

**Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes  
February 24, 2021**

**Present:** Jenn Walsh; Lynn Cavicchi; Frank DelVecchio; Michael A. Trowbridge; Sara Walsh; and Walter Wilk  
**Also Present:** Barry LaCasse, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director; Teresa Murphy, Superintendent; Edward Donoghue, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations and Kevin Dumas, Town Manager

Jenn Walsh was not present at the start of the meeting but arrived at 5:34PM.

2021 APR 22 A 10:54

WINDSORFIELD  
SUSSEX COUNTY MASSACHUSETTS

**1. Call the Meeting to Order AT 5:00 PM**

Sara Walsh, Chair called the meeting to order at 5:03PM.

**2. Acceptance of meeting minutes from January 19, 2021 and February 27, 2020**

Ms. Sara Walsh and Mr. Wilk were not on the committee at that time and abstained from the vote.

**Motion:** To approve the meeting minutes from February 27, 2020. (Trowbridge/DelVecchio)

**Roll Call Vote:**

M. Trowbridge – Yes, L. Cavicchi – Yes, F. DelVecchio – Yes, W. Wilk – Abstain, S. Walsh – Abstain

**Passes 3:0:2**

**Motion:** To approve the meeting minutes from January 19, 2021. (Trowbridge/DelVecchio)

**Roll Call Vote:**

M. Trowbridge – Yes, L. Cavicchi – Yes, F. DelVecchio – Yes, W. Wilk – Yes, S. Walsh – Yes

**Passes 5:0**

**3. Updated Budget Projections Reports based on ongoing conversations with Town/School**

Ms. Sara Walsh, Chair turned the meeting over to Mr. LaCasse. Mr. LaCasse stated that since the last meeting there have been some changes and modifications to the budget. He stated that the Governors Cherry Sheet was received and resulted in a net gain of \$121,000, therefore the budget deficit has been reduced from \$4.8 million to \$2.2 million. Mr. LaCasse then explained further how the deficit was reduced and believes there may be federal funding and he explained that \$1.6 million in COVID expenses is separated out so the FY21 and FY22 can be compared easily. Mr. LaCasse then explained that in FY21 the OPEB funding of \$400,000 was not done and he is proposing that it be reduced again to \$120,000 this year. Mr. LaCasse also is unsure what the insurance rates are going to be but he believes there may be a reduction of that expense of \$600,000. Mr. Dumas added that he has a meeting on Friday with the National League of Cities and Towns and he expects to receive more information on the next round of Federal funding and believes that the dollars provided will be enough for the Town and School COVID expenses. Mr. Donoghue then provided an update on the COVID funding that the schools have received and what he has heard about the rescue plan for the schools from the Federal funding and stated that there is a potential grant \$1.3 to \$1.4 million. He expects that by mid-March it will be confirmed. Mr. Donoghue also stated that if the schools do not have to run the virtual academies in the fall that will reduce the budget by \$600,000. Ms. Murphy agreed with Mr. Donoghue that we need to be patient as things are constantly changing and nothing has been confirmed for the next school year. She also stated that the Governor announced that schools should start preparing for children to return to school full time on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Sara Walsh then asked committee members if they had any questions and several questions were asked and answered. Mr. Trowbridge asked why there was an increase of \$130,000 on insurance and Mr. LaCasse answered that the library employees' benefits are coming over to the Town side of the budget. Mr. DelVecchio asked about the cost of the virtual academy of \$600,000 and if that is not needed if that could help reduce the \$2.2 million deficit and Ms. Murphy explained that it was part of the COVID budget and is not part of the operating budget as it is still unknown if the expense will be needed.

Mr. Wilk thought it was a good idea to separate out the COVID or onetime expenses. He then asked if COVID funds can be used for technology and Mr. Donoghue answered that they were able to with the CARES Act funds and used

about \$400,000 to buy Chrome Books, but some of the additional COVID funds had specific parameters that it could only be used for PPE and social/emotional needs for students. Ms. Cavicchi asked about the towns COVID expenses that are projected for FY22 and Mr. Dumas answered that it was about \$400,000. Ms. Sara Walsh stated that she liked the format of the provided reports and how the changes were tracked. She asked if this assumed flat revenue assumptions and Mr. LaCasse answered that it did. She then asked if the local receipt number was a conservative number and Mr. LaCasse answered that it was. Mr. LaCasse added that excise tax bills went out and are due March 3<sup>rd</sup> so by the next meeting we should see the results of that. Mr. Wilk asked if more or less was billed this year than last year for excise taxes and Mr. LaCasse responded that he would look into that.

**4. Budget Format Discussion: Level Service, Enhancement, COVID**

Ms. Sara Walsh stated that having level service, enhancements and COVID differentiated in the budget would be helpful for high-level speaking points and for discussing funding mechanisms. Mr. Trowbridge stated that he did not have a problem with it being presented like that and has seen many variations over the last twenty-five years. The committee had some discussion and Mr. LaCasse in summary suggested that the COVID related expenses could be a single article at Town Meeting and if the Federal funding/grants come through the article could be passed over at Town Meeting.

**5. Timeline for FY 22 Budget: Budget Finalization, Consensus, warrants, Town Meeting**

Ms. Sara Walsh asked what the timing is for the next few months and said that she wanted to make sure that the committee had enough meetings scheduled. Mr. LaCasse went through the time line and it was confirmed that the next Budget Subcommittee meeting was scheduled for March 24<sup>th</sup> which is after when he expects to have more information. Town Meeting is tentatively planned for May 24<sup>th</sup> and should schedule an April meeting.

**6. Status Update on General Budget Timeline/Calendar**

Ms. Sara Walsh asked about this item as it was a goal of the Select Board and Mr. Dumas answered that he has not had time to look at the document since the last meeting. Mr. LaCasse stated that he has spent some time working on it, but it was not complete.

**7. Any Items Not Known 48 hours of meeting**

There were no items brought forward by the Chair or members.

Mr. Wilk left the meeting at 5:54PM. Ms. Sara Walsh asked if anyone had any additional questions, but there were none. Mr. Dumas then took a minute to find availability for an April meeting and it was planned for Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 5PM.

**8. Adjourn**

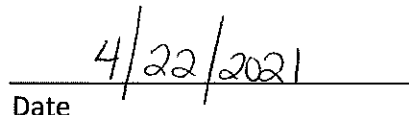
**Motion:** To adjourn the February 24, 2021 meeting at 5:56PM. (Trowbridge/DelVecchio)

**Roll Call Vote:**

M. Trowbridge – Yes, L. Cavicchi – Yes, F. DelVecchio – Yes, S. Walsh – Yes  
(Ms. Jenn Walsh did not respond with a vote)

**Passes 4:0**

  
Signature

  
Date

*Minutes prepared by Carrie Champagne*