

TOWN OF BEDFORD FINANCE COMMITTEE

September 7, 2023

Minutes

Finance Committee Members in attendance: Ben Thomas, Chair, Abigail Seibert, Vice Chair, Tom Rowan, Mark Bailey, and George Lee

Others in attendance: David Castellarin, (Finance Director),

Chair Thomas calls the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Calls the Roll of Committee Members in attendance.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Public Comment

None.

2. Review/Approve Minutes

Chair Thomas asks for any comments on the Minutes for August 17, 2023.

Motion to approve the Minutes for August 17, 2023 by Member Bailey.

Second by Member Lee

Roll call of members in attendance.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries

Chair Thomas asks for any comments on the Minutes for August 24, 2023.

Member Seibert notes additional people that should be added to “Others in Attendance”.

Also notes requested changes to her comments with respect to “Meetings Attended”

Chair Thomas suggests addition to Section 5 on page 3 with respect to the discussion concerning the Committee agreeing to continue hybrid attendance.

Motion to approve the Minutes for August 24, 2023 as amended by Member Bailey.

Second by Member Seibert

Roll call of members in attendance.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries

3. Introduction to FY 25 Model and Guideline

Chair Thomas begins overview of the main budget documents with respect to which the Finance Committee is involved. These are the FY 25 Model which is continually updated by the Finance Director and generally discussed at each Committee meeting, the Budget Guideline Allocation Table and the resulting Budget Guideline Letter and Memorandum.

Chair Thomas discusses how the Committee decides the percentage of increase each Department and Board should have over the prior year's approved budget for that Board or Department. Discusses how, historically, with the exception of Schools, each Department or Board is asked to prepare its Budget within this Guideline.

Chair Thomas also discusses how the Committee prepares the allocation table using various potential percentage increases. Also discusses how the table is used to decide the percentage to be used by referencing the Model numbers and the budget surplus or deficit shown there.

Chair Thomas also discusses the Committee's goal which is preparation of the annual Guideline Letter and Memorandum which will include the percentage increase decided upon by the Committee and be sent to all Committees and Boards which prepare budgets. The letter will also include the proposed date for that Department or Committee to appear at a Finance Committee meeting to discuss its proposed budget.

Chair Thomas discusses how this effort used to be done later in the year but last year the Committee decided to move up the process. Discusses the current goal of getting the Guideline letter out sooner.

General discussion of history of 2.5% being a norm for increases for all except the Schools which generally would be 3.5%. Discussed last year being unusual due to COVID and expected inflation increasing all expenses.

General discussion of Schools budget and the additional use of a separate Reserve Transfer Fund which would be available to the Schools upon request but which would not be included in the Schools base for the next year's consideration.

General discussion of last year's unusual situation which resulted in the Town's requesting 6.5% increase due to special circumstances and that was approved by the Committee.

General discussion of the history of all Departments and Committees in cooperating in this process very well.

General discussion of how the Committee acts conservatively since not all income and expense numbers are known when this process occurs. Basically the Committee is prognosticating what actual numbers will be 17-18 months from now. Just giving a broad overview now.

General discussion of the various actual numbers which will not yet be available. Also discussion of Free Cash, Unused Tax Levy and how those numbers are reached.

General discussion of policies which currently exist and what issues might deserve a more formal policies.

Chair Thomas suggests having Mr. Castellarin provide a review of the higher income and expense numbers as they appear in the current Model.

Mr. Castellarin provides this review of income, new growth and expense numbers for purposes of initial Guideline consideration.

Chair Thomas thanks Mr. Castellarin for this review.

4. Future Meetings

Chair Thomas notes that next week's meeting will be devoted to the preparation of the Guideline and initial review of the current draft of the Warrant for Fall Town Meeting.

II. RECURRING BUSINESS

1. Meetings Attended

Chair Thomas discusses two Select Board meetings attended.

2. Finance Committee Adjourns

Chair Thomas calls for a motion to adjourn.

Member Bailey moves to adjourn.

Second by Member Lee

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion carries

Time: 8:55 pm

John B. Connarton
Recording Secretary

DOCUMENT LIST

Agenda for September 7, 2023 Meeting

Minutes for August 17, 2023 Meeting

Minutes for August 24, 2023 Meeting

Finance Committee 2023-2024 Meeting Schedule

Current List of Committee for Assignment of Liaisons

Finance Committee Members List 2023

FY25 Model – 09-7-23

