

Buckland Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, Jan 14, 2018, 7:00 pm
Buckland Town Hall, 17 State St, Buckland MA

Present: Ben Murray, Larry Langford, Karen Blom, ~~Paula Console~~, Ciara Hayden, Raymond Weil-Lanza, Buckland Town Administrator, Bob Markel, Select Board member, Barry Del Castilho.

Member of the public present, Marilyn Kelsey.

Meeting opens at 7:05pm.

Review and acceptance of prior meeting minutes – December 17, 2018

Meeting minutes moved and accepted unanimously - no discussion.

Meeting with School Com rep, David Parrella on Rural Aid

The School Committee is seeking changes in funding formula that addresses rural schools specifically. Last year, there was no change in the formula, but there was an allocation of \$1M to rural schools of which Mohawk received \$100k.

David shared a letter similar to one signed by the Select Board which asks Governor Baker to support legislation that will change the funding formula to specifically address needs unique to rural schools.

The letter will be considered at our next meeting (January 24).

Public Comments

Marilyn Kelsey, 39 Williams Street, presented a copy of a letter sent to Andrea Llamas in November seeking answers to questions regarding Town Debt. She expressed a wish that at Town Meeting time something be added to the warrants or other information which would indicate how various voted items would specifically impact the town's debt.

Marilyn feels that many members of the public, and specifically seniors, are not as well educated about Town debt or terms regarding debt (e.g. debt exclusion) as they should or would like to be. She would like to find a way in which to better inform these people and provide clear information.

Karen highlighted some of the financial policies that we follow, including specific guidelines regarding debt limits. Current Town policy is to ensure that debt service make up no more than 10% of the operating budget, and no less than 2% of the operating budget.

Further discussion was had about past votes that were made which had an impact on town debt, and an invitation was extended to Marilyn to get a copy of the Town's financial policies printed from Town Hall.

Update on Senior Center expansion

An MOU on how to share costs of operating a new Senior Center and methods on how to distribute capital responsibilities has been presented and generally accepted by the Select Board (no vote has been taken).

It was acknowledged by the Senior Center staff that if there is a new center and property purchased, then there will need to be significant additional amendments required.

The committee voiced many concerns regarding the ongoing lack of a business plan or concept of operations for a new Senior Center. It was pointed out that the committee has been asking for these details for many months and there has been no additional information provided. Barry was asked to have the Select Board play a strong role to help get some of these questions answered.

Review of budget meeting schedule – department meetings on 1/19 and 1/26
Saturday, January 26 meeting is confirmed from 9am - 12pm.

Review of draft Operating Budget – process for updating figures

Bob will take charge of the budget spreadsheet and also sort out the best way to share with the committee on a regular basis - in particular looking at some sort of cloud service. Ben offered to examine Google doc options.

There was some discussion clarifying types of budgets, reports and other paperwork that are part of our budget binders. Some 2018 and 2019 numbers on the expense and analysis sheet were questioned because they did not match underlying budget numbers. Bob will look into the items and try to reconcile the numbers and reports.

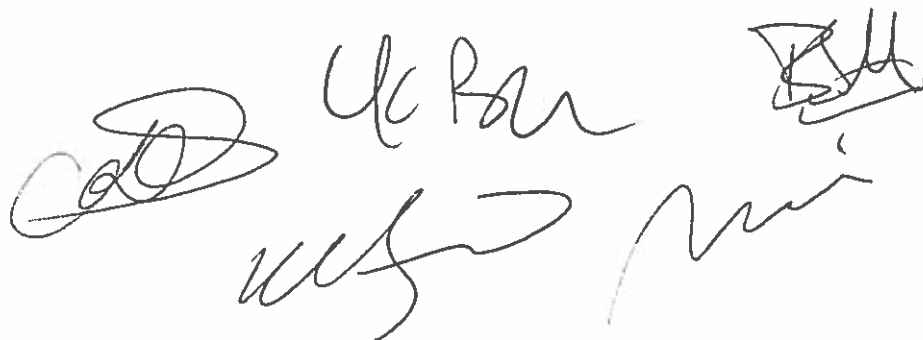
Review of remote meeting participation

There was a short discussion on the rules of remote meeting participation.

Any other items not reasonably known 48 hours prior to the meeting.
No other items were discussed.

Motion to adjourn at 8:50pm. Moved and approved unanimously

Next meeting Monday Jan 21st, Buckland Public Library, 7:00 pm

The block contains four handwritten signatures in black ink. From left to right, they are: a large, stylized signature that appears to be 'CD'; a signature that reads 'Uc Bar'; a signature that appears to be 'WJ'; and a signature that appears to be 'M'. There is also a small, illegible mark above the 'WJ' signature.