

APPROVED
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 11, 2019
APPROVED – September 12, 2019

CALL TO ORDER – at approximately 7:30pm

PRESENT: Mr. David Cronin, Mr. Dave Cate, Ms. Daryle Hillsgrove, Mr. Bob Sherman,
Ms. Meg Bressette, Ms. Amber Capone, Mr. Jas Moorjani, Mr. Eduardo Martony,
Mr. Kannan Sasi, Selectmen Representative Heather Forde

ABSENT: School Board Representative Deb Ryan (excused)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Cronin congratulated and welcomed the new members to the Board.

INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Each member introduced themselves and provided a brief summary of their background.

MEETING MINUTES

January 10, 2019

MOTION: (Cate/Sherman) To approve the January 10, 2019 meeting minutes as submitted.

VOTE: (6-0-4) The motion carried. Ms. Forde, Mr. Moorjani, Mr. Martony, Mr. Sasi
abstained.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Cate nominated Mr. Cronin for Chair. Mr. Sherman seconded the nomination. There were
no other nominations made.

MOTION: (Sherman/Cate) To elect David Cronin as Budget Committee Chair.

VOTE: (9-0-1) The motion carried. Mr. Cronin abstained.

Mr. Cate nominated Ms. Capone for Vice Chair. Mr. Sherman seconded the nomination. There
no other nominations made.

MOTION: (Sherman/Cate) To elect Amber Capone as Budget Committee Vice Chair.

VOTE: (10-0-0) The motion carried.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Liaison to Board of Selectmen – Mr. Moorjani
Liaisons to School Board – Mr. Martony and Mr. Sasi

Memorial School Renovation Committee – Ms. Bressette
Capital Improvement Plan (committee) - Mr. Sherman

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Cronin informed the Board they would be issued iPads (with the coming year budget pre-loaded) and individual Town email addresses at the time of the Town site walk, September 7, 2019. The site walk will begin at 9am (further details to follow). The Town's IT Coordinator will be available to answer questions and provide assistance with the electronic device. Ms. Hillsgrove asked if the School budget would be uploaded to the tablets. Mr. Cronin said he would find out. Mr. Sherman suggested the school liaisons seek the answer.

The first Budget Committee meeting will be held September 12, 2019 beginning at 7:30. Mr. Cronin stated he was finalizing the budget schedule and would send via email to the Board. He asked the Board if they wanted to meet on Halloween. The Board was not in favor of doing so.

Ms. Capone questioned if the Board would conduct a site walk of the schools. Mr. Cronin replied it would be scheduled for early October; he will forward information when finalized.

Mr. Cronin explained the attendance policy to the new members (as outlined in the Board's ByLaws).

Mr. Moorjani questioned if meeting minutes would be posted on the Town website. He also wanted to know how the Board would communicate with one another. Ms. Landry explained that the Town would assign individual emails to Board members during the Town site walk. She also explained once transcribing is complete meeting minutes are disseminated for review (and approval) and posted on the Town's website for the public. Mr. Cronin will provide the Board with a member list and contact information.

Mr. Sherman commented that any use of the Town computer is open to examination by anyone. He explained to the Board that there could not be a gathering of six or more members of the committee, or it would be considered an 'official' meeting which requires appropriate posting. Mr. Cronin added that emails between members is also open to the public.

Mr. Sherman informed that the Board of Selectmen and School Board set the policies; the Budget Committee simply reviews budget numbers and expenditures. The Budget Committee can make suggestions but could not set policies. He noted once a budget has been approved the Selectmen and School Board could move money from one account into another account without the Budget Committee's input. Ms. Hillsgrove commented there were some circumstances that they could move money; however, there were other areas in the budget that couldn't be moved (i.e. Special Education). She said part of the Board's job is to ask questions regarding the budget figures. Mr. Moorjani asked if the Budget Committee was informed when money is moved. Ms. Hillsgrove answered no. Ms. Forde stated everything the Selectmen did was televised and they very rarely went against the Budget Committee.

Mr. Moorjani inquired if the Board followed a budgetary process during review. Ms. Forde explained each department forwarded the Selectmen their budget and requests for the upcoming year. The Selectmen conduct a line-by-line review of the budgets with the department heads to assess the numbers. From that point the budget is forwarded to the Budget Committee for review. Mr. Cate noted the department heads go over their budget with the Town Administrator prior to submission with the Selectmen. Ms. Hillsgrove stated the Budget Committee is given budget

87 information from previous years for comparison to newly submitted budgets. They also receive
88 the year-to-date figures for the current year to understand where the budget stood (in real time).
89 The Board can use the information to ask questions during budget review. She stated a majority
90 of the time the departments come to the Board with good information including backup
91 documentation to support the figures and requests. The submitted budgets will show the areas
92 that the Selectmen or School Board already cut/reduced.

93
94 Mr. Cronin informed that the past Budget Committee meeting minutes (and meeting recordings)
95 are on the Town website. He stated Board members could question any budget line during
96 review; however, when they vote on a department's budget it is only for the bottom-line figure.
97 Ms. Hillsgrove added that members could make recommendations for a line item decrease prior
98 to the final vote.

99
100 Mr. Moorjani wanted to know if the Board had any say regarding the overall revenues and how
101 the budget was split. Ms. Hillsgrove replied the Board receives a very detailed budget. In Mr.
102 Moorjani's observation there was a lot of waste going on and some of the budgets may be
103 inflated. Ms. Hillsgrove said the Board members can ask (through the Board Chair) the
104 department heads for more information/detail. She noted any suggestions for reductions are
105 discussed and voted on by the Board. Mr. Moorjani stated he had concerns. He said he moved to
106 Pelham thirty-five years ago and at that time knew what his property taxes were. He observed
107 during the last thirty-five years how the Town had grown (from 12,000 to approximately 15,000).
108 He said taxes had more than doubled but the services had decreased. Based on Mr. Moorjani's
109 population number, Ms. Capone noted 'percentage wise' the population growth equated to
110 approximately 25%. Ms. Hillsgrove believed Mr. Moorjani would have a clearer understanding
111 of the budgets when he reviews the Town budget versus School budget and capital improvement
112 projects. She said the past Town Reports contain budget information from previous years for
113 comparison. Mr. Cate pointed out there had been funding cuts from the State and Federal
114 government that affected the budgets. He said they now had some unfunded mandates the Town
115 had to fund. Mr. Sherman added in the past the State had contributed approximately one third of
116 (Town and School employee) pensions and now contributed zero. Another area was health
117 insurance which the State had contributed and now was not. Mr. Cate said the Town had to make
118 up the difference.

119
120 Mr. Kannan asked if they knew what the State contribution amounts would be each year or how it
121 was calculated. Mr. Sherman replied the decision was with the State Legislature and believed
122 they ran on a two-year budget. He said there had been some court cases and gave a brief
123 explanation of a current case. He said the Town had no control over the State's contributions.
124 Ms. Hillsgrove commented that the School tries to estimate what they'll receive from the State.
125 She said the school had to budget for the full costs but tried to estimate revenue amounts based on
126 student enrollment, needs etc. to offset the full cost. Any excess is turned back to the General
127 Fund. She spoke about the Fire Department and how they breakout revenues for service so the
128 Board could see what was received in prior years and the estimate of revenues for the budget
129 being reviewed. Ms. Hillsgrove said certain departments receive grants. Information regarding
130 what grants are received is provided so the Board could see the offset of taxpayer burden. Also,
131 certain Parks and Recreation programs are self-funded and don't come from budgeted amounts.

132
133 Mr. Cate stated the Budget Committee was a vetting committee and they welcome questions
134 from everyone. Mr. Cronin reiterated members were free to ask any questions of the
135 representatives (who submitted a budget) or other committee members. Mr. Kannan asked if
136 historical data was available for review. Ms. Landry replied Town Reports were available as
137 were recordings of the meetings and corresponding meeting minutes. Mr. Kannan felt it would

be informative to compile the information into graphs to show the correlation between the elimination of State funding and the effects on property taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: (Sherman/Cate) To adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: (10-0-0) The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Charity Landry
Recording Secretary