

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
June 24, 2014
MINUTES**

Call to Order:

6:00pm Chairman Kevin Verville called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Verville asked all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Roll Call:

Present: Kevin Verville, Chairman; Jim Spillane, Vice Chair; Harriet Cady, David Carbone, Karen Cote and Brendan O'Donnell Members; Maryann Clark, School Board Rep; Andrew Robertson, Select Board Rep

Absent: Fred McGarry, Member

Excused: Carol Levesque, Member

Also Present: Jan Foisy, Finance Director

Approval of Minutes – January 14, 2014

Motion: Chairman Verville moves the minutes as written

Second: Vice Chairman Spillane

Vote to approve the minutes: Yea 6, Nay 0, Abstained 2 – Motion Carries

Vacancy Appointment

M. Clark asked whether anyone had reached out to Chuck Reese to see if he may be interested in serving on the Committee. Chairman Verville admitted that he was unfamiliar with the process of filling a vacancy and was not sure if there were any prior practices. The Committee agreed that it would be prudent to solicit for interested individuals through the Forum and Town Website and on the posting boards located at the Post Office and GBW Building.

Motion: Vice Chairman Spillane moves to delay the appointment and to schedule a meeting on Tuesday, September 16th for the purpose of filling the vacancy and approving the June 24th minutes.

Second: H. Cady

Vote: Yea 8, Nay 0, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Chairman Verville will post information at the various locations around Town and on the Internet and will ask the Town Administrator's Office to collect responses. Applicant's information will be circulated to MBC Members prior to the September Meeting.

Election of Officers

Chairman Verville welcomed new Select Board Representative Andrew Robertson and new member Karen Cote to the meetings.

Chairman

Nomination: M. Clark nominates Kevin Verville as 2014-2015 Committee Chair

Second: Selectman Robertson

Vote: Yea 8, Nay 0, Abstained 0

Vice Chairman

Nomination: H. Cady nominates Jim Spillane as 2014-2015 Committee Vice Chair

Second: Chairman Verville

Vote: Yea 8, Nay 0, Abstained 0

Archivist

With no nominations for Archivist the duties will fall upon the Vice Chairman – Jim Spillane

Email Policy

Chairman Verville distributed copies of the current email policy and asked that members review and abide by it.

2014-2015 Meeting Schedule

Chairman Verville distributed the proposed 2014-2015 schedule of meetings. M. Clarke confirmed that the schedule has been reviewed by the Superintendent of Schools and that there are no conflicts anticipated at this time. Chairman Verville will add in the SB2 Deadlines as soon as they made available.

H. Cady expressed that she does not feel the Committee is truly looking through the line items in the budgets and fully vetting them as well as she would like. She does not feel the proposed meeting schedule allows sufficient time to conduct a thorough review.

Motion: Vice Chairman Spillane moves to approve the schedule as written

Second: Selectman Robertson

Discussion: H. Cady believes that the amount of times the default budget has been voted for by the Town speaks to the problem that sufficient information is not being made available. She sees it as the job of the MBC to get into the details of the Budgets.

Vote: Yea 7, Nay 1, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

Access to Local Government Center Legal Services Policy

Chairman Verville reminded members that the Town's Policy, as dictated by the Board of Selectmen, that legal requests of the LGC must be made through the Chair. Selectman Robertson noted that the new Town Administrator is also an Attorney and asked that he be kept in mind as a valuable resource. J. Foisy clarified that the organization is now known as the NH Municipal Association.

Town Budget Update

Chairman Verville updated the Committee that due to confusion on his part, he was responsible for incurring a \$542 charge in the posting of a meeting causing the budget line to be over spent. He apologized to the Committee and to the Tax Payers for the error. H. Cady spoke that, through her work with the Supervisors of the Checklist, she has found the Union Leader to have significantly lower costs for posting of notices. Additionally, law requires that postings be made in the paper of general circulation and where the Concord Monitor does not deliver to the entire Town, the Union Leader should be considered the paper of general circulation.

Selectman Robertson provided an update and overview of the 2014 Town Budget expenditures to date. To date the Town is a bit under budget, this is due in large part to the vacant Chief position and the Full Time Officer shortage within the Police Department. While the Highway Department budget has been scaled back significantly, the Select Board is very concerned at how Fall inclement weather may impact the budget. A new Chief of Police Gary Duquett, formerly of Orono, ME, has been hired and as of tomorrow all vacant Police Officer positions will be filled. The Board received some 50 applicants for the position, they ultimately made the decision to come up slightly from the previous Chief's salary and offer the position to Mr. Duquett at \$65,000. Selectman Robertson also spoke that the Select Board will be working in conjunction with the Planning Board on the Town's Capital Improvement Plan. They expect several items to be identified for purchase, particularly in the Rescue Department. He informed that recently through Selectman Pitman's role with the Concord Hospital Trust Board that the Rescue Department was able to obtain a LUKAS self-resuscitation machine. The Trust paid for 1/3 of the cost and the Rescue Squad took the remaining amount from its Capital Reserve Fund.

In closing, Selectman Robertson spoke that the primary effect of working with a default budget this year will be seen in a scaling back of the road resurfacing projects. The Highway Agent has determined that Coffeetown Road needs to be repaved and the only other project expected for 2014 is the reconstruction of a portion of Pleasant Hill Rd. H. Cady noted the increase to the State Road Tax and asked that the Town send communication to the DOT, State Senators, etc. and urge them to direct money back to the maintenance of South Road as much of the traffic traveling that road is the result of Bear Brook State Park. Vice Chairman Spillane concurred, he is of the understanding that many Towns will be fighting for a reduced amount of money and he would encourage Deerfield to apply early.

School Budget Update

M. Clark spoke that the School's fiscal year will end June 30th, at this point in time the School Board estimates that there will be a surplus of approximately \$92,885. If they opt to transfer \$70,000 of that to the Expendable Trust Fund, \$22,885 will remain to be returned to the Town to offset the Tax Rate. At its June meeting the School Board authorized the spending of \$4,258 to augment the Cafeteria Sound System. This was done for safety reasons so that Emergency Alerts will be able to

be heard in that part of the building. H. Cady asked that the School's form MS22 and Town's MS4 reports be furnished to the MBC for review, these are reports that show the actual expenditures of each entity. Chairman Verville noted the new playground replacement project and asked what the current balance of the Expendable Trust fund is, M. Clark answered that the balance is \$30,539, \$25,000 was initially deposited through the vote of a Warrant Article and an additional \$5,000 has been contributed through fund raising efforts. She believes that the goal is \$65,000 to replace the playground equipment. Chairman Verville asked whether the Board would be looking to put additional money into that fund, M. Clark answered that it was too early to say, but that if they did it would likely be through a Warrant Article.

H. Cady requested that the School provide to the MBC the number of students who started and the number of students who completed the year at DCS, she was interested in learning the year's high and low attendance rates and asked for that information for the MBC meeting to be held in September.

Old Business

H. Cady requested that the Town and School produce Department inventories of assets for the Committee's Review. This information has been made available with respect to Computers, but she would like to see it across all Departments. J. Foisy asked to what level of detail is Ms. Cady requesting, and noted that much of the Town's physical inventory, for example chairs in the Emergency Management Room, have been donated over the years at no cost to the tax payers. Chairman Verville asked whether a master physical inventory already existed, to which Selectman Robertson answered yes, to some extent. Inventories are maintained by department and that information is typically included in the back up materials of the budget packet presented to the MBC.

H. Cady spoke that when she served on the MBC, on or around 1987, they held weekly meetings where regular reviews of the invoices were conducted. She found this useful so that one could tell from year to year where items were requested for purchase and then ended up in inventory along with the age of the pieces they were intended to replace. The way the MBC currently conducts review she feels relies too heavily on the stated opinions of the Department Heads. She indicated that if it is not the pleasure of the MBC to request this detail she will personally pursue it through a Right To Know Request.

Motion: H. Cady moves that the MBC receive an inventory list by Department from the Town and School detailing any asset with a value greater than \$100

Second: J. Spillane

Discussion: B. O'Donnell suggested that in order to make the gathering of information more efficient that the Select Board request that Department Heads include the information in their budget prep packets. Vice Chairman Spillane agreed, noting that there was no time frame or deadline specified in the motion. He feels that having it in the Budget Packets would allow sufficient time for review. H. Cady clarified that she was not interested in an accounting of disposable items, for example pens, crayons, or paper at the School, though Chairman Verville pointed out that the pens and similar disposable items purchased by the school are very likely done so in increments greater than \$100.

Selectman Robertson spoke that doing a physical inventory would require a very large amount of time and resources, both of which are of short supply, but indicated that the Town will make a best faith effort in pulling together the information if it is the pleasure of the Budget Committee.

Vote: Yea 5, Nay 3, Abstained 0 – Motion Carries

New Business None

Citizens Comments

Kevin Chalbeck spoke that he agreed with the Committees decision to postpone the filling of the vacant position until the posting could be more widely circulated.

Adjourn:

Motion: Vice Chair Spillane moves to adjourn the meeting of June 24, 2014

Second: Selectman Robertson

All in Favor – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourned @ 7:03pm

Next Meeting Tuesday, September 16th @ 6:00pm

The Minutes were Recorded, Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katie Libby.

Pending Approval by the Municipal Budget Committee