

**TOWN OF DEERFIELD, NH
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE**

George B. White Building
8 Raymond Rd. Deerfield, NH 03037

November 3, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order by Chair at 6:02 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present - Bonnie Beaubien, William Huebner, Jocelyn Messier, Maureen Quinn, Bill Von Hassel, Jenifer Lee, Kevin Verville, John Harrington

Excused Absence - Zach Langlois, Joshua Cresswell, Phil Bilodeau

Tardy - Terry Roy arrived at 6:10 PM

Approval of Minutes: No minutes from last meeting to approve

New Business: Town Budget

Mr. Verville made a motion to move the Executive budget in the amount of \$17,501. Motion was seconded by Ms. Messier. All in favor, motion passed.

Mr. Verville made a motion to move the Forestry Commission budget in the amount of \$6.00, seconded by Ms. Beaubien. All in favor, motion passed.

Mr. Verville made a motion to move the Tax Anticipation Note budget in the amount of \$1.00. the motion was seconded by Ms. Quinn. All in favor, motion passed.

Ms. Messier made a motion to move the Advertising Regional Associations budget in the amount of \$4552.00, seconded by Ms. Quinn. Mr. Huebner stated this is for the NH Municipal Association Dues. Mr. Verville said it is his belief that Deerfield shouldn't be using the association as the organization lobbies in Concord and he doesn't think we should be using taxpayer money to lobby. Yay - 4, Nay - 4, Abstain - 0. Motion failed. Mr. Von Hassel stated that he feels there is some benefit to being a member of the organization, politics aside. He said that he has used them as a reference himself.

Mr. Verville made a motion to zero out the Advertising Regional Associations budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roy. Mr. Huebner asked Mr. Harrington for guidance. Mr. Harrington explained the town uses the NH Municipal Association for legal opinion, to post job openings. He explained that advertising job openings with them gives us statewide coverage, in every town & city in the state. Ms. Quinn asked what the cost to advertise would be if we did not have membership with the organization. Mr. Harrington said that they had just advertised for the road agent position in two newspapers at a cost of \$800 each. Ms. Quinn also asked about the legal advice cost. Mr. Harrington did not know the per hour rate for the town's legal counsel, but said it is quite expensive per hour and that the NH Municipal Association does not charge for legal advice. He added that the services are available to the chairs of all of the town's boards and committees as well. Mr. Roy asked if sometimes the legal advice is detrimental to taxpayers. Mr. Harrington said he has not had that experience so he couldn't answer that question. Mr. Roy said it has been his experience that if a bill goes forward that is beneficial to taxpayers that the association lobbies against it on behalf of the boards and committees. He said the association does not represent taxpayers and it seems wrong to him to take money from taxpayers to use against them. Mr. Roy said he doesn't know where the association advertises job openings and that the legal advice they give is advisory at best; they give opinion based on what they have seen happen in other cases. Mr. Huebner said he had taken the training course through them when he became a selectman and asked if there are alternatives to this association. Mr. Verville said there is no requirement to take a training course to be on any board or committee. Mr. Verville said he took their training course to be the MBC. He found their training to be heavily skewed in one direction, said the material wasn't unbiased, and is using taxpayer money to lobby. He said there are other resources to get information about RSAs. Mr. Huebner said he will be obligated to vote no on the motion to zero out the line due to his representing the board of selectmen. Mr. Von Hassel said as chair of the MBC he has used their legal services and that it was extremely helpful in making sure he was following the letter of the RSA. Ms. Quinn asked Mr. Huebner if he is obligated to vote no on the motion to zero out the line, why didn't he feel obligated to vote yes to approve the line in the first motion. Mr. Huebner said he realized after the first vote that the selectboard would probably prefer he had voted the other way. Mr. Huebner said he would be in favor of leaving \$1.00 in the line to keep it open so there is the option to still join if that is what the town decides to do. He said he didn't think the MBC is supposed to set policy, they're only supposed to review budgets and that it's not the MBC's place to say to the town that they don't think they should be part of the association. Mr. Verville said they are reviewing the budget. He said he made a valid motion to zero out the line, the MBC has zeroed out lines in the past and likely will in the future. Mr. Verville said the next step is to vote on the motion. Mr. Roy said in response to the policy comments from Mr. Huebner, it is practically impossible to discuss if an amount is appropriate or not without discussing the line's policy. Mr. Huebner said in preparation for tonight's meeting he had gone over the rules with Mr. Harrington and asked Mr. Harrington to summarize. Mr. Harrington explained that in the materials given to Mr. Huebner, it is stated that the job of the MBC is to look over the appropriateness of the allocations for the purpose, not whether the purpose is needed or not, but to review if it is properly backed up.

Mr. Harrington explained that there is proper back up for this purpose, that they have outlined that this is for the membership, the back up indicates it is based on the billing that they get from the NH Municipal Association, nothing more, nothing less. Mr. Verville said his motion is not out of order and unless someone can cite RSA and give specific language that is compelling, he would say vote on the motion. Mr. Von Hassle said that will happen once discussion is finished. Ms. Messier said she thinks the benefits stated by Mr. Von Hassle and Mr. Harrington of being a member of the organization outweigh what she sees as vague shortcomings. Ms. Quinn said what the motion seems completely counter to what Mr. Harrington just said that the MBC review of the budget is not to decide for the board of selectmen what the town does, but to decide if the amount for the item is appropriate or not. Mr. Verville said that is the town administrator's opinion and he doesn't dissuade anyone from agreeing or believing that opinion but that opinion won't be found in NH statute for the budget committee. Mr. Von Hassle called for a vote on Mr. Verville's motion to zero out the line. Yay - 3, Nay - 5, Abstain - 0. Motion failed. Mr. Von Hassel made a motion to change the amount of the line to \$1.00, seconded by Ms. Beaubien. Ms. Quinn made a motion to amend Mr. Von Hassel's motion to restore the amount of the line to \$4552.00. The motion was seconded by Ms. Beaubien. Yay - 4, Nay - 3, Abstain - 0. Motion to amend the motion passed, the motion was amended to restore the line to \$4552. Vote to restore the line to \$4552 was Yay - 4, Nay - 3, Abstain - 0. Motion passed, the line for Advertising Regional Associations budget was restored to \$4552.00.

Mr. Verville made a motion to move the Patriotic Purposes budget in the amount of \$600.00. The motion was seconded by Ms. Beaubien. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Verville made a motion to move the Heritage Commission budget in the amount of \$600.00. The motion was seconded by Ms. Quinn. Ms. Lee questioned the amount requested for mailings and printing in the amount of \$550. Mr. Verville said it is his understanding that the Heritage Commission prints and mails flyers to let people know about various events they're having. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Von Hassel spoke about the MBC budget. He asked Mr. Harrington if there is money left in the part time employee line from this year. Mr. Harrington said he printed a year to date on November 1st that shows all spending as of that date. Mr. Roy asked with regard to the tech employee, would that amount be coming from the part time employee line. Mr. Harrington said yes, that is the line to charge that to. Mr. Von Hassel said he thought he had added \$600 to that line but it didn't look like it on the copy of the budget they have. Ms. Quinn said it looks like \$300 had been added. Mr. Roy made a motion to add \$302 to the part time employee line. The motion was seconded by Ms. Messier. Ms. Quinn asked if \$302 will be enough to pay a part time employee to run the recording equipment. Mr. Von Hassel said he thinks it will be. Mr. Verville asked Mr. Harrington if other boards or committees had hired someone to run the recording equipment for their meeting. Mr. Harrington said the other boards are running it themselves. Mr. Von Hassel called for a vote on the motion to add \$302 to the part time employee line. Yay - 5, Nay - 2, Abstain - 0. Motion passed. Mr. Von Hassel added as a point of clarification that this is for next year's budget and that he believes there is some money in the part time employee line left for this year.

Mr. Harrington said the line had \$804 and they have used \$357.48 of that as of November 1st. Mr. Von Hassel said so, there is some money to approach the transcriptionist to run the recording equipment and that he had been authorized at a previous meeting to speak with the transcriptionist about doing that, he just has not done that yet. Mr. Verville said that is the year to date total, but that their busy season had just started and that they can expect to see more spending out of that line in the coming months. Mr. Roy asked if a member of the MBC can be trained and operate the recording equipment during meetings, will the unused money be returned to taxpayers. Mr. Harrington said any unused funds are returned. Mr. Roy made a motion to move the MBC budget in the amount of \$1581. The motion was seconded by Ms. Beaubien. Yay - 5, Nay - 2, Abstain -0. Motion passed.

Ms. Quinn made a motion to move the Reevaluation of Property budget in the amount of \$94,754.00. The motion was seconded by Ms. Beaubien. Mr. Roy asked why in regards to the increase. Mr. Huebner explained the increase was for supplies and the part time employee line. Mr. Harrington explained the part time employee line increased due to the cost of living increases given to town employees, which were approved by the public. Ms. Lee asked why supplies increased by \$400.00. Mr. Harrington said that that office was severely unorganized and that the part time employee is still working on organizing and cataloging files. Mr. Harrington said he could ask the billing clerk for records the next day. Mr. Verville made a motion to table the Reevaluation of Property budget until the next meeting, seconded by Ms. Lee. Yay - 6, Nay - 1, Abstain - 0. Motion passed. Budget tabled until the next meeting.

Mr. Verville made a motion to move the Planning and Zoning budget in the amount of \$47,451.00. The motion was seconded by Ms. Quinn. Ms. Lee asked if the increase on the part time employee line was due to cost of living increases again. Mr. Harrington said yes. All in favor. Motion passed

Mr. Von Hassel said that takes care of this meeting's agenda, the next meeting is November 10th.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Verville, seconded by Mr. Roy. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned by Chair at 7:09 PM.

These minutes were transcribed and respectfully submitted by Tina St. Peter,
Recording Secretary
Pending approval by the Municipal Budget Committee

