

**APPROVED at the May 10, 2010 Bristol Budget Committee Meeting**

***BRISTOL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 12, 2010***

***PRESENT:***

Dan Bouchard-Vice Chairman, Barbara Greenwood, Dave Carr, Dorcas Gordon, Wendy Costigan, Dan Arseneau, Jon Thouin, Shaun Lagueux, Ron Preble, Paul Simard, Tom Keegan, Joe Denning (substituting for Jeff Shackett)

***ABSENT:***

Jeff Shackett

***CALL TO ORDER:***

Vice-Chairman Bouchard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

***REVIEW OF MINUTES:***

The meeting began with a review of the minutes from February 7, 2010; Mr. Preble made a motion to accept the minutes as written and was seconded by Mr. Lagueux followed by a unanimous vote in favor.

***NEW BUSINESS:***

**WELCOME TO NEW and RETURNING MEMBERS:**

Vice-Chairman welcomed new member Tom Keegan to the Budget Committee. He also confirmed that all the returning members had been sworn in and requested that they do so before the next meeting.

**COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS FOR THIS YEAR:**

Mr. Thouin stated he would like to receive the expenditure charts prior to the meetings. The next Chairperson needs to talk with the administrator to resolve this on-going issue of receiving this information.

Joe Denning confirmed that an ad has been placed for a Town Administrator and the selectmen have received many applications for the position

Dave Carr stated that he did receive the expenditure chart and was concerned that areas that were zeroed out had current expenditures. (i.e. the Grant Writer line.) It was stated that perhaps this was an encumbrance. Mr. Preble asked if we could get a list of encumbrances.

Ms. Greenwood said it would be helpful to have information regarding the benefits that are offered to the town employees. She would like to start this year with fundamentals of expenses. It would be helpful to make a packet of information to give to new members showing basic needs of each department. Mr. Bouchard suggested a sub-committee be formed to work on this information package.

Ms. Gordon stated she would like to see Co-Chairs rather than the Chairman – Vice Chairman type of leadership. She supported the Co-Chair idea by adding it would give a more unified leadership because they would work closely together and would help with the flow of information. It would also require that one of them would be present at each meeting.

Vice-Chairman Bouchard stated that this Committee needs a written Rules of Procedure that is followed year after year. It would make the meeting less confusing and allowing for better flow of information. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Carr had a couple of items that he wanted to discuss. First the Bottom Line Budget was never used in the past and it allows for the movement of money from department to department. When a line has been zeroed out there should not be any expenditure on that line. Mr. Carr would like to see us move away from the Bottom Line Budget and return to the Line by Line. The Committee builds the budget line by line and it should be followed as closely as possible. The second item Mr. Carr brought to the attention of the Committee was to consider a goal for 2011 that we produce a budget that is positive cash flow and avoid borrowing on anticipated taxes. This year we are spending \$500,000 more than our revenues. We need to stop this cycle of borrowing.

Mr. Lagueux had a constructive conversation with Police Chief Clark. Based on that conversation he feels it would benefit the Committee to have a better relationship with the Police Department and the Fire Department. It would create a better understanding of the department's needs and especially the big-ticket items. Mr. Lagueux would like to see a meeting with each department separately and earlier to present their respective needs. It was his opinion that some of the larger expenses got sandwiched in because there was not enough time to look at them.

Ms. Greenwood added that we wait too long to get information needed to begin work on the budget. She would like to meet with the department heads during the summer to see how they are doing with the current budget and to know if they anticipate any problems. By working together in this way we will avoid the adversarial type of situation later on in the process.

Mr. Carr agreed that we do not receive the budget early enough. We do not receive them soon enough to study them so we can have better questions when we meet with them. Ms. Dolloff stated that in the past the Town Manager would change the dollar amounts every week/month. This means every week we are working with new numbers. Ms. Dolloff

expressed concern with the Committee adopting one member's template and working off that. She would prefer that everyone work off the budget given by the Selectmen. Many agreed and Mr. Simard added that each Committee Member should come in with their own ideas of each item and then work together to create a budget that everyone agrees on. Mr. Simard continued by stating the Committee must start with meeting with the CIP and including the necessary future expenses they propose. Including these items in the budget now will eliminate some of the last minute additions big expenditures that we are seeing now. A discussion followed regarding the tax rate and the tax anticipation notes.

Mr. Thouin found that the template process made the creating of a new budget less confusing and a smoother process than in the past. Mr. Bouchard stated that another way would be to use the last year's budget and work from that. Mr. Thouin agreed saying that is what the departments are doing. Mr. Simard asked if the Budget Committee would receive a line item budget from the Selectmen. Mr. Denning did not have the answer to that. He gave one two years ago and it wasn't wanted. Mr. Bouchard did not see how it would be helpful. Ms. Gordon said that it would be helpful because it shows the Budget committee what the Select Board is thinking and what is important to them. She felt that in the last two years the Select Board was reluctant in giving information to the Committee early in the process. All agreed that a budget from the Select Board early in the process would be helpful.

Mr. Bouchard summarized by stating that there is a need for more information and it needs to be given early in the process.

Mr. Denning explained that a line item budget is one where every line is voted on at the Town Meeting. The Town uses a Bottom Line budget and the Selectmen have the authority to move money as needed. Mr. Preble would like to have a meeting with the Select Board early.

Mr. Denning confirmed Mr. Thouin's statement that the town does have a Tax Anticipation Note this year. Mr. Thouin also asked what the department heads were being told regarding the budget. Mr. Denning replied that they are being told to stay within their budgets and if there is a problem they must let the Select Board know sooner than later. Mr. Denning also reminded the Committee members the minutes to the Select Board meetings are on the Town's website and Television Station.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

Prior to election of officers a discussion regarding the Co-Chair or the Chair and Vice Chair took place. Ms. Gordon felt that the Co-Chair would be beneficial because it would provide two viewpoints for direction of Committee. The committee would be better assured of getting information, there would be a sharing of responsibilities and tasks would be split between two. Ms. Dolloff felt that it was not a bad idea but that is how the Chair and Vice Chair ought to work. Mr. Thouin was concerned with the final vote situation, it could still cause a tie vote. Mr. Denning added that the Committee could govern themselves anyway they choose as long as everyone understands and it is agreed upon. Mr. Bouchard concluded by stating the Chair and Vice Chair need to work

together. He felt that Co-Chairs might be difficult – when the solution would be to get the Vice Chair more involved. Mr. Lagueux wanted to vote on officers and discuss this at a later meeting. We could elect a Chair and Vice Chair now and choose to elevate the Vice Chair later meeting. Mr. Keegan liked the idea of the Co-Chair giving more members more responsibility.

Dorcas Gordon made a motion that Co-Chairs be elected and, Tom Keegan seconded it. A voice vote was taken and the motion was defeated.

Vice-Chair Bouchard asked for nominations for Chairman:

Ms. Greenwood nominated Dorcas Gordon seconded by Mr. Lagueux. Dorcas withdrew her name.

Mr. Carr nominated Paul Simard seconded by Mr. Preble

Ms. Gordon nominated Shaun Lagueux seconded by Ms. Greenwood

Asking for a show of hands all those in 5 were in favor of Paul Simard and 7 in favor of Shaun Lagueux. Mr. Lagueux is elected as Chairman.

Mr. Carr nominated Paul Simard as Vice-Chairman seconded by Mr. Arseneau.

No one else was nominated therefore, Mr. Simard is the elected Vice-Chairman.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Preble made a motion that the Budget Committee does NOT meet in the months of July and August unless the Chairman called a special meeting. Ms. Gordon seconded the motion. A vote was taken after a brief discussion: passing with an 8 in favor and 4 opposed vote.

Vice-Chairman Bouchard submitted his resignation from the Budget Committee. A posting will be made for a replacement and a new member will be chosen at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10 at 7:00 pm

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Preble made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Mr. Simard.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Hemingway  
Recording Secretary