

TOWN OF SEABROOK

SELECTMEN'S JOINT MEETING

AUGUST 27, 2015

Present: Raymond Smith  
Aboul B. Khan  
Theresa A. Kyle  
William Manzi

10:00AM

Budget Committee: Paula Wood, Ellen Chase, Richard Maguire, Paul Knowles, Ivan Eaton and Jeff Brown.

Mr. Smith opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

**JOINT MEETING - BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Paula Wood said they meet with the Selectmen before budgets begin to go over things. She sent a list of things they were interested in and receive a response.

Jeff Brown asked if the calendar would be the same as last year. Mr. Manzi said it may have been a little late last year but anticipates it would be earlier this year. Mr. Khan commented that last year was unique as they were negotiating four contracts until the last hour.

Paula Wood asked if they could get the warrant articles with the budget. Richard Maguire said the warrant articles have come at the last minute so members were not able to review thoroughly before making proper recommendations. Mr. Smith said they would attempt to expedite everything that they could. Mr. Khan said the Town Manager can offer that the department head's bring warrant articles first and then discuss the budget so that they can do both together to get them to the budget committee.

Paula Wood asked about obtaining more information on vehicles when a department is requesting to replace. She said they would also like to know if they are being traded or sold. Mr. Manzi said they would provide a list of all of the vehicles that are in the fleet and whether or not it is being replaced.

Question was raised if they would be maintaining the one vehicle in one vehicle out as they have done previously. Currently that is not happening but it is a Selectmen's decision/policy if they want to discuss and/or change.

The budget committee would like to have the human service agencies come in to discuss funding requests. Jeff Brown asked if the Board has set a policy as to how the ballot would look. He suggested they have the agencies do a petition article which requires 25 registered voters. Mr. Smith said they have not

discussed this so they would need to come back to it. Ivan Eaton commented that if the agency cannot show they are helping 25 residents it shouldn't be on the ballot. Mr. Khan said they could look at adding agency if under \$2500 but anything more go by a petition article.

Jeff Brown said there should be a discussion on whether the Town should go to a fiscal year budget rather than calendar. He said the legislation is still in session so there is no way to handle as to what the state will do with their budget. He said the budget is not even voted on until March which means that one quarter of the year has already passed. Mr. Smith said they could look into this.

Paula Wood said the joint hearings with the human service agencies worked well last year and suggests doing it the same way this year. The form was distributed to all of the agencies this year and it was the first time this was done.

Mr. Manzi said the Community Action Program will be moving out of the building but did agree to pay the Town rent beginning April 1, 2015 at \$600/month. Jeff Brown said he has an issue with the rent as it is the towns own money they are paying the rent, building permits fees and engineering fees. Mr. Manzi said the counter-argument is they could reduce what the town gives them for funding. The question was asked if they paid rent and the answer now is yes they do.

The budget committee is looking for all new hires and what health insurance plan they are on. They are looking to see if the new system is working where the contracts have rates for current employees and new employees. Mr. Khan said if a position is vacant the town manager has filled the position and those new employees pay based on the new system. Mr. Manzi said he would get this information to the budget committee.

The budget committee is looking to have a joint meeting with the Selectmen and planning board so they can all be on the same page and have an understanding as to what the CIP is. Jeff Brown said the only reason for a CIP is for impact fees which is why the planning board is responsible for it. Mr. Khan asked what would be accomplished by having a joint meeting. Paula Wood said the meeting would just be for knowledge of the CIP.

Mr. Manzi said going back to the Community Action building they would be exploring the use of the building as a senior center.

Mr. Smith said the Board would like to hold the line as much as possible on the budget. He said things do come up that are not anticipated so until they meet with each department they do not know 100% but the goal is to stay as close to or not increase the current tax rate. Mr. Khan said he doesn't see anything big coming in 2016 so the goal should be to not increase the tax rate and suggested even decreasing the tax rate. He said the water rate study showed we should be increasing the water fees gradually and that hasn't been done so it may be they need to address this going forward. Mrs. Kyle said they all want to keep taxes down but realistically departments do need more employees and vehicles and equipment in order to function properly and efficiently.

Paula Wood said they always try to look at keeping the budget the same as last year but that is not what makes up the tax rate alone. She said the warrant articles also need to be considered and the town has just purchased a fire truck which was voted on in a warrant article that is going to increase the tax rate. She said this is why they would like the warrant articles sooner so they can see what the tax rate would increase by and have a complete picture.

The budget committee asked about the Yankee Coop. Mr. Smith this item is not the purview of the budget committee and not on the agenda for discussion. He said there has been no contract signed so therefore there is nothing to be discussed.

Joint meeting adjourned at 6:54PM.

Minutes taken by Kelly J. O'Connor

Approved and endorsed

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Theresa A. Kyle, Clerk

Date: \_\_\_\_\_