

**Town of Candia Municipal Budget Committee
Supplemental Public Hearing on Town & School Budgets
Approved Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: January 13, 2021
Location: Town Office Building
Zoom Meeting ID# 870-1668-7030
Attendees: Lynn Chivers
Bob Stout
Sue Young
Todd Keating
Dick Snow (attended via Zoom)
Jodi Hedstrom
Susan Gill
Katrina Niles
Stephanie Helmig
Kaycee Vitale

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:00 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence for Dennis Lewis

Approval of Minutes from 12/17 and 12/21

- 12/17 Meeting Minutes
 - Dick Snow would like the word “to” added in front of the number on the final vote of the budget
 - Bob Stout motioned to approve as amended
 - Susan Gill seconds
 - Stephanie Helmig and Katrina Niles abstain
 - All in favor
 - Motion Passed 7-0-2
- 12/21 Meeting Minutes
 - No Changes
 - Bob Stout motioned to approve
 - Susan Gill Seconds
 - Katrina Niles abstains
 - All in favor
 - Motion Passed 8-0-1

Budget Committee to Address Statements from Previous Meeting on Town Budgets

- Bob Stout addressed and followed up on comments that was made at the previous meeting around the Town administrator as well as there not being enough work to keep the town’s part time associate busy.
 - After he spoke with associates at the town it was determined that there was a lot of work that needed to be completed, they are struggling to complete their tasks, and they felt compelled to come in early to get the work done but were told no overtime because of the budget.
 - Associates shared many of the same questions as the Budget Committee around the duties of a Town Administrator.
 - He supports the Town Administrator Position to bring leadership to the town office.
- Selectman Young Responds

- She is unsure where it is coming from that associates are being told not to put in time worked because it is a law that we have to follow. They can be asked to not work overtime but she has not heard a board member tell someone not to put down actual overtime worked.
- In response to the associates at the town struggling to complete their tasks, that is why a part time person was added.
- Chairman Chivers addressed the questions from the last meeting around the Town Administrator position.
 - There were many unanswered questions around the benefits of the Town Administrator so two members of the select board, Boyd and Brian went and spoke with the Town Administrator in Auburn to collect some information.
 - Selectman Boyd Chivers presented the following information to the Budget Committee:
 - *How does a Town Administrator add value to the town offices?*
 - Coordinates all the town departments
 - Provides leadership
 - Provides continuity of management of all the personnel
 - Acts as a liaison between town employees and the select board
 - Does employee evaluations
 - *Can the cost of the Town Administrator position be offset by the grants that they can find and apply for?*
 - Auburn has received about \$200,000 in COVID grants
 - Over the last 15 years Auburn has received over \$1 million dollars in grants for various construction projects.
 - *What are some of the unexpected advantages of a Town Administrator?*
 - By assuming responsibility for the town administrator functions, the selectman's daily obligations are minimized, requiring less of a time commitment from each member. This could lead to a younger cohort of selectman. Auburn's board of 3 selectman average age is 47 and in Candia is 66.
 - *What term should the employment contract for the Town Administrator include?*
 - 3 years would be optimal but it is more important to put a severance clause in the contract to discourage early termination.
 - *Other Learnings*
 - Public meeting minutes are done by a subcontractor that provides legally adequate minutes generally in two days and charge between \$75-\$100/meeting.
 - Auburn has only had 1 budget rejected in the past 15 years that went to default at voting.
 - Yearly the Town Administrator sends out education packets to all the taxpayers explaining the warrant articles and tax impact of each of the items being voted on.
 - Stephanie Helmig asked what is the population of Auburn and how many people does the Town Administrator manage?
 - Selectman answered 5500 and about 1/2 dozen.
 - Todd Keating asked if Boyd or Brian had the operating budget of Auburn?
 - Selectman answered about \$5 million dollars.
 - Donna Becker addressed the personnel changes over the years as well as the current state of the town office. Refer to audio for details.
 - Russ Dan spoke about his support for a Town Administrator. Refer to audio for details.
 - Jodi Hedstrom noted that if the Board of Selectman want a Town Administrator it would be prudent to consider the \$231,000 surplus that we are working with this year as well as the \$108,000 that was encumbered and be able to have it in the budget instead of adding an additional \$100,000 to the budget.

- Chairman Chivers corrected the statement and explained that there were about \$50,000 in bills that have not been paid out of that surplus and it also includes money received from COVID. The \$231,000 is reduced to about \$120,000 taking those two things into consideration.
 - Selectman Boyd Chivers addressed Jodi's question and noted that it is important to add the salary and benefits (about \$100,000) to the operating budget so it becomes a part of the default budget in the following year. Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for details.
 - Selectman Sue Young speaks on the Town Administrator
 - Selectman Young stressed that the taxpayers should know what their money is being spent on.
 - She stated that later on she will show how to level fund the budget while keeping the Town Administrator.
 - She warned that we only have Auburn as an example. Other towns have had administrators that did not bring stability to the town.
 - She asked for a list of grants to see what was missed. Auburn received \$200,000 in COVID grants; Candia received \$95,000. These grants had nothing to do with a Town Administrator, it was based on the population of the town.
 - She suggested that if it is less of a time commitment for Selectman as noted, we could cut Selectman salaries to fund the Town Administrator.
 - Stephanie Helmig urged the Budget Committee to discuss the expense of the new road agent in conjunction with this discussion on the Town Administrator to see where the funds should be best spent. She asked if the budget committee could reconvene next week after the select board meeting to discuss the town budget and these items.
 - Chairman Chivers answered that no one knows how anything will work out, but we can all agree that it will cost us more. When talking about a surplus we have to remember that we are losing Dennis, not just a road agent. The select board is not in a position to know how this will play out. We have time constraints to vote on things before the deliberative session. Discussion ensued, refer to audio for more details.
 - Carla Penfield added that she believes that there is enough money to have a Town Administrator if the select board chooses to have one and level fund the budget for next year. She also believes the selectman are not prepared to hire anyone soon because there are logistics to work out. She also mentioned the discontent in the town around the increase in their property taxes this year. It is her suggestion that we level fund the budget and allow the select board to continue their discussions around hiring a Town Administrator.
 - Dean Young finds it unfair to play with the numbers and add this to the budget so it becomes a part of next years default budget. It is his belief that it would only go to default if we are not prudent by keeping taxes down.
 - Todd Keating noted that our population is not increasing. When you look at a town as small as Candia, where the population is not increasing, and has a budget that is dwarfed by the towns we are being compared to; it does not warrant a Town Administrator.
 - There was more input around the raising of taxes, communications through social media, and how to properly bring grievances to the Budget Committee. Refer to audio for details.
 - Selectman Boyd Chivers appealed to the board to restore the 2021 Town Operating Budget in the amount of \$3.1 million dollars. This was the budget brought to this committee based on request of the budget committee to not have the budget exceed 4% of the 2020 budget. In summary, a level funded budget would not allow for the town to meet its contractual obligations let alone fund the initiatives presented in the budget (not solely the Town Administrator. He also spoke on the surplus saying that the tax payers pay for the funds expended, not funds budgeted. The surplus funds that may be viewed as bloated is actually a testament to the department heads and select board because they are prudent with expenditures. Surplus funds are available as a credit dollar for dollar against the following years tax rate. He also noted that the Budget Committee

approved a budget for the school board with a 4% increase while the Town was allowed 0%. He would like it noted that the school budget is 3X the amount of the Town operating budget. He finds it unacceptable that the school in its budget gets a 2% raise for its workers while the town workers will only receive 1.75%. He then went through the timeline of coming up with the current proposed budget. Refer to audio for details.

- Selectman Young provided a scenario to level fund the budget while still meeting the town obligations and initiatives presented to the budget committee.
 - She started with the total operating budget of \$3,100,230
 - She took out the town administrators' salary of \$77,103 out of the town officers operating line.
 - She took out \$5000 out of communications in the fire department (approved by Dean).
 - They also agreed to lower dispatch by \$5640.
 - This brings the budget to \$3,002,485 bringing it down 1.4%
 - Another option is to level fund the cemetery and taking \$4268 from their budget.
 - That would bring the budget to \$2,998,217.

Budget Committee to Vote on Town Budget and Warrant Articles

Town Operating Budget

- At the previous meeting the Budget Committee voted to level fund the budget at \$2,970,795.00 with a vote of 4-3.
- Bob Stout made a motion to increase the budget to \$3,002,485
- Bob Stout changes his motion and so motions to increase the budget to \$2,998,217
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - Chairman Chivers reminds the committee that we have not considered the increased Highway budget and it is her recommendation that we will need to increase that line item.
 - Selectman Sue Young believes that it became a problem at some point, we can call a special meeting if we needed extra money for the Road Agent.
 - Todd Keating agrees that there is no value to adding funds that we will not intelligently know what the increase would be. Discussion ensued, refer to audio for details.
 - 7 in favor (Jodi Hedstrom, Stephanie Helmig, Bob Stout, Todd Keating, Dick Snow, Susan Gill, Katrina Niles)
 - 2 opposed (Selectman Sue Young, Lynn Chivers)
 - Motion passes 7-2
- Refer to audio on the position of the Budget Committee on how the Selectman's representative vote affects the Budget Committee

Warrant Articles

- Jodi Hedstrom would like it noted on why the budget committee voted no on most of the charitable contributions so the public does not think those charities did anything wrong.
 - Chairman Chivers said she will stand at the deliberative session and speak to the Budget Committees vote on the charitable contributions.
- Dick Snow would like to change any previous abstention on the warrant article to a yes vote resulting in the new recommendations below:
 - Article 3 Road Maintenance - Recommended by the BC 8-0
 - Article 4 Currier Road - Recommended by the BC 8-0
 - Article 5 Healey Rd - Recommended 7-1
 - Article 6 Fire apparatus - Recommended 8-0
 - Article 7 Fire Station - Recommended 8-0
 - Article 8 Revaluation - Recommended 8-0
 - Article 9 Town Office Fund - Recommended 8-0
 - Article 10 Smyth PL - recommended 8-0
 - Article 11 Fitts Museum - Recommended 8-0
 - Article 12 Smyth Memorial Building NOT recommended 7-1
 - Article 13 Visiting Nurses - NOT Recommended 5-2

- Article 14 Red Cross - NOT recommended 6-1
- Article 15 Rock Co Nutrition (transportation) - Recommended 4-3
- Article 16 Child Advocacy - Recommended 5-2
- Article 17 Waypoint - NOT recommended 5-2
- Article 18 Rock Co Nutrition - Recommended 4-3
- Article 19 Hospice - Recommended 4-3
- Article 20 Big Brother / Sister - NOT recommended 5-2
- Article 21 CASA - NOT recommended 5-2
- Article 22 Aids Response - NOT recommended 5-2
- Article 23 RSVP - NOT recommended 5-2
- Article 24 Community action - NOT Recommended 6-1
- Article 25 Veterans Tax Credit - Recommended 8-0
- To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seventeen Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$17,500) to the Candia Youth Athletic Association with the specific expenses of providing youth recreation programs to the children of Candia. Said expenses to be expended under the direction of the Candia Youth Athletic Association Board of Directors in accordance with the approved budgets.
 - Selectman Sue Young makes a motion to recommend
 - Todd Keating seconds the motion
 - 9 in favor (Dick Snow, Chairman Chivers, Todd Keating, Bob Stout, Susan Gill, Jodi Hedstrom, Selectman Young, Katrina Niles, Stephanie Helmig)
 - 0 opposed
 - Recommended by a vote of 9-0

School Business

- Chairman Chivers said that she received an email from Matt Woodrow stating that there was incorrect information presented at the last budget committee meeting. She read the minutes from the school board meeting to correct any inaccuracies. Below is what Chairman Chivers read from the minutes of the School Board meeting to the Budget Committee:
 - Discussion ensued relative to a statement recently made about safety concerns of the roof joists at the Henry W. Moore School. After review of the turner report, no such concerns were noted.
 - Matt Woodrow wanted the opportunity to clarify that the reason that intermural teams were created was not due to not enough enrollment, but in order to play against Deerfield who has co-ed teams. Matt also stressed that any statements made at any public meeting should be factual and vetted statements. He cited one such statement made at a budget committee meeting that ADA accessibility for electronic meetings is not required by law. Matt stated that is an untrue statement.
- Stephanie Helmig said that she wanted to say some things on the school budget before voting
 - She wanted to address Selectman Young's concern that the \$173,503 in capital costs never gets cut from the budget. Stephanie said that the net from not paying the Manchester costs and the paying of the Pinkerton High School tuition is about \$69,000 surplus. High School is a 3.54% increase in tuition and 3 more students in the next budget. The board is aware that there is no cap on tuition increases for Pinkerton and will be addressing that when the contract is due. The contracts are 5 years.
 - She added up special ed and the total increase is \$335,000.
 - NH retirement is about \$58,000 increase and wanted it noted that the last three retirements were not replaced to help offset declining enrollment.
 - The non-union increases were 2%, a step increase.
 - She emailed out the collective bargaining agreement for the next three years
 - She read through the Turner Report and ENE report and believes Dicks concern is addressed in the ENE report. She asked Mike Davey to clarify and he will be at the school deliberative session.
 - She also has the law for the ADA recording if anyone wanted to review

- Of the \$127,000 requested this year \$80,000 is for projects and maintenance of the school.

Vote on School Budget

- Jodi Hedstrom made a motion to approve the school budget of \$9,311,706; which is the same as the default budget.
 - Bob Stout seconds the motion
 - Discussion ensued around population
 - Jodi Hedstrom withdraws her motion
 - Bob Stout withdraws his second
 - Motion withdrawn
- Chairman Chivers made a motion to approve the school budget of \$9,311,706; which is the same as the default budget.
 - Bob Stout seconds the motion
 - Todd Keating warns that if we vote to approve it does not give the taxpayers a choice at voting as the proposed budget and default budget is the same.
 - 2 in favor (Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout)
 - 7 opposed (Dick Snow, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Todd Keating, Katrina Niles, Selectman Young)
 - Motion fails 7-2
- Todd Keating made a motion to approve the school's requested budget of \$9,439,642
 - Stephanie Helmig seconds the motion
 - Discussion ensued
 - 4 in favor (Dick Snow, Stephanie Helmig, Susan Gill, Todd Keating)
 - 5 opposed (Jodi Hedstrom, Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout, Katrina Niles, Selectman Young)
 - Motion fails 5-4
- Selectman Sue Young made a motion to approve a school budget of \$9,259,208
 - Selectman Sue Young would like it noted that this is a 2% increase over the previous years' operating budget.
 - Discussion ensued. Refer to audio for details.
 - Jodi Hedstrom seconds the motion
 - 1 in favor (Selectman Sue Young)
 - 8 opposed (Dick Snow, Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Todd Keating, Katrina Niles, Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout)
 - Motion fails 8-1
- Stephanie Helmig made a motion to approve a school budget of \$9,400,000
 - No one seconds the motion
 - Motion dies
- Todd Keating made a motion to approve a school requested budget of \$9,375,674
 - Susan Gill seconds the motion
 - 5 in favor (Lynn Chivers, Bob Stout, Katrina Niles, Susan Gill, Todd Keating)
 - 4 opposed (Dick Snow, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Selectman Susan Young)
 - Motion passes 5-4
- Warrant Article #2 – Audio Video Equipment
 Shall the Candia School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000 for the purpose of purchasing audio video equipment for the live streaming/recording of school board meetings and school events.
 - 0 in favor
 - 9 opposed (Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Susan Gill, Bob Stout, Chairman Chivers, Dick Snow, Stephanie Helmig, Jodi Hedstrom, Katrina Niles)
 - Not recommended by a vote of 9-0
- Warrant Article #3 – Building upgrade
 Shall the Candia School District vote to authorize the School Board to enter into a multiyear (15 year) lease/purchase agreement in the amount of \$2,415,000 (Two million four hundred fifteen

thousand dollars) for the purpose of installing energy saving equipment including but not limited to LED lighting, heating systems, roof replacements, HVAC upgrades, insulation, and other improvements to the Candia Moore School, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$204,000 for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Future payments will be offset by guaranteed energy savings and a reduction in utility and fuel costs for the district.

- 2 in favor (Susan Gill, Stephanie Helmig)
- 7 opposed (Bob Stout, Chairman Chivers, Todd Keating, Selectman Young, Dick Snow, Jodi Hedstrom, Katrina Niles)
- Not Recommended by a vote of 7-2

Bob Stout makes a motion to adjourn meeting

Katrina Niles Seconds the Motion

All in favor

Meeting adjourned 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by: Kaycee Vitale, Administrative Assistant