

# Pownal Budget Committee

## April 19, 2022 Public Proceeding Minutes Approved

### Members Present:

Bo Chesney, Gennifer Giuliano (via remote video), John Green, Brian Stornelli, Andy Wyatt

### Guests:

Andy O'Brien of the Select Board, Town Administrator Becky Taylor-Chase

1. A quorum was established (all committee members present). The meeting was called to order by Chairman Green at 6:33PM. Since one member of the committee attended via remote video, votes on all motions will be done by roll-call vote.
2. Mr. Wyatt had provided draft minutes of the April 5, 2022 meeting. Mr. Chesney moved to approve them as written. Mr. Green seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. The Public Comment period was skipped as no members of the public were present.
4. In the Town Officials Comment period, Mr. O'Brien reported that the Select Board is working to finalize the Public Works compensation budget. The Board is aiming for a reduction of about \$11,000, accomplished in part by reducing overtime expense by on-boarding of two relief drivers for long-running snow events.
5. Mr. Green provided an updated budget comparison spreadsheet showing the changes in budgets by department over time.
6. Mr. Green asked for reflections on last meeting's budget presentations. Mr. Wyatt noted that the Public Safety budget increase is quite minimal this year, given the general inflation of costs.
7. Mr. Wyatt led the committee through a review of the Solid Waste and Recycling budget. The budget for solid waste tipping fees is up by \$3,600, due to recently-seen increased tonnages as well as a scheduled increase in tipping fees from \$75.50 to 79.50 per ton, starting 7/1/2022. The Casella waste hauling expense is up 3.0%, per the Town's contract with Casella. July marks the start of year three of a three-year contract. The cost of the Pay-as-you-throw bags is increased by \$1446. This is driven by the increase in production costs, as well as an increase in usage (related to the increase in solid waste tonnages). On the bottom line, the solid waste and recycling budget is increased by \$7,798 (6.90%)
8. Ms. Taylor-Chase provided a view of the Town's debt service commitments. Since there were no new bonds initiated in the current fiscal year and the Town received credits on interest on older bonds, the Town's debt service commitment for the next fiscal year is \$284,964, a reduction of \$54,793 from the current fiscal year.
9. Ms. Taylor-Chase provided a view of the Town's commitments to County Tax. The Town's contribution to County operations is \$193,965, an increase of \$11,770 (6%) over current year. This tax covers county services, such as Courts, Jail, Sherriff, Deed Registry, etc.
10. Ms. Taylor-Chase led the committee through a view of sources of estimated revenues. The estimate for auto excise revenue is increased by \$60,000, in response to recent underestimation of this line. The estimates for State revenue sharing and State reimbursement for homestead property tax

exemption are also increased substantially (\$158,600 and \$117,000, respectively). The presented revenue projections represent an increase of \$344,015 over current year.

This spurred significant discussion by the committee regarding recent revenue estimates vs. actual revenues and the related increases in the Undesignated Fund Balance (aka 'Surplus'). Mr. Stornelli noted that current year budget may add about \$400,000 to Surplus due to underestimated revenues. More discussion of this topic will continue at future meetings.

As illustration of the difficulty of budgeting expected revenue, Ms. Taylor-Chase mentioned that the Town of Brunswick's 2020 budget included excise revenue from 35 new car registrations. That expectation was met in the first four days of the fiscal year.

11. The next meeting of this committee will be on April 26, 2022 at 6:30 PM. The agenda includes discussions on Road Commissioner salary, Select Board stipends and Town Meeting recommendations.
12. Mr. Chesney made a motion for adjournment. Mr. Green seconded. The motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andy Wyatt