

Advisory Budget Committee

Minutes

November 21, 2023

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

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

Alternate Members Present: Peter Royce and Dannen Mannschreck

Others Present: Amy Doherty and Conner MacIver

Steve Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:38pm.

Steve Saunders welcomed Jamey Jennison and John Huckins to the meeting.

The group discussed the Building and Assessing budget which can be found on the town's website www.barrington.nh.gov/2024budget. John Huckins explained his plans for retirement in 2024. Currently the budget has 2 full-time employees (an administrative assistant and a building inspector) and a part-time employee (deputy building inspector). John Huckins explained the administrative position roles, the full-time building inspector role and the part-time building inspector role.

Building fees help offset the operating costs of the department. Conner MacIver explained that if the ABC wanted to, they could recommend increasing user fees to help cover the cost of the proposed additional part-time employee. John Morris agrees that this department should be covering costs. The group reviewed the past 5 years of revenue collected in user fees. Currently, the town's user fees are on the lower end of the area average. January 2021 was the last time user fees increased.

The current proposal would add a part-time building inspector. The ABC is recommending adding a part-time building inspector in January 2024.

Peter Royce asked if both inspectors would have the same knowledge base for inspections. Jamey Jennison explained that it would depend on the person they hire and their expertise. Steve Saunders asked about Amanda Noyes' role in the assessing department. Conner MacIver explained her administrative role for assessing, abatement requests, and forward facing to residents. Steve Saunders asked if her workload would increase and be manageable since the tax bills went out. John Huckins explained that workloads fluctuate, and they work together to get the job done. The group thanked John and Jamey for their attendance.

The group welcomed Vanessa Price to the meeting.

The group did not feel they needed to talk about her budget but would like to discuss the CIP.

Vanessa Price reviewed the CIP recommendations for FY 2024 and their funding sources. John Morris explained his unfavorable opinion of the over 5 million dollars in warrant article

requests due to the rising cost of living in town. Conner MacIver suggested that the ABC review the projects and make recommendations on what to put forward to voters. Conner MacIver continued by stating that it's important to put forth to voters items that residents are interested in. Scott Shepard's suggestion is to bring issues up at the deliberative session.

The group reviewed NHMBB interest rates and tax rate impacts.

Steve Saunders suggests making recommendations based on safety or "must haves" rather than "wants".

Scott Shepard suggests getting the school board and the town together to do long-term planning.

The group discussed the importance of working together with the school to meet the goals of the town.

The group discussed the importance of providing long term budget information to residents via a public information session or having more discussion at the deliberative session.

Conner MacIver will provide the group with a tool to calculate the tax rate impact based on the CIP.

The group discussed school enrollments in comparison to the future request to add additional classrooms.

The group will discuss recommendations at the next meeting on November 28th.

Meeting adjourned at 6:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Doherty