Others Present: Nate Fogg, Mike Cahalane, John Meisner, Eric Jones, Cheryl Fierick

Meeting called to order at 6:33pm.

Minutes

The Budget Committee (BC) reviewed the minutes from the February 12th meeting.

A motion was made by Leo Racine to approve the February 12th minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Chuck Fuller. The vote was 4-0-1, with Tom Hart abstaining because he was not a member of the committee at that time.

Theresa Swanick joined the meeting.

Budget Committee Duties

A list of BC duties was presented with 23 items listed. The duties are listed to make sure that the committee runs smoothly, and important tasks are not overlooked. Many items are the responsibility of the chair and vice chair and some are assigned to "All" (members). Nate Fogg was asked if he would be willing to help with items 8 & 10, which include making minutes, budgets, and other material available for the meetings. He will also obtain draft department budgets (prior to BoS review) and have them posted on the websites. He noted that he would be pleased to assist as requested. Theresa Swanick excepted assignment to posting the meeting and to be a backup to the recording secretary. Dave Strauss and Leo Racine noted that they were willing to attend all of the BOS budget meetings.

Election of Officers

Dave Strauss noted that it was necessary to choose officers of the Budget Committee for the coming year.

Theresa Swanick nominated Dave Strauss as chair of the Budget Committee. No further nominations were brought before the committee.

Theresa Swanick made a motion for Dave Strauss to continue as Chair of the Budget Committee for the coming year. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine. All were in favor of the motion.

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Dave Strauss nominated Leo Racine as the vice-chair of the Budget Committee. No further nominations were brought before the committee.

Dave Strauss made a motion for Leo Racine to continue as the Vice-Chair of the Budget Committee for the coming year. The motion was seconded by Tom Hart. All were in favor of the motion.

Dave Strauss nominated Theresa Swanick as the Recording Secretary of the Budget Committee. No further nominations were brought before the committee.

Dave Strauss made a motion for Theresa Swanick to become the Recording Secretary of the Budget Committee for the coming year. The motion was seconded by Tom Hart. All were in favor of the motion.

New Business

Dave Strauss noted that to keep communication organized and to ensure compliance with RSA 91-A, the Right-To-Know law, that any communication should go through the Chair or Vice Chair of the committee. Also when responding to email, do not use "Reply All". Reply only to the chair or vice-chair. Questions for the office staff should also go through the chair or vice-chair to prevent duplicate questions and duplication of effort.

The BC reviewed a short list of 5 concerns from last year's budget process. Several items were looking for more detail of spending. Detailed spending reports are available when requested to help clarify budget questions and help with budget planning. They can also be used to investigate discrepancies in budget items (over or under spending.) Supervisor of the Checklist need a software line added to their budget. The Unreserved Fund Balance needs to be checked and made available to the BC at least four times per year. This will help the BC with planning for funding of some town projects. Currently the balance is checked in April and October. At least two more dates need to be added.

Dave Strauss noted that he had checked a portion of the current town budget for the coming year and found some discrepancies between the printed budget and the numbers from the town meeting. Mike Cahalane noted that the numbers had just been input and had not been double checked. Mike will ask Claudia Lamphier and the office staff will check the numbers and provide an updated budget for the BC to check and use.

Dave Strauss distributed a nine-page Budget Committee Process Instruction document. This will help with continuity for this committee and future budget committees to make the process as smooth and consistent as possible. Dave asked for the members to review the document and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

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School Enrollment

Dave Strauss noted that the portion of town property taxes required to cover the cost of education is significant. The Governor Wentworth Regional School District sends a school enrollment list to the town for verification of the town's school enrollment during the first week of February each year. The list is currently not being reviewed/audited by the town. A form had been created to send out with the December tax bills for property owners to verify the number of students that are attending the school system. Calls will have to be made to parents of children who live in town and do not own property. Left unaudited, the town has no way to know if the list is accurate and the number of students greatly affects the tax rate in the town. The town has approximately three weeks to review the data and report back to the school district. Checking the list is very important because each child costs approximately 18K per year to educate.

Cheryl Fierick noted that the list was checked regularly a number of years ago.

Theresa Swanick noted that home-school children are supposed to be counted. They are accounted for in the state funding formula.

Dave Strauss noted that there is a meeting to help people understand school funding. The meeting will take place on May 8th in the Wolfeboro Town Hall and will begin at 7pm. This could be good information for the BC members to help understand school the budgeting process.

Other Business

Dave Strauss distributed a list of contact information for the budget committee members and asked them to check their information for accuracy. Tom Hart's cell phone was added to the list. Other information was correct.

Mike noted that he and John Meisner would like copies of BC handout material. They plan to attend most BC meetings and would like to stay informed.

Budget Committee meetings will follow Board of Selectmen meetings and will begin at 6:30pm. The BoS will begin their meetings earlier and/or lighten the agenda on their meetings to be completed in to for the BC to begin at 6:30.

The BC eliminated their first budget review meeting set for October 22nd and combined those budgets with the others already set for October 29th. The General Assistance budget review was moved from December 3rd up to November 19th. The Budget Schedule will be updated to reflect the changes. The budget schedule will be finalized at the July BC meeting.

Dave Strauss has added two columns to the 2020 Budget Worksheet, including BoS Approved and BC Approved. All members were in favor of the change and addition of columns.

It was noted that detailed budget reports can be produced for any department or committee throughout the year to provide information for the committee or department, especially for budget planning purposes. They will only be produced when requested.

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Dave Strauss will formally request an updated budget from the town office. Leo Racine noted that he did not want to review the budget until the numbers were checked and adjusted where necessary.

Next Meeting Date

The committee checked their calendars and picked Tuesday, July 9th at 6:30pm for the next BC meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Leo Racine to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Theresa Swanick. All were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.