Budget Recommendations Committee

January 5, 2015

Draft Minutes

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Corey Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm in the Nowak Room of the Exeter Town Offices Building on Monday, January 05, 2015. Other members present were Allan Corey, Nelson Lourenco, Bob Kelly, Francine Hall, Vice Chairman Harry Thayer, Don Woodward, Robert Wentworth, Judy Rowan, Dr. Anthony Zwaan, Peter Lennon, and Phil Johnson. Also there was Selectman Don Clement. Chairman Stevens said that tonight will get the committee members' feedback on how things went and what can be improved upon for next year, as well as going over the meeting minutes, and see what their feelings are for next year.

Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Wentworth found no problem and would like to recommend approval, seconded by Mr. Woodward.

Mr. Lennon said that he thought that there were several places it was hard to tell what was being discussed and that he would like to see them once more before they are sent off for final approval.

Selectman Clement said that minutes follow under the right to know law. If you are going to vote on changes of minutes then everyone must know of the minutes.

Chairman Stevens said that he went through the minutes and made sure the names and the motions were correct. Ms. Hall said that if someone thinks something is inaccurate then they should mention it. Mr. Kelly said that he is not asking the recording secretary to transcribe every word and if they get the vote right then that should be the intent of the minutes.

Selectman Clement said that the purpose of the minutes is to record the actions taken by the committee. Vice chair Thayer said he thinks they should accept them as they are. Chairman Stevens said that less is more. Mr. Lennon moved that the record show he was present on October 22 and November 13th.

Motion made to approve the minutes withdrawn. Motion to withdraw amending the attendance on the minutes made by Mr. Lennon.

At the January 31st Deliberative meeting the committee will meet at 8:50am that day to approve the final minutes. Mr. Johnson said that minutes are useful to use as research.

Comments on what did/did not work:

Ms. Hall said that it is very useful to have references in subcommittee reports as to line item numbers. Chairman Stevens said he agrees that it would be useful. Vice chair Thayer said that he does not think they should limit line item by numbers.

Mr. Wentworth said that a year ago they said that they will be giving a fresh outlook on the guidelines of how and the way we operate as well as what the vision is. In the fall there was a vote, and he was pleased to the following of the guidelines but was disappointed to the length of the meetings as they did not follow the guidelines. Mr. Wentworth said that he found it extremely objectable to have issues brought up at the meeting when they did not attend the subcommittee meetings and voice their opinions there. The function of the BRC is to assist elected government officials with their work.

Chairman Stevens said he appreciated Mr. Wentworth's 3 years on the committee. Chairman Stevens said that he likes what he is saying but that maybe the group did not feel the same in regard to sub committees. Mr. Wentworth said that it is clear that the heritage of this committee is individual action. Chairman Stevens said he feels like the document gave people the latitude to bring things up.

Mr. Lourenco said that the first time he served here he really enjoyed it. He thinks part of the reason some of the members second guess the subcommittee is due to them lacking the same type of structure, and maybe the subcommittees need to be more structured.

Ms. Rowan said that as a new person she would like to say how much she is appreciated the respect she was given by the committee. Chairman Stevens said that the new group that came in was a huge part of the discussions and help.

Dr. Zwaan said he found this to be a very collegial process and well run, even though the meetings were long, and he thinks they were long by necessity. He does agree with Mr. Lourenco's statement of having the subcommittees more structured. More general comments were to make sure that new arrivals get more orientation, and that making reference to page numbers during the discussion would be helpful. Also being presented with the list of maintenance items at the last minutes was not helpful. The warrant articles ending up last were unfortunate as they are often times the largest items.

Mr. Corey said that to come up with a standardized format would be helpful. Mr. Lourenco said that he was disappointed to learn that the CIP went that far into the night and that he hopes that the committee makes a cutoff time. Chairman Stevens said that going forward that they should have some way to not go until midnight.

Mr. Wentworth suggested moving the CIPs in with the departments, and then it becomes part of the review and becomes streamlined. Dr. Zwaan agreed with Mr. Wentworth that if a CIP item is clearly related to a department then it should be brought up by the department.

Mr. Johnson said that he does not think there is any need for the power point presentations and that he would suggest that if they need to then the departments can give copies of the

presentation. Vice chair Thayer answered and said in regard to the CIP when the department presents their budget, then the department will be there all night and maybe two meetings. He said that highway and water and sewer might need their own nights.

Mr. Johnson said that the in regard to the subcommittees- that they should have the subcommittee reports prior to the meeting and it would save time. Chairman Stevens agreed with that and Vice chair Thayer said that they were suppose to have the subcommittee reports 48 hours prior to the meeting. Mr. Johnson said that the two issues were the health cost and the difference in the number of 52/53 weeks was a challenge. Ms. Hall said it would be helpful that when they get reports to be consistent.

Mr. Kelly said he really likes the idea of eliminating the power point presentations. However, he has no problem with the length of the meetings. In regard to the CIP he disagrees with putting in with the departments as it will get washed out if every department has there CIP split up, it would be hard to track the money and thinks that they should have a separate committee to deal with it

Vice chair Thayer said that the department head should not be afraid to come before the committee and ask for money for what they need. Mr. Campbell said that he would like to caution on speeding up certain parts of the meetings as the public needs to get the full benefit of knowing what is being spoken about.

Mr. Campbell said that he would like the numbers not to change without their knowledge and Vice chair Thayer agreed. Selectman Clement said that the CIP is governed by state statutes and it has guidelines and then when it is ready is to be passed to the planning board and then to the board of selectman. He said maybe the budget subcommittee should sit in on the departments from the start.

Dr. Zwaan said that he agrees that it is a public meeting so to some extent the department presentations are serving a purpose. Ms. Hall said the potential subcommittee for the CIP or it could be someone from each department. Mr. Kelly said that there should be a way to prioritize the CIPs. Mr. Wentworth agree that they should have a separate subcommittee for the CIP, however you cannot avoid talking about what is coming up with the CIP, that we could have a representative from each subcommittee for CIP.

Ms. Rowan said that it would have been helpful to have some ideas of priorities in subcommittees, and said maybe the department could present the order of hierarchy. Mr. Kelly said that since they have EPA as a director they answer to the EPA. Selectman Clement said that in regard to Water and Sewer they are governed by state mandates.

Dr. Zwaan said that he would be concerned in the amount of money with the CIP is very large and that you cannot delegate that to a subcommittee, you are still going to need the presentations to the committee and that it is a large enough item that a fair amount of presentation to the public is helpful.

Mr. Frank Ferraro said that it is good that there is concern for what the public might see, but that there will be a presentation at the deliberative session that will be seen by the public. The public is relying on the committee and the board to weed it out. Chairman Stevens said that sometimes they come to conclusions on big items sometimes quick and sometimes longer and that at the end they are dealing with the big picture number.

Mr. Woodward would like to set time limit on length of meetings. Mr. Lennon said that he is here for the duration of the meetings. He agrees for standardize formats for the subcommittee reports and that he appreciates that they have subcommittee but that it reinforces the need for other members who are not on the subcommittee to ask questions. He does not believe that they arrived at the numbers they made by only using subcommittees. He thinks that in regard to the CIP they should have a separate subcommittee. Mr. Lennon said that he saw a lot of departments that were not as organized with their own paperwork. He thinks that they should do a better job of pushing the priorities from the departments on all the budgets.

Mr. Lourenco asked in regard to the CIP and having subcommittees addressing those issues. Mr. Corey said that there are a lot of items in the CIP that are maintenance issues and that if you operate like you should starting from a zero base and then making list of needs verses wants and what can be afforded. Chairman Stevens said that there was no directive to look at CIP from the subcommittees. Mr. Lourenco asked if they have the CIP subcommittee have the CIPs addressed on a separate night. Chairman Stevens said that there should be a better way and to make it more efficient.

Ms. Hall said she thinks that this is a collegiate group. Chairman Stevens said that they will have to decide after March in regard to the separate subcommittee for the CIP and then discuss and bring it forth, but that it is worth spending time on it. Vice chair Thayer said that in addition to CIP then that committee should work on the subcommittee guidelines. Mr. Ferraro suggested making a bullet point of the recommendations and having the group come up with a concise document of lesson learned. Mr. Corey said that he would like to see more formality in the process.

Chairman Stevens asked Selectman Clement if they are supposed to give them policies and procedures, and Selectman Clement said it had not been brought up to the board. Vice chair Thayer spoke on a study that was asked for and never given in regard to a mechanic's position by the town.

Chairman Stevens said to please email Russ, Sheri or himself to be on the committee for next year.

Meeting ended at 8:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Brigitte Nelcoski
Recording Secretary