

**Middlesex Budget Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, January 04, 2022  
4:30 PM**

**Participants:** Theo Kennedy, Mark Harris, Bill McManis, Randy Drury, Elias Gardner

**Guests:** none

## **Minutes**

4:30 Call to Order. No guests. No amendments.

Review draft Budget Committee Town Report

- Tabled for next meeting

Discuss Budget Workshop Documents

- Mark suggested reducing the additional COLA down to 3% and take another \$2,000 from the Public works to bring the total increase under 9%
- Randy agreed with the Treasurer, Dorinda's point that we shouldn't plan to take money from the general fund rather than putting it in a budget line item because this reduces transparency for townspeople.
- Mark agreed the general fund should be left untouched.
- Bill expressed that using general fund money was the Select Board's intention last meeting.
- Mark replied that is a setup for a big increase next budget year.
- Randy thought the Select Board also mentioned using the general fund balance to bring down the tax rate and cautioned that our first question should be to be sure what the Select Board's intentions are.
- Randy moved the Budget Committee recommend the general fund balance not be used to subsidize any budget line item. Mark seconded
  - Theo asked where the money comes from and Mark responded the general fund which contains money not spent in previous years budgets.
  - Elias asked when the town does use the general fund and if we are saying it should never be used.
  - Randy replied that the general fund is used for operational lending and it has allowed us to move from 1 or 2 to 4 tax payments.
  - Elias suggested in the long term there should be a target balance and a plan ahead of time for what to do if the balance goes over or under.
  - Randy added that the general fund balance could be meaningful for the Capital Improvement Process as it was for East Montpelier.
  - Theo clarified to general agreement that we are not trying to take a position on the tennis courts..
  - Randy added it's not about any specific line item. The point is not intentionally using the general fund instead of a line item.
  - Theo summarized that transparency is the core issue.
  - Unanimous approval 5-0-0

- Mark continued the conversation to the start and asked if we want to shave the budget increase down more or leave where it is.
- Randy asked if the committee wanted to make the recommendation.
- Bill suggested 3% COLA and remove \$2000 from public works for 8.87% increase sounded reasonable.
- Elias asked what the previous mid year salary increases the Select Board approved amounted to.
- Randy replied it was generally a 10-20% increase per employee so for the year increases are still above the %5.9 inflation rate.
- Mark moves to recommend the Select Board reduce the COLA to 3% and reduce Public Works by \$2,000 in order to make the over all budget increase, below 9%. Randy seconds. Unanimous Approval.

#### Other Business

- Approve 2021-12-21 Meeting Minutes - tabled
- No correspondence

#### Budget Workshop

- At 5:00 committee members joined the Select Board Meeting for the Budget Workshop.

6:00 Adjourn