

DRAFT
TOWN OF PELHAM
BUDGET COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 29, 2024

1 **CALL TO ORDER** – Mr. Greg Smith opened the meeting at 6:31 PM.
2

3 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
4

5 Attendance:

6
7 **PRESENT:**

8
9 Acting Chair Greg Smith
10 Deborah Ryan
11 Bob Sherman
12 Lisa Brown
13 Brett Gagnon
14 David Silva
15 Ellen Cormier – *Not present for roll call, arrived around 6: 45pm*
16 Selectmen Representative Heather Corbet
17 School Board Representative Troy Bressette
18 Recording Secretary Andrea Dube
19

20 **ABSENT:** (none)
21

22
23 Mr. Smith opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and mentioned that he
24 appreciates all of the volunteers that have stepped forward for the two open seats.
25

26
27
28 **MINUTES REVIEW: February 6 & February 7, 2024**
29

30 **MOTION:** (Smith/Sherman) To place the **February 6 & February 7, 2024** Budget Committee
31 Meeting minutes on file.
32

33
34 **VOTE:** (3-0-5) The motion passed.
35

36 Greg Smith – Abstain
37 Bob Sherman – Yes
38 Deb Ryan – Yes
39 David Silva – Yes
40 Lisa Wood- Abstain
41 Brett Gagnon – Abstain
42 Heather Corbet – Abstain
43 Troy Bressette – Abstain
44 Ellen Cormier – *Not Present*
45
46
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49
50 **WELCOME RE-ELECTED AND NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS**
51

52 Mr. Smith invited the newly elected members, Lisa Brown, Brett Gagnon and Deborah Ryan
53 to introduce themselves.
54

55 Lisa Brown is serving her first 1-year term, Brett Gagnon is serving his first 3-year term,
56 Debbie Ryan is serving her second 3-year term and she previously served on the Budget
57 Committee as a School Board representative and served 12 years on the Pelham School
58 Board.
59

60
61 **COMMITTEE MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS**
62

63 Mr. Smith invited the rest of the Committee to introduce themselves.
64

65 Heather Corbett is the Selectboard Representative. This is her second time serving as the
66 Budget Committee representative.
67

68 David Silva is a previous member of CERT and serving on the Budget Committee is his first
69 elected position.
70

71 Troy Bressette is the School Board Representative. He is in his second term serving on the
72 School Board and this is his second year as School Board Chair. This is his first time serving
73 as the Budget Committee Representative.
74

75 *Mr. Smith stated that he is using first names and that historically the Committee has been*
76 *informal and there is opportunity to be as formal or as informal as the Committee would like*
77 *to be.*
78

79 Bob Sherman has been on the Budget Committee for over 20 years and has also been a
80 member of the CIP committee.
81

82 Greg Smith started on the Budget Committee and then served as a State Representative for
83 two terms before returning to the Budget Committee.
84

85 Ellen Cormier has been on the Budget Committee for a year as an elected member.
86

87
88 **Discussion**
89

90 Mr. Smith reminded the Committee that the work they do is very important, representing the
91 people, and the decisions the Committee makes affect the citizens and employees of the town.
92

93 He would like the Committee to operate in a smooth and efficient way. The Committee will
94 try to identify changes to the budget earlier so they can get more timely feedback from the
95 department heads and SAU.
96

97 Ms. Ryan expressed that the previous inefficiencies were due to the fact that the Budget
98 Committee members didn't take the time to learn the processes. Some requests and emails

were sent for feedback and input and the feedback and input was not sent back in time for certain meetings. There is a manual for Budget Committee members and trainings available and they are important to the process and there are RSA's to learn for everyone who is elected and appointed and they need to be followed as they are laid out.

Mr. Smith also noted that there are training opportunities that can be hosted online or through Zoom for everyone to watch and the State of New Hampshire runs municipal finance and Budget Committee training in September which the Committee is eligible to attend.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

MOTION: (Mr. Smith/Ms. Ryan) To nominate Mr. Greg Smith for Chair.

Mr. Sherman moved that nominations be closed and Mr. Smith be the Chair for the upcoming year.

VOTE: None taken

MOTION: (Mr. Smith/Ms. Ryan) To nominate Mr. Brett Gagnon for Vice Chair.

Mr. Gagnon accepted nomination.

Mr. Sherman moved that Mr. Gagnon be the Vice Chair for the upcoming year.

VOTE: (9-0-0) Motion passes.

MOTION: (Mr. Smith/Mr. Gagnon) To nominate Ms. Deborah Ryan for Secretary

Ms. Ryan accepted nomination.

Mr. Smith moved that Ms. Ryan be the Secretary for the upcoming year.

VOTE: (9-0-0) Motion passes.

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Smith appointed Bob Sherman to the Capital Improvement Plan "CIP" member.

Mr. Sherman accepted the nomination and suggested to also choose an alternate.

No alternate was chosen.

Mr. Smith asked if anyone needed an explanation of what the CIP is and all members declined.

Mr. Smith questioned if a School Board representative was needed.

Mr. Bressette said he is the School Board representative to the Budget Committee and he is not aware of the Budget Committee having a School Board representative in the past.

150
151 Ms. Ryan stated that there had been one in the past. Mr. Sherman said there was a Building
152 Committee and there had been a representative from the budget committee attending some of
153 those meetings.
154

155 Ms. Ryan said there was some history of a representative from the Budget Committee being
156 appointed to the School Board. She also stated that there is a Building Committee that is
157 winding down and she's not sure if there's much need or if anyone would like to be appointed
158 to attend the last few meetings of that group. They are currently planning the grand opening of
159 the new middle school.
160

161 No School Board representative was chosen.
162

163 **Discussion**
164

165 Mr. Smith stated that before they moved onto the interviews for the volunteer positions, he
166 wanted to let everyone know that after the interviews they would be going over the upcoming
167 schedule for the 2024/2025 year, the review of the bylaws, and asked if everyone had received
168 their iPads. Everyone said they did. He also said he would update the contact list with
169 everyone's phone numbers and emails. He also said there would need to be discussion on
170 whether or not to support remote meeting attendance going forward.
171
172
173

174 **INTERVIEWS OF VOLUNTEERS**
175

176 There were eight applications from volunteers for two (2) open seats for 1 year. One applicant
177 withdrew their application and one applicant was unable to attend the meeting, but Mr. Smith
178 was able to speak with that applicant over the phone prior to this meeting. There were 6
179 applicants to interview.
180

181 Mr. Smith stated that the group did not have to vote tonight. He said he would like to come
182 back in a week for another meeting to vote. He said, as long as no one had any objections, a
183 date for the next meeting would be set before the end of this meeting because he would like
184 everyone to have some time for a thorough discussion.
185

186 Mr. Smith thanked everyone for volunteering and expressed that there has never been an
187 interest like this previously. He said there are going to be 4 open seats next year and would
188 like to see anyone not selected for these two seats to come back next year. He reminded the
189 group that these two open seats were only for one-year positions. It was determined that there
190 will actually be 5 open seats next year during Town meeting.
191

192 Mr. Smith stated interviews would be performed in the order of the list, which was in the
193 order of when the application was received.
194

195 Mr. Smith stated he wanted to have a one uniform set of rules for everybody. He said
196 everyone would be allowed to come up and speak for 2 to 3 minutes. Once the applicant was
197 done speaking, the Committee would be able to ask them questions.
198

199 **Applicant:** Ken Wootton
200

201 The first application received was from Ken Woonton. Ken was unable to attend this meeting
202 due to a family situation. Mr. Smith encouraged everyone to review Mr. Woonton's
203 application and résumé as he brings a lot of financial experience and is well-qualified for the
204 position.
205
206

207 **Applicant:** Cody Atwood
208

209 Mr. Atwood moved to Pelham last year. The reason he would like to join this Committee is
210 because he likes to get back to the community. Mr. Atwood grew up in Reading,
211 Massachusetts, but went to school in Cambridge, Massachusetts and was required to do 40
212 hours of volunteer work every year. Mr. Atwood has a degree in civil engineering, and
213 currently works as a construction project manager and deals with budgets and numbers all of
214 the time. Mr. Atwood stated it would be pretty organic for him to come into this position and
215 start giving back to the community he's living in.
216

217 Mr. Smith asked if this would be Mr. Atwood's first role in a volunteer Town position. Mr.
218 Atwood stated that it would be, but he works with budgets for a lot of towns and in both
219 public and private departments in his professional career.
220

221 Mr. Gagnon asked about the statement on Mr. Atwood's application which states, "with a
222 proven track record in optimizing resources without compromising quality" and asked for an
223 example of Mr. Atwood's work, and what he meant by that. Mr. Atwood stated that the
224 company he works for is primarily self-sustaining. They are a general contractor, not a
225 construction manager so they are 80% self performing. His daily responsibilities are working
226 with every facet of the company which includes labor, production, and making sure that their
227 ends are meeting and that they are making their budget, and everyone is happy including the
228 clients and the company itself.
229

230 Mr. Gagnon asked Mr. Atwood if he could give a specific example of an instance where he
231 increased quality without adding resources or expenses. Mr. Atwood stated that he does this
232 with his quality assurance program with the company he works for right now. That is very
233 minimal and even though it is not his role, he will step up when he sees something that is
234 needed, and he volunteers his extra time to fill in and build that program. He also makes sure
235 that everything is documented, and everyone is trained, to make sure that [the company's]
236 quality is being kept.
237

238 Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Atwood for coming in today and for volunteering. Mr. Smith invited
239 Mr. Atwood to stay for the rest of the interviews if he would like.
240

241
242 **Applicant:** James Meniates
243

244 Mr. Meniates said that his family has been doing business in Pelham since 2003 and he has
245 lived in Pelham since 2013. He grew up in Danvers, Massachusetts. He stated he does not
246 have experience in anything like this but ran for student government in college. He has an
247 interest in serving the community that he has grown to love. He applied to present himself as
248 an option to the town of Pelham.
249

250 Mr. Smith said that we all had to start out somewhere in the budget committee is a great way
251 to get your feet wet in a municipal role.

252
253 Mr. Gagnon asked why did Mr. Meniates move to New Hampshire and if he had watched any
254 Budget Committee meetings and if he was to be placed on this committee would Mr.
255 Meniates have any ideas about how to make this town a better place. Mr. Meniates said he did
256 not have anything specific he was bringing to the table. He was presenting himself as an
257 option, but his intention is to make the town a better place however he can do that, and if he is
258 selected for this role, that he will come up with ideas.
259

260 Mr. Smith stated that he would be reaching out to everyone who was not chosen for this
261 position in January, when Town elections come up, because there will be five open seats, and
262 they will be looking to fill those.
263

264 Mr. Gagnon asked again why did Mr. Meniates move to Pelham. Mr. Meniates stated his
265 family open the convenient store here in 2003 and he has been falling in love with the Town
266 ever since. And although he grew up in Danvers, he lived in Florida for about a decade while
267 he was an undergrad and then moved to New Hampshire after he left Florida.
268

269 Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Meniates for volunteering.
270

271
272 **Applicant: Mike Carter**
273

274 Mr. Carter opened by thanking everyone for serving on the budget committee. Mr. Carter has
275 an n undergrad in economic crime investigation, focused on financial fraud and crime, and
276 cyber security. He graduated in 2005 from Syracuse. He received his MBA from the
277 University of Maryland in 2011. He stated he has worked full-time since 2004 in the IT
278 security field handling lots of unique issues with data mining on the internet, data analysis,
279 and optimization, and has done a lot of security work for government agencies. This work has
280 to do with fundamental operational efficiencies, within budget restrictions for the government.
281

282 Mr. Carter has lived in Pelham almost all his life, he has been here since second grade/8 years
283 old. When he graduated from Syracuse, he took an internship in Washington DC doing a lot
284 of federal contracting, working for the department of the treasury and the Federal Reserve
285 Bank, doing a lot of security audits and assessments. He spend some time as a penetration
286 tester, which is an “ethical hacker”, which means he performed assessments of organizational
287 IT, and would write them a report that detailed what was broken, and how to fix it. Then he
288 would come back in and let them know whether or not they succeeded in fixing that. He did
289 this from 2005 to 2011 until he had an opportunity to start a new career path and move back to
290 Pelham since his wife also grew up here and they had wanted to do that for a long time.
291

292 After that his career led him to an IT security start-up in 2018 were they started with six
293 employees and now have 127 employees. They handle a lot of federal contracts. Mr. Carter is
294 responsible for a lot of project and program management, so budgets are fairly natural and
295 organic for him. He also does a lot of bids and proposals for the federal government. There’s a
296 lot of analysis and number crunching associated with that.
297

298 Mr. Smith asked Mr. Carter if he had had an opportunity to serve on any voluntary positions
299 or boards previously. Mr. Carter stated that previously he has not done that, but he was the
300 comptroller of his student Senate when he was in Syracuse for two years, and he volunteers a
301 lot in town for youth sports.
302

303 Mr. Gagnon stated that he was able to get to know Mr. Carter during the most recent
304 elections. Mr. Gagnon stated that he should ask this question to everybody, but sometimes
305 there are conflicts and differences of opinions. Mr. Gagnon asked if Mr. Carter can give an
306 example in his life or professional career, where he's dealt with a conflict situation, and what
307 Mr. Carter thinks, and how he would deal with it to find the reasonable, right, and logical
308 answer. Mr. Carter said that generally speaking life is full of disagreements, and that no two
309 people see every issue exactly the same. Mr. Carter stated when he deals with conflict, he
310 likes to find common ground, and once you find some common ground, you can start to
311 expand from there and gain more common ground. He said always keep things polite and
312 professional and try to see where views align.

313
314 Mr. Smith stated it's worth reminding everybody that ultimately the voters are the ones who
315 are going to have the final say on the budget.

316
317 Mr. Sherman. Asked Mr. Carter what is the name of the company he works for. Mr. Carter
318 stated the name of his company is Armavel, LLC which Mr. Carter started with his business
319 partner. Mr. Carter said he's the chief operating officer, and he would be happy to provide his
320 résumé or anything else to the Committee.

321
322 Mr. Carter also stated that he did run for a position and was narrowly defeated. He came in
323 just behind the person who declined to take the position, and this was from a fairly hastily put
324 together writing campaign, so the community has provided some support for him in this role.

325
326 Mr. Smith. thanked Mr. Carter for volunteering.

327
328
329 **Applicant:** Natassia (Niki) Trettel

330
331 Ms. Trettel ran for the budget committee this past election season, and was defeated, but said
332 there were some people in the community that did support her. Ms. Trettel said she wanted to
333 participate in the electoral process because she started to pay attention to the budget
334 committee meetings in 2020 and throughout the pandemic. This last fiscal year she started to
335 attend them in person, and some of the things that she did see, she did find alarming, and that
336 prompted her to get more involved. She submitted her application for this appointment, and
337 the Committee has seen her résumé and can ask her any questions they would like.

338
339 Ms. Trettel stated she moved here in 2017 with her partner, Tim, and four children who attend
340 the elementary and middle school. They live on 89 Tallant Rd., and the Committee may know
341 them as the "big foot house" and they are homesteading on their land. As her children have
342 gotten older, she has been able to dedicate more time to her community, and she has an
343 extensive history of community service. Ms. Trettel volunteers with the Pelham Parks and Rec
344 coaching, basketball and soccer since they moved here.

345
346 Ms. Trettel's main objective is to reduce the tax burden. Ms. Trettel stated that the people of
347 Pelham have spoken in this past election where the town and the school budget were narrowly
348 defeated. She's listening to those people and is one of those people. She stated she is here to
349 help make this town more affordable and keep the character of the town.

350
351 Mr. Smith stated to the Committee that there is nothing off-limits in terms of topic or being
352 able to bring things up.

354 Mr. Smith asked Ms. Trettel which things she saw on the budget committee that she thought
355 were alarming, and asked for some insight on anything specific that she would like to call out.
356

357 Ms. Trettel stated that her main concern was that she saw a lot of processes being chaotic and
358 disorganized. The Committee had to go back into session because things weren't resolved.
359 She stated she saw a lot of room to improve and use some lean principles there and there's a
360 lot of waste there. Ms. Trettel stated that [the Committee] failed to provide an itemize list for
361 the cuts in the budget, which is a legal requirement. She's concerned that there is a lack of
362 experience and that even if there is a lack of experience and a lack of understanding on where
363 to get the information that [the Committee] needs to do the job the right way, the first time.
364

365 Mr. Gagnon asked Ms. Trettel if she had spoken to any department heads concerning the
366 budget, because the voters usually want to pay less, but the departments have things to do, and
367 actions to take care of, and services to provide. Ms. Trettel stated that to be transparent, she
368 does attend all of the school board meetings, either in person or online so she has
369 communicated with the department heads there. She understands that they have different
370 needs than what the voters need so she understands that there will need to be a compromise
371 and some critical conversations and speaking with to what is actually needed or wanted from
372 some department heads versus what the voters are actually saying.
373

374 Mr. Sherman stated that Ms. Trettel stated that the budget was not itemized per state law. He
375 said that state law dictates what the format has to be and what the processes are going
376 forward. He asked Ms. Trettel where in state law can she point to him the law that the
377 Committee is not following. Ms. Trettel stated that she did not have the RSA in front of her at
378 this time but she is saying that from what happened last year that the Committee had to go
379 back into session to itemize those cuts and invited Troy Bressette to speak to that.
380

381 Mr. Bressette stated that the budget committee got on track at the last session but it took some
382 additional work. Mr. Sherman said that is something to recognize that the newer members did
383 not realize.
384

385 Mr. Smith stated that he wanted to point out for the newer members that there is actually a
386 form that the Committee signs off at the end of the season that is very specific in terms of
387 amounts by department. He stated he will share that at one of the next meetings, so that
388 everyone understands that this is actually what the ultimate goal is. It will be delivered in this
389 format.
390

391 Mr. Smith. thanked Ms. Trettel for volunteering.
392

393
394 **Applicant:** Katie Ralls

395
396 Ms. Ralls withdrew her application.
397
398
399

400 **Applicant:** John Russell

401
402 Mr. Russell has lived in Pelham since 2013 with his wife, Lisa, and his two children, Andrew
403 and Ava who both go to Pelham Elementary School. Mr. Russell spent the better part of last

404 year as an appointed member of the Pelham School Board and went through a rigorous budget
405 cycle there which was both eye-opening an educational for him.

406
407 Mr. Russell has spent the last 26 years as a sales professional for corporate business to
408 business sales. Most of that was in technology and software. He spent 10 of those years in
409 sales leadership. He has spent the entirety of his career, trying to come to mutual agreements
410 between customers and prospects from different ends of the spectrum. They want it cheaper
411 and he wants them to spend more money. They have a common goal, which is compromise,
412 logic, and common sense, and partnerships, and this is how he views the Budget Committee.
413 He sees this as a non-partisan position. He said the fact of the matter is, there's left and right
414 and red and blue but the Committee are all in their seats for one common goal, and that is to
415 make educated, logical, and informed decisions based on the best interest of the town and the
416 taxpayers. Mr. Russell asked the Committee for their vote of confidence to appoint him as a
417 member of the budget committee for this term.

418
419 Mr. Smith asked Mr. Russell if he had run for one of the offices. Mr. Russell stated that he ran
420 for School Board. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Russell how long he had lived in Pelham. Mr. Russell
421 stated he has lived here since 2013.

422
423 Mr. Gagnon asked Mr. Russell for examples of multiple ways that he tried to lower the school
424 budget while he was on the School Board. Mr. Russell stated that he joined the School Board
425 just as the budget cycle began and stated it was a lot to take in. The meetings were long and
426 every week and the RSA's were a lot for him to gather and learn. Mr. Russell stated that there
427 is a difference between a need and a want and the question is what if we don't do this today,
428 do we do we double our ask for the next budget cycle if we are remiss this year? He does
429 think there's a big difference between a want a need or a have or have not. Mr. Russell said he
430 thinks in our case we can take the Pelham Memorial School; he thinks we sat on our hands for
431 a long time and let that school get into a really bad situation and into really poor conditions.
432 He stated his wife and he toured that school with Ms. Ryan about three or four years ago. He
433 stated his wife left there crying and the bathrooms were deplorable. He stated the students told
434 them they couldn't open the windows because the septic tank overflowed each year, and if
435 they open the windows, the classroom would smell like fecal matter. He stated those are the
436 things we can't allow and he wants to do the right things. He stated he doesn't know a single
437 person that wakes up in the morning and says "I'd like to pay more taxes". He says we need to
438 do the right thing and keep taxes low, and the town should be affordable. He does not want to
439 be priced out of his home, or have anyone else priced out of their home, especially the seniors,
440 so we can't ignore things.

441
442 Mr. Gagnon asked again if Mr. Russell give any examples of things he was cut from the
443 School Board budget when he was there. Mr. Russell stated he was not sure he could give
444 anything specific, but there was a pretty hefty price tag on laptops and his ask to Dr. McGee
445 was if we need laptops or if we could do a third now, a third next year, and a third... and the
446 answer was no. He stated that again it's a want to have versus a need to have and what does it
447 look like if we don't do this? He said in his day-to-day in the corporate world in the sales
448 profession that has biggest competition is the status quo. Sometimes customers don't realize
449 they have a challenge and it's his job or his sales team's job to uncover those challenges and
450 show them that there's a better way. He stated he thinks most of us go through our day-to-day
451 with "if it's not broke, don't fix it" but there could be a better and easier way, and sometimes
452 you just need to bite the bullet.

454 Mr. Sherman asked Mr. Russell, if besides baseball, if there were other community groups he
455 has been involved in. Mr. Russell stated he was a member of the Pelham Community Spirit
456 group and he was co-chair for the Pelham New Hampshire farmers market that was on the
457 Village Green and he started that. He has also coached for tot soccer, basketball, and baseball.
458 He likes to be involved in as much as he can be. He grew up in Tewksbury and his mother
459 was on the Board of Appeals in the 70s and 80s and he sat in the back like his son was this
460 night.

461
462 Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Russell for volunteering.

463 **Applicant:** Giovannino Giuffrida

464
465
466 Mr. Giuffrida is originally from Methuen, Massachusetts and moved to Pelham about seven
467 months ago. Mr. Giuffrida was his class president during his last year in high school and
468 enjoys putting himself out there in the community. He stated he appreciate other people's
469 opinions whether he agrees with them or not.

470
471 Mr. Giuffrida volunteered a lot in his previous town and helped other politicians with their
472 campaign. He stated he planned to run for the School Board next year, but saw this
473 opportunity come up and decided to take it. He believes his youth to be a positive change for
474 the community, and he understands there are people behind him that have a lot more
475 experience. Mr. Giuffrida stated that even if he doesn't get chosen for this committee that next
476 year he will be here for either this committee or another committee for the town of Pelham
477 and he wants to do his best not for him before the town of Pelham.

478
479 Mr. Smith asked Mr. Giuffrida what brought him to Pelham. Mr. Giuffrida stated that his
480 parents owned a two-family house in Methuen. They sold the house last year and ended up
481 moving to Pelham.

482
483 Mr. Smith asked Mr. Giuffrida what he thinks are the biggest challenges from a budget or
484 finance perspective, that the town faces. Mr. Giuffrida said that he thinks the town faces a lot.
485 He stated he notices that the older citizens have a lot of interest and in the community. He
486 feels that his youth will show the younger generation that they actually have a say, and that
487 they are equal to everyone else.

488
489 Mr. Sherman asked Mr. Giuffrida if he sees any needs that the youth need offhand. Mr.
490 Giuffrida stated that he felt that the youth could be more involved by joining a committee and
491 participating in volunteering. Mr. Giuffrida sent an email to offer to coach basketball next
492 season and he feels the youth could be more proactive in the community.

493
494 Mr. Gagnon asked how Mr. Giuffrida would reach out to the young people. Mr. Giuffrida
495 stated that in his previous town, he coached basketball for three years and realizes that the
496 Budget Committee is a lot more serious than that but feels like by being a role model he could
497 show others that they can do it, even though they are younger, even though it could be
498 intimidating. Mr. Giuffrida said he will be coaching basketball and trying to talk to everyone
499 and try to get out in the community and talk to you to see what they want.

500
501 Mr. Smith stated that he knows it is hard to get in front of a group and speaking publicly
502 especially in front of cameras when its broadcast. Mr. Smith told Mr. Giuffrida that he
503 appreciates him coming out and would appreciate him getting more people involved.
504

Discussion

Mr. Smith stated that he would like to set the next meeting one or two weeks from tonight to vote for the two open seats. He asked if anyone had any objections to that, and there were none.

Jim Greenwood stated that it would have to be a Thursday, and all Thursdays are open. Mr. Smith asked if 6:30 on Thursday, May 9 would work for everybody, and they agreed that it would.

Mr. Gagnon asked about the application for Ken Woonton and how it would be handled. Mr. Gagnon asked if Mr. Woonton would come in for an interview or if the Committee should just decide based on the documentation that was submitted. Mr. Smith said it was up to the Committee to decide if it was fair to have him come and speak at the next meeting since everyone else was able to take time out of their schedules to be here. Mr. Smith stated that his inclination is to just go by the application and not have Mr. Woonton come in on May 9 to be fair to all of the people who came out and changed their schedules for tonight. Mr. Gagnon stated that it was a medical emergency, so there should be more leeway there. Ms. Cormier asked how much time was given between notice of this meeting and the meeting. Mr. Smith stated that there was only a couple of days and he apologized for the short notice.

Mr. Smith said that he would hate to have someone not put their best foot forward because they had a family situation as they do go out of their way to be accommodating. Based on that, his recommendation would be to offer Mr. Woonton the opportunity to come in on May 9 and speak first thing, and then the Committee will vote. Mr. Gagnon said he was OK with that if the rest of the committee was OK with that.

Mr. Smith will reach out to Mr. Woonton directly to see if he is available for that.

UPCOMING SCHEDULE 2024/2025

Mr. Smith invited the applicants to stay if they would like for the rest of the meeting, but let them know if they do not have to. Mr. Sherman said if anyone was unfamiliar with the process is in the calendar that they should stay and Thursday night is the night that this committee meets so if someone cannot make Thursday nights, that is something to be considered.

Mr. Smith stated that he will circulate a proposed schedule and the Committee will be doing a Town walk-through, and that would be targeted to the Saturday after Labor Day weekend. The walk-through is a tour of the various Town buildings that the town administrator would like the Committee to see. Usually, they are tied back to needing repairs made or making a budget request for an upgrade, and they will specifically walk the Committee through it so when they are discussing an item the committee will know exactly what they are talking about. The walk-through is three or four hours long and the Committee is not required to be there, but it is encouraged.

Ms. Cormier asked if it was just one Saturday and Mr. Smith stated it is just one for the Town and about two weeks later there is another one for the school and he will provide the exact dates.

556 Mr. Sherman stated those are regular schedule meetings, and the Committee is expected to be
557 there. He stated it is also gives the CIP a chance to point out those projects that it has
558 recommended. Ms. Ryan stated they are very informative, and Mr. Smith agreed that they are
559 very informative because when the CIP says there's a problem that you can see the problem
560 and it starts to make sense.

561
562 Mr. Smith said the Committee will be meeting on Thursdays and he would work out all the
563 details based on the budget schedule but the meetings are typically mid-September through
564 Thanksgiving. The Committee would meet again in January and February when we get to
565 deliberative of session and reconsideration. He will walk everyone through exactly what these
566 things mean.

567
568 Mr. Smith stated that the first year is overwhelming, but he will try to make it simple.

569
570 Mr. Smith will also identify the dates where if anyone wants to make specific budget changes
571 that he would want them submitted. This would be able to schedule department heads and
572 School heads to come in advance to speak to their specific impact of what any budget changes
573 are needed.

574
575 Mr. Gagnon asked if Committee members had the ability to call department heads without a
576 quorum as they see fit. Mr. Sherman said, no, the Committee does not set policies and it needs
577 to relate to finances. Mr. Sherman said that anything anyone thinks needs to be answered
578 budgetary or monetary-wise, it needs to go through the chairman, and the chairman will then
579 decide to pass things on and raise questions.

580
581 Mr. Smith said the Committees roll is around finances, even though there was some overlap.
582 So if anyone has any specific questions, and they wanted to go to a department head to please
583 route them through Mr. Smith.

584
585 Mr. Smith asked if quorum was 4 people and Mr. Sherman said no, it is 6 because this is a
586 committee of 11 and majority is six members. Mr. Smith stated if there are six Committee
587 members together, then there would be a problem because it is considered a meeting, and the
588 group needs to be careful that they are following the rules. Mr. Sherman said that is the same
589 with any type of email correspondence so you should send your correspondence to the
590 chairperson and Mr. Smith said yes because we don't want to violate any right-to-know laws.
591 Mr. Smith reminded everyone that as soon as you use your personal email it becomes a right-
592 to-know problem, and that the Committee should use their iPads and Budget Committee e-
593 mail addresses.

594 595 **REVIEW OF BYLAWS**

596
597 Mr. Smith stated he did not have the bylaws ready for review and they could be talked about
598 at the May 9 meeting. He stated there were some minor changes last year to update them and
599 he didn't see a need for the bylaws to be updated and he will circulate them and if anyone had
600 any specific changes to make that they could address that.

601
602 Mr. Sherman stated that the bylaws are online. Mr. Smith will send out a note that everyone
603 has access because they are public.

604 605 **REMOTE MEETINGS**

607 Mr. Smith said he wanted the Committee to vote on whether or not to allow remote meetings.
608 Mr. Smith stated he wanted to have a firm policy upfront, but everyone agrees to.

609
610 Mr. Silva stated that he needed to miss a meeting and requested to participate remotely. He
611 asked if meetings were remote during Covid. Mr. Sherman said yes, they were by governor's
612 order.

613
614 Mr. Gagnon suggested a three-strike rule where a member could be remote 3 times but after
615 that it would become a pattern and not be allowed and there should be the flexibility to allow
616 participation.

617
618 Mr. Sherman stated that all votes need to be by rollcall, and that being remote would slow
619 things down. Mr. Bressette asked if we know where things stand statutorily. Mr. Smith stated
620 that it is allowed, but there needs to be a policy.

621
622 Mr. Smith stated he would like the opportunity and the convenience of being remote, but it
623 complicates the recording and changes the dynamic and we do not have the technology. He
624 said, even if he's not at a meeting, he likes to watch it, but when it's time to vote it matters
625 and that is the real issue. Mr. Smith's recommendation is that the group agrees not to allow
626 remote participation. The group agreed to this.

627
628 **Discussion**

629
630 Mr. Sherman stated that last year the Committee had decided to list the number of votes on
631 the ballot and wanted to know if that would continue into this year. Ms. Ryan recommended
632 that the group wait to seat the full Committee so that everyone can vote on that decision and
633 that if she remembers correctly, it's something that needs to be done each year, not something
634 that rolls over. Ms. Ryan also stated that the group to check to see if it should be part of the
635 bylaws or not.

636
637 **CONTACT LIST**

638
639 Mr. Smith will work to make sure he has everyone's home phone number or the best way to
640 reach everyone and he will update the contact list.

641
642
643
644 **ADJOURNMENT**

645
646
647 **MOTION:** (Sherman/Bressette) To adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:49 PM.

648 **VOTE:** The motion carried.

649
650
651 Respectfully Submitted,
652 Andrea Dube
653 Recording Secretary