

North Berwick Budget Committee Minutes
February 1, 2016
6:30 p.m.

Present: Lynn Manley, Craig Linscott, Michael Johnson, Sr., Gregg Drew, Laura Shaw, Reggie Toussaint, Julie Fernee, Rebecca Hopper, Maurice Dolbec and Patrick McLaughlin .

Also Present: Dwayne Morin, Charles Galemmo

Dwayne opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. by welcoming the Budget Committee and the committee members introduced themselves.

Elect Chair and Vice Chair

It was moved and seconded to nominate Michael Johnson, Sr, as Chair for the ensuing year.
Vote 9-0-1 in favor.

It was moved and seconded to nominate Laura Shaw as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year. Vote 9-0-1 in favor.

Review Schedule

The Board reviewed the schedule for the Budget Committee.

Public Input

There was no Public Input.

Committee Input

Pat McLaughlin stated that he had contacted Dwayne in October regarding having the Budget Committee hold a preliminary meeting in the fall and Dwayne requested that Mr. McLaughlin submit a letter that he had prepared. After Dwayne received the letter, he informed Mr. McLaughlin that this needed to go before the Board of Selectmen. Upon review by the Board of Selectmen, they requested Dwayne contact Mr. McLaughlin to tell him that what he was proposing was beyond the purview of the Budget Committee's authority but invited him to the next Board of Selectmen's meeting or any Board of Selectmen's meeting to allow Mr. McLaughlin the ability present the Board and Dwayne with concerns as he begins his preparation process. Mr. McLaughlin did not believe that it was beyond the authority of the Budget Committee. He felt that the Budget Committee could be more effective by meeting to discuss these issues. He also did not feel that it was the Board of Selectmen's authority to call the first Budget Committee meeting and the bylaws clearly stated that the chairman calls the budget committee meeting. Dwayne stated that historically, the Selectmen call the first meeting because there is no Budget Committee chairman to call the meeting as the first order of business at the first budget committee meeting is to elect a chairman and vice chairman, just as the committee has just done this evening.

Dwayne clarified the Board of Selectmen's position and what he had informed Mr. McLaughlin back in October. Mr. McLaughlin's letter requested the Budget Committee meet for two reasons: 1) to present concerns to Dwayne before he begins his preparation process and 2) to discuss the ever increasing SAD 60 budget and strategize an approach that might be helpful in bringing this to a reasonable amount that is acceptable to all. (See attached copy of letter)

Both of these issues are beyond the authority of the Budget Committee. Like most Towns, the North Berwick Budget Committee is a budget review committee and not a budget preparation committee. It is the Board of Selectmen's job to prepare a budget and then submit to the Budget Committee so that pursuant to the Budget Committee bylaws section III "the committee can make definite recommendations on all articles in annual or special town meetings." Dwayne stated that the Board of Selectmen started work on the town budget in the summer and invited Mr. McLaughlin (or any Budget Committee member) in to discuss any concerns or recommendation that he had regarding the Town Budget, but he did not attend any Selectmen meetings. The Selectmen are always open to hear suggestions on the budget as they prepare the budget for the upcoming year. In previous years, if the Budget Committee had an issue with the budget prepared, the Selectmen always try to find common ground so that there is no conflict between the two Boards. This has typically been accomplished in the past, however, there have been times when the two Boards do not agree. Ultimately the Town Meeting voters must decide on the warrant articles prepared by the Board of Selectmen.

The North Berwick Budget Committee does not have any legal authority to make recommendations on the SAD 60 budget as SAD 60 is a separate legal entity and their budget is prepared by the elected school board members. To meet to discuss this issue would be beyond the Budget Committee's authority.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that he would like to have the budget committee authority changed and he was informed by members of the Budget Committee that this would have to go before the Board of Selectmen and ultimately the Town Meeting. Craig Linscott stated that he has had an issue with how the budget committee works in that he feels that sometimes they basically rubber stamp the budget prepared, however, that is how it is setup and a change will not occur this year as it would need to go to the Board of Selectmen and then to Town Meeting for approval.

Dwayne stated that the Budget Committee is currently set up to basically have citizens from all walks of life and varied life experiences to review the budget prepared by the Board of Selectmen to ensure that the Selectmen have prepared a reasonable and responsible budget for the services provided by the Town for the ensuing year. If the Committee does not feel that the budget is reasonable or responsible, they can make a recommendation to recommend a different budget or level of service. This recommendation is included under each warrant article prepared by the Board of Selectmen for the Town Meeting voters to consider.

Town Manager Presentation on Budget

Dwayne presented the Budget Committee with a budget overview for the FY17 budget.

Non-Money Articles:

Chairman Johnson read **Article 4** regarding ***Balances Forward*** along with the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Recommendation. It was moved by Maurice and seconded by Julie ought to pass. Vote 10-0 in favor.

Chairman Johnson read **Article 5** regarding ***accepting of taxes in anticipation of tax commitment*** along with the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Recommendation. It was moved by Maurice and seconded by Julie ought to pass. Vote 10-0 in favor.

Article 6 regarding ***date of payment for taxes and rate of interest for overdue taxes*** was tabled as the interest rate was not yet available from the State Treasurer.

Chairman Johnson read **Article 39** regarding ***depositing excess excise tax into the Equipment Fund*** along with the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Recommendation. It was moved by Maurice and seconded by Julie ought to pass. Vote 10-0 in favor.

Chairman Johnson read Article 40 regarding *unforeseen purchase and/or repair of vehicles and equipment* along with the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Recommendation. It was moved by Maurice and seconded by Gregg ought to pass. Vote 10-0 in favor.

Chairman Johnson read Article 41 regarding *the acceptance of gifts by the Board of Selectmen* along with the Board of Selectmen/Town Manager Recommendation. It was moved by Maurice and seconded by Gregg ought to pass. Vote 10-0 in favor.

Adjournment

It was moved by Gregg and seconded by Maurice to adjourn at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwayne G. Morin
Town Manager