

**Special Note:** Following the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, there has been clarification on start times for the joint Select Board/Budget Committee meetings. The Select Board meeting will begin at 5:30 with an Executive Session. As a result, the Select Board /Budget Committee joint portion of the meeting is now estimated to begin at 6:00 vs. 5:45 as discussed and captured in the minutes below.

## **Pownal Budget Committee**

Monday, December 4, 2023

Meeting Minutes - amended

**Members Present:** Bo Chesney, Chair, Gennifer Giuliano, Matt Roy, Jenna Shue, Donna Watson

**Town Representatives Present:** Andy O'Brien – Selectperson and Budget Committee liaison, Becky Taylor-Chase – Town Administrator, Jon Morris – Select Board Chair

**Additional Participating Attendees:** none

The meeting began at approximately 6:45pm and was recorded.

Bo Chesney welcomed and thanked the committee, recognized Matt Roy returning and Jenna Shue joining the committee for FY 2025. Andy O'Brien will continue to serve as select board committee liaison.

1. **Oath administration** – Oath statements were signed by all.
2. **Vote to elect committee Chair and Secretary.**
  1. Ms. Watson nominated Bo Chesney to serve again as Chair and Ms. Giuliano seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.
  2. Chair Chesney nominated Donna Watson to serve again as Secretary and Mr. Roy seconded. The motion passed with all in favor.
3. **Minutes** – It was moved and seconded that the April 4, 2023 minutes be approved. All who were in attendance at that meeting voted in favor.
4. **Budget process review and plan** – Ms. Taylor-Chase requested feedback on the joint Select Board/Budget Committee meeting process followed last year. Feedback was positive including -
  - Overall more streamlined process
  - Allowed for more public engagement
  - More effective and efficient process for department heads

It was also agreed that if on occasion the Budget Committee reconvenes briefly following the joint meeting to debrief and discuss next steps – those notes can be captured as written minutes and posted online. It was agreed that because those discussions are so brief - usually 10-minutes - it would not be practically or efficient to schedule them as recorded meetings.

Ms. Taylor-Chase laid out the schedule leading up to the June 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Meeting including:

- May 28<sup>th</sup> – Warrants signed by Select Board
- May 13<sup>th</sup> – Public Hearing #2
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Public Hearing #1

Based on this timeline, the committee agreed on the following meeting dates:

Joint Select Board/Budget Committee Meetings 5:45pm – 8:00pm

- Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>
- Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup>
- Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>

Select Board meetings will begin at 5:30 to allow for Select Board business to be completed prior to the joint meeting. It was agreed to set the joint committee meetings time for 5:45pm – 8:00pm.

Budget Committee Meetings (stand-alone, recorded) 6:00pm – 8:00pm

- Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup> – formal committee vote on recommendations
- Monday, April – if needed

Ms. Giuliano asked if setting hard stop meeting end times had been explored. Chair Morris explained that a hard stop is not an option for Select Board meetings because the board must complete all schedule business and allow any public comment regardless of time. So it is understood that start and end times of the joint meetings will be flexible.

5. **Significant issues that may impact FY25 budget cycle** – There are two issues identified by Chair Chesney that the committee will need to be aware of and involved in assessing the impact on the budget.
  1. Future Facilities – Chair Chesney participates in this work and will keep the Budget Committee informed. Impacts of this work will be significant.
  2. Possible TIF (Tax Increment Financing – a value capture revenue tool that uses taxes on future gains in real estate value to pay for new infrastructure improvements). Selectperson O’Brien explained that the town has hired a consultant to assist on the TIF process. Chair Morris commented that the Select Board will be collaborating with the Budget Committee on decisions related to managing the TIF, if created. Ms. Taylor-Chase encouraged all to attend the December 11<sup>th</sup> public hearing where the TIF consultant will be presenting.

No additional “issues” were identified by the committee.

6. **Investment policy** – Chair Chesney updated the committee on progress. The first step is for the Select Board to establish an investment policy. Selectperson O’Brien commented that it is important the policy is flexible in order to meet the needs of the town over time. Chair Chesney offered to work with Ms. Taylor-Chase, Selectperson O’Brien, and Mr. Roy to formulate a policy proposal for

the select board to consider. It will also be important to engage the CIP Committee.

7. **CIP Meeting Liaison** – Chair Chesney offered to continue in this role – all agreed. Ms. Watson offered to begin attending CIP Committee meetings, when possible, to serve as a back-up. CIP Committee meetings are the last Wednesday of each month – the next meeting is December 27<sup>th</sup>. All agreed that at this time there are no other committee liaisons are needed at this time.
8. **Budget Committee spreadsheet** – Mr. Roy offered to manage the spreadsheet going forward.
9. **Next meeting** – Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>. Joint meeting. 5:45pm estimated start time.
10. **Closing comments** – Chair Chesney reminded the committee and encourage all to attend the public hearings on December 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and the Special Town Meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted : Donna Watson