

TOWN OF DEERFIELD
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING & MEETING
April 30, 2013
MINUTES

Call to Order:

6:30 pm Chairman Don Daley called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Daley asked all to rise and pledge allegiance to the Flag.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Roll Call:

Present: Don Daley, Chairman; Jim Spillane, Vice Chair, Harriet Cady, David Carbone, Carol Levesque, Jeff Shute and Kevin Verville, Members; Maryann Clark, School Board Rep

Absent: Fred McGarry, Member and Steve Barry, Board of Selectmen Rep

Approval of Minutes – January 9, 2013

Motion: Vice Chairman Spillane moves the minutes as written

Second: K. Verville

All in Favor – Motion Carries

Election of Officers

Motion: M. Clark moves to nominate Don Daley as MBC Chair

Second: K. Verville

Don Daley declines nomination

Motion: K. Verville moves to nominate himself for the position of MBC Chair

Second: M. Clark

Motion: H. Cady moves to nominate Jim Spillane for the position of MBC Chair

Second: D. Carbone

Discussion: Vice Chairman Spillane expressed that he would welcome the opportunity to step back into the role of Committee Chair. K. Verville indicated that he would be happy to volunteer his services with the intention of keeping discussions thorough and on topic.

Vote: J. Spillane 4; K. Verville 4 – Resulting a tie

J. Shute suggested the Committee fill vacancies, continue on through the meeting and revisit later. All agreed, with M. Clark noting that the appointment tonight would not resolve a tie vote as the new member would need to be first sworn in before participating in formal voting.

Vacancy Appointment

Chairman Daley explained that the 1 year MBC position had been filled by Carol Levesque. There were three open three-year terms, to which Jim Spillane and David Carbone were elected, the third write in candidate declined appointment, as a result the Committee is able to appoint someone to fill the role. Chuck Reese and Bill von Hassel have applied for the position. C. Reese noted that he enjoyed his term last year filling in for Mr. Pitman and had not realized until it was too late that he would need to re-run for the remainder of the term. Bill von Hassel spoke that he would welcome the new experience of serving on the Committee and felt he would bring insight as a business owner with a background in finance. Neither candidate had conflicts with the dates of proposed meetings.

Motion: K. Verville moves to nominate Bill von Hassel to the vacant position

Second: H. Cady

Motion: M. Clark moves to nominate Chuck Reese to the vacant position

Second: J. Spillane

Vote: Bill von Hassel 6; Chuck Reese 2 – Mr. von Hassel is appointed to the vacant MBC Position

Chairman Daley noted he will notify the Town Clerk so that Mr. von Hassel can be fully sworn in before the next meeting and thanked Mr. Reese for his service and continued interest in helping the Committee with their work.

2013-2014 Meeting Schedule

Chairman Daley presented the proposed 2013-2014 meeting schedule to the Committee.

Motion: Vice Chairman Spillane moves to approve the schedule as presented

Second: K. Verville

Discussion: H. Cady disagreed with the schedule and feels that the MBC is not doing its job. She felt the team is failing to look into the budgeting and Town spending well enough, through her attendance at Selectmen meetings and reviewing of the Accounts Payable manifests she feels that money is being spent in ways the Town does not know about. Chairman Daley noted H. Cady's concerns, but felt that in the past using weekly meetings for the MBC resulted in many instances of wasted time due to the Town and School budgets being works in progress, so that the MBC was reviewing incomplete budgets, or budgets that were later revised. He agreed with Ms. Cady that more can be done as a committee and encouraged other members to attend the Selectmen and School Board meetings. Vice Chairman Spillane echoed Chairman Daley's views of the weekly meetings and added that because the Town operates with a bottom line budget, it is outside the authority of the MBC to dictate what the funds are spent on. The Selectmen are within their authority to move money around and make purchases as they see fit.

H. Cady would like to see reviews start in September with some of the smaller and unchanging department budgets.

Motion: H. Cady moves to add an additional meeting on September 24th to the schedule

Second: Vice Chairman Spillane

Discussion: C. Levesque pointed out that the 24th of September falls during the week of the Fair and suggested that the 17th of September may be a better date. K. Verville suggested looking at early to mid October. M. Clark noted that it would be highly unlikely that the School would have any of its budget finalized at that time.

Motion Withdrawn: H. Cady withdrew her motion

Motion: H. Cady moves to add an additional meeting on October 8th to the schedule

Second: Vice Chairman Spillane

Discussion: H. Cady indicated that her desire would be for the Town and School to come before the MBC at that first meeting with information showing how many lines in their current budget had been changed.

Vote to add October 8th to the Schedule: Yea 5; Nay 3 - Motion Carries

Vote to approve the 2013/2014 Meeting Schedule as Amended: Yea 5; Nay 3 – Motion Carries

E-Mail Policy

Motion: K. Verville moves the email policy as written

Second: Vice Chairman Spillane

Discussion: Chairman Daley reviewed the policy and re-stated how important it is that business discussions by email be limited.

Vote: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Access to Local Government Center Legal Services Policy

Motion: K. Verville moves the LGC Access Policy as written

Second: Vice Chairman Spillane

Discussion: Chairman Daley provided a context and history behind his drafting of this policy for the MBC. He informed the Committee that the Board of Selectmen had voted earlier this year to limit LGC Legal access to just committee Chairs and, as a result of that action, he had drafted this policy to be brought before the Selectmen. Vice Chairman Spillane felt it was a good policy, but based on the Statement of Purpose on the LGC's website did not feel that there was any teeth to the Selectmen's action. Chairman Daley noted that the LGC policies do make qualifications that allow the local governing bodies, in this case the Deerfield Selectman, to limit access to services.

Motion: K. Verville moved to amend the motion that approval of the policy would be advisory in nature to the Select Board

Second: M. Clark

Discussion: Chairman Daley noted that, if approved, the understanding is that the MBC's policy will be presented to the Selectmen and that the MBC will request the Selectmen update their policy to accommodate the MBC

Vote: All in favor of amending the motion to be advisory in nature – Motion Carries

M. Clark expressed the opinion that there would be a benefit of having a single point of contact for the LGC, especially with so large a Committee. Chairman Daley responded that not many of the Committee members use the service, in the last year it was only one or two individuals. He noted that it is burdensome for the Chair and is especially difficult in inquiries where the Chair may not necessarily agree with the position of the Committee Member. K. Verville likes not using the Chair as there could be conflicting opinions and noted that often times how you ask a question determines the answer received. H. Cady agreed with those sentiments and suggested that any Members wishing to reach out to the LGC copy the Chair in their communication so that everyone is kept in the loop. B. von Hassel asked if it might be reasonable to limit the number of inquires each member is permitted. Chairman Daley noted he had thought of that, but wanted to keep the initial policy very simple in its language and scope.

Vote to approve the Access to Local Government Center Legal Services Policy: All in Favor – Motion Carries

Town Budget Update

With Selectman Representative S. Barry absent no Town Budget Update was discussed.

School Budget Update

M. Clark informed the Committee that at last report there was a \$328,000 surplus in the School budget with a yearend date of June 30th. The School Board will be meeting tomorrow night for anyone interested in attending. Vice Chairman Spillane asked if there were any large expenditures or unbilled activities that haven't hit that total yet. There were none that Maryann was aware of. She suggested that Members may want to attend the School Board Meetings in June as the possible uses for unused funds would likely be discussed then.

New Business:

K. Verville commented that, based on the election results, specifically with regards to the voter's defeat of the Safety Complex Project he would encourage the Board of Selectmen to investigate an alternate remedy for the perceived situations faced by the Fire and Police Departments. H. Cady added that the Selectmen mentioned at their last meeting that the Department Chiefs have been approached by local contractors and are working to create a new, less costly, proposal to bring before the Town. Vice Chairman Spillane added that he believes the intention is to keep presenting the project to voters until it passes.

H. Cady shared with the Committee that the Selectmen are currently reviewing the Capital Improvement Plans, she noted the items identified as needs on the walls, and that when finalized the plans will be presented for voter approval at a Public Hearing.

Election of Officers – Resume

Motion: J. Shute moves to postpone the election of Officers until the October 8th meeting

Second: H. Cady

Discussion: Chairman Daley agreed that he would be willing to continue as Chairman, at the Committee's pleasure until the next meeting at which time they will re-vote to elect Officers.

Vote – All in Favor – Motion Carries

Old Business:

H. Cady noted that the Warrant Article to have the MBC review and set the default budgets was defeated and she believes that it should be under the Committee's scope of work. Chairman Daley ruled the discussion out of order as the Warrant was not a money-related Warrant Item and as a result would not be something the Committee discusses.

Citizens Comments:

Chuck Reese congratulated Mr. von Hassel on his appointment and noted he will more than likely put his name in at the next election for service on the Committee.

Adjournment:

Motion: M. Clark moves to adjourn the meeting of April 30, 2013

Second: K. Verville
All in Favor – Motion Carries – Meeting Adjourned @ 7:40 p

The Minutes were Recorded, Transcribed and Respectfully Submitted by Katie Libby.
Pending Approval by the Municipal Budget Committee