

Pownal Budget Committee

April 26, 2022 Public Proceeding Minutes Approved

Members Present:

Bo Chesney, Gennifer Giuliano, John Green, Brian Stornelli, Andy Wyatt

Guests:

Andy O'Brien and Jon Morris 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 6:36PM.
2. Mr. Wyatt had provided draft minutes of the April 19, 2022 meeting. A couple of grammar errors were noted. Mr. Green moved to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Chesney 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, Ms. Taylor-Chase summarized a discussion from the previous evening's Select Board meeting, where Recreation Committee Chair Kathy Hogue had requested that this year's Town Meeting warrant include articles for creation of a Recreation Committee budget and provide initial funding at \$1,000. Additionally, Ms. Hogue had requested that the new budget be a non-lapsing account, so that unexpended balances will persist beyond fiscal year changes. This money would enable flexibility in managing Recreation Committee events (e.g. rain canopy rental), and would allow the committee to purchase liability insurance via Maine Municipal Association to cover risks at events. Mr. Chesney moved that this committee recommend that the Town should create a Recreation Committee budget and fund it at \$1,000. Mr. Green seconded. The motion passed with all voting in favor.
5. Mr. Green provided an updated budget comparison spreadsheet including budgets that had been presented at last week's meeting. A couple of errors/omissions were noted and will be corrected.
6. Ms. Taylor-Chase reviewed a few late-coming changes to previously reviewed budgets:
 - i. In General Government/Compensation, the mileage line is increased by \$500 to \$2,500, due to anticipated travel for training. The mileage rate is currently \$0.585/mile.
 - ii. To better serve residents without access to technology, the printing budget is increased to permit printing and mailing of an 8-page booklet, four times per year. Kathy Hogue had offered to assist with this work.
 - iii. The stipend for Assessors Agent is increased from \$9,000 to \$18,000 to enable provisioning of this service for two days per month. At the current rate of one day per month, the work is not getting done in a timely manner.
 - iv. The Road Commissioner position is now compensated via a salary, rather than an hourly wage.
 - v. The overtime budget for the Public Works staff is reduced, and a new line for relief drivers is funded at \$3,450 to provide two relief drivers at \$19.00/hour, for three eight-hour shifts per month, for four months.
7. Mr. Green initiated a discussion on stipends for the Select Board. Currently, the annual stipends are \$4,500 for the chair and \$4,000 for the other two board members. Mr. Morris indicated that the cost of a full-time town manager is approximately \$120,000. Ms. Taylor-Chase spoke appreciatively for

the daily support provided by the members of the Select Board. This support enables her to do her job more effectively. Mr. Chesney cited the Public Safety/Public Works building project as an example of where the Select Board should be functioning in a management role, rather than executing the project themselves. After some discussion, Mr. Chesney moved that the stipend line be raised by \$2,500, with \$900 of that for the chair and \$800 to the other two board members. Mr. Green seconded. The motion passed with all voting in favor. This increase was noted as a 'token amount' to show appreciation for the Select Board's work.

8. Mr. Green started a discussion of the Town's financial practices by reading a portion of his first draft of the committee's report to the Town. In this draft he expressed his displeasure with the Select Board's recent practice for carry forward of unexpended balances at the end of a fiscal year. Mr. Morris stated that, at public Select Board meetings, the department heads bring their requests to carry forward appropriations specific to projects that may not be completed by end of year. Mr. Green believes that these decisions should be made by the town at Town Meeting. There was significant further discussion, primarily between Mr. Morris and Mr. Green.

Mr. Chesney suggested that we compose a list of questions that the Town Administrator could present to a Maine Municipal Association attorney. Mr. Green agreed, and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

9. Mr. Green started the discussion for creating this committee's recommendations for the Town Meeting warrant with a discussion on General Government. Mr. Stornelli suggested that the committee recommend appropriation of monies from undesignated fund balance to cover the General Gov't/Planning Board lines that will be used for NorthStar Planning's ordinance review efforts. This prompted significant discussion regarding the practice of stating specific funding sources for expense lines.

Due to the late hour and that Mr. Chesney was called away, the committee decided to table the discussion to the next meeting.

10. The next meeting of this committee will be on May 3, 2022 at 6:30 PM. The agenda will include voting on Town Meeting recommendations.
11. Mr. Green made a motion for adjournment. Mr. Stornelli seconded. The motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wyatt