

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
TOWN OF PEMBROKE  
Thursday March 31, 2016  
2015-16 Budget Season Retrospective  
FINAL

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Members Present: Mark LePage, Chair; Gerry Fleury, Vice Chair; Michael Connor; Brian Seaworth; Marie Chouinard; Clint Hanson; Tina Courtemanche, Selectmen Rep. Patricia Boucher, School Board Rep.; David Doherty, Alt. School Board Rep., Karen Yeaton, Sandy Goulet

Mark LePage called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Mark announced that Dan Crean has submitted his resignation to the Budget Committee. Dan has made very significant contributions to the committee during his years of service, and he will be greatly missed. Tom Petit has been notified that there is now a vacant seat on the committee.

Mark requested that anyone anticipating they would not be returning for the fall to please let him or Tom Petit know as soon as possible.

#### Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Clint Hanson to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2016 session, held following School District Meeting, seconded by Brian Seaworth. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Review of the 2015-2016 Budget Season.

Mark noted that overall this had been a difficult budget season in terms of the School Budget due primarily to revisions in the budget structure and the facilities study which arrived very late in the process, and the overall frequency of changes.

Mark then presented a set of requests to the School Board for the upcoming season:

The School budget must be available for review and discussion before the holiday break. The statutory deadline for holding a public hearing leaves little time for in-depth review, particularly during a complex budget year, and as this year showed there was insufficient time to assess the budget to the extent desired.

Budget account line items must remain stable going forward. Pat Boucher noted that account structure changes came as a result of considerable cleanup and adjustment efforts by new personnel, and that changes can be dictated by state requirements. It was noted that the committee understood the basis for this year's changes, but it is very important that the structure remain as-is going forward (statutory requirements excepted) to allow meaningful, understandable year-to-year comparisons.

The School Board should be available to meet weekly from December to February to allow for the Budget Committee to ask questions, get timely answers, and for the Board to be able to consider timely action based on Committee recommendations during the budget review process. Pat requested specifics as to what was being requested, noting it was unreasonable to demand the Board change it's meeting schedule. This was clarified through discussion in that it is not a requirement to meet weekly however being prepared to meet off-cycle during this period would allow for a more effective and timely flow of information between the two bodies as they proceed within very tight timeframes.

Enhanced detail in the budget. The additional details and notations provided this year were helpful but specialized breakdowns of specific departments/categories would provide improved insight. Areas of the budget for enhanced detail were discussed, with line items related to the CBA (Collective Bargaining

Agreement) being of highest interest. The Committee requested the CBA breakout include 1-line summaries for each type of expense as well as full detail on line items at each school.

Further discussion related to the School budget process continued.

Pat announced that the School Board is forming a utilization study committee, and they were looking for a volunteer from the Budget Committee. Mike Conner volunteered.

Pat asked whether there were any changes being requested to the Board's approach to presenting the budget to the Committee. The consensus was that no changes are needed.

Other topics of discussion:

A suggestion was given to hold the public hearing during a weeknight instead of Saturdays, as has been the practice. This would eliminate the issue of the Superintendent of Schools and the finance manager not being able to attend (they are typically attending Deerfield's hearing as it is an SB2 town). It may also attract more citizen attendance. The general consensus was that we should try this for the upcoming season.

Mark asked whether there should be any changes to the tax impact sheet that has been used for many years. One consideration could be to revise it so that numbers align with the MS forms for more effective use. Gerry noted that the spreadsheet originated as an internal Committee worksheet not intended for the public, and perhaps an alternate format for public consumption may be of value. Gerry also noted that formulas used have over time been deleted or altered, and that cleanup is needed.

Karen Yeaton asked about the potential use of a dropbox-style resource to aid with version control of the various documents we work with, particularly in light of difficulties this year.

The Town budget process was then discussed.

Committee members noted that the budget packages and information presented have been working very well, the breakdown and descriptions provided are very helpful. No changes were requested.

David Jodoin was thanked for all he has done over the course of the past year, including assisting the new SAU finance manager with the tax impact sheet.

Motion to adjourn was made by Gerry, seconded by Clint, and unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.