

**Middlesex Budget Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, December 21, 2021
4:30 PM**

Minutes

Present: Randy Drury, Mark Harris, Elias Gardner, Bill McManis

Guests: None

4:30 Call to Order

Review draft Budget Committee Town Report

- The draft will need to be adjusted once the Select Board approves the final budget amount.
- Randy asked if adding more details explaining the main drivers of the budget increase (General Government Expenditures, Fire Department, and Public Works) would be helpful and advocated the Budget Committee's purpose is to lay out the simple facts of the budget.
- Mark agreed and questioned where the Budget Committee report should end and the Select Board's begin.
- Elias suggested having some level of coordination between the Budget Committee and Select Board reports.
- Mark offered to reach out to coordinate.

Discuss New Budget Committee Role

- Randy pointed out that a big part of the process will require the Treasurer be highly interactive with the Budget Committee. If the Treasurer is not a part of the committee they must at least be included.
- Mark cautioned being careful of boundaries of the Budget Committee's role versus the Treasurer's role.
- Elias wondered how to schedule meetings to make them work for the Budget Committee, Treasurer and Select Board. If the Budget Committee meets outside of Select Board meetings and attends Budget Workshops the Budget Committee and the Treasurer could end up meeting every week, twice as often as the Select Board.

Discuss Budget Workshops

- Mark proposed using the federal CPI for COLA adjustments in the budget every year and handling merit separately.
- Elias agreed saying federal CPI could be the default COLA used if the Select Board takes no action.
- Randy suggested it at least be used as the starting point.
- Bill suggested the Budget Committee recommend to the Select board that the baseline wage increase be the Federal CPI each year.

- Randy supported using Federal CPI this year but did not support an additional 5.9% wage increase in this budget because of the pre-existing wage increases already implemented and suggested we discuss this more at our next meeting.

Other Business

- Approve 2021-12-07 Meeting Minutes - Bill moved and Mark seconded with unanimous approval (4-0-1)

Budget Workshop

- Joined Select Board Meeting for Budget Workshop at 5:02

6:00 Adjourn