

Pownal Budget Committee

December 20, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Approved

Members Present: Bo Chesney, Gennifer Giuliano, Brian Stornelli, Donna Watson

Attending: Town Administrator Becky Taylor-Chase, Selectpersons Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien, Heidi Cushman Curry, Road Commissioner Matt Nielsen

1. The meeting began at approximately 6:40 pm.
2. Bo Chesney reported that Matt Roy will not be able to serve on the committee this year due to family obligations.
3. Introductions and welcome – All in attendance introduced themselves. Select Board Chair Jon Morris thanked the committee for the work ahead, and Andy O'Brien and Heidi Cushman Curry adding their appreciation for service on the committee.
4. Oaths - All budget committee members signed the committee service oath.
5. Committee elections - It was moved and seconded to elect Bo Chesney as committee chair. All voted in favor. It was moved and seconded to elect Donna Watson committee secretary. All voted in favor. Brian Stornelli offered to maintain the spreadsheet used to track the committees progress throughout the process.
6. Budget cycle process proposal – Select Board Chair Morris and Becky Taylor-Chase proposed for discussion a more streamlined budget process with the following objectives:
 - a. Reduce the total number of meetings and duplication of effort for committees and department chairs
 - b. Promote open and timely joint discussion and questions between Select Board, Budget Committee, department chairs and the public.
 - c. Extend the budget review cycle by one week with process beginning at the end of January and running through early April leaving ample time for public hearings and warrant completion prior June 26th Town Meeting.
 - d. Preserve the budget committee's ability to convene independently for follow up discussions and committee business, as needed.

After discussion, it was agreed by all to follow the new more streamlined process as follows.

- The Budget Committee and Select Board will hold joint budget meetings on the following Mondays at 6:00 pm – January 23, February 13th, February 27th. Select Board will proceed with other agenda items and business following the joint budget discussion.
- Becky Taylor-Chase will plan and coordinate the budgets to be reviewed at each meeting understanding the complexity and time needed. She will ask the department heads to submit budgets for preview a week in advance of the joint meetings and will invite department heads to attend and present details. Becky will also provide a copy of the 2022 Audit report to the Budget Committee.
- Any questions from committee members following the joint meeting will be directed to Becky Taylor-Chase who will facilitate getting answers and will ensure that both the Budget Committee and the Select Board are fully informed.
- The Budget Committee will return to regular Tuesday meetings at 6:30 on the following dates: March 7th, March 14th.

7. Wishes were extended by all for safe and happy holidays. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Submitted by: Donna Watson