

Henniker Budget Committee Meetings and Minutes

Minute Taker: Daniel Butler

Budget Meeting 1

- Opening and Attendance
 - Meeting took place on 2020-12-29 at 6:30pm.
 - Members in attendance were Dan Butler, Lori Marko, Heidi Aucoin.
 - Jarrod Gleason was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict but sent his review and notes.
- Agenda
 - Members held an open discussion of the presentations and a chapter by chapter review of the binders.
 - From the open discussion and review, topics were raised for further review in deciding where we can recommend budget cuts.
 - **Topics addressed were as follows:**
 - Accounting for the spending between 2020-10-31 and 2020-12-31.
 - Whether the Town of Henniker or New England College pays for the electricity or maintenance of the street lights south of the bridge downtown.
 - The operational expenses and transparency of the Library.
 - Whether or not the town has need or benefits from having a second ambulance.
 - If the Waste Water system is properly billing businesses based on their use of the facilities.
 - Community Concerts receives some money from a collection during the concerts, how much money have the concerts collected and whether or not those funds are being put towards the budget.
 - The Police Department on line 341 spoke about a negotiated cell phone plan, and there's discussion if the town should have a negotiated cell phone plan in bulk that might lower the cost of each phone bill.
 - Whether or not the town bill people for the expense of blood alcohol tests so that we can recover this expense.
 - Solid Waste has a line item for building repair and there was a concern that it might be an expense duplicated with CIP.
 - Does Athletics need its own website or could the town save money by adding a page for the Athletics Department to the town's website.
 - Does the town benefit from its donations to White Birch Community Center, the CAP Program, and the Henniker Beautification Alliance and are those benefits equal to what we donate to these causes?
 - Would it be possible to lower the cost of the phone line in the Grange?

- Whether or not we could save money on computer maintenance line 810 in the Town Offices budget by having fewer firewalls and servers.
 - Whether or not the Executive Offices need the full amount requested on line 615 the Historic District.
- Plan going forward.
 - The Plan going forward was to arrange and conduct interviews with Tia Hooper, Joe Devine, and Marc McMurphy to ask follow up questions in regards to the aforementioned topics and with that information, determine if any of the budget expenses or cuts make sense to us. Once interviews were completed the plan was to reconvene on 2021-01-12 at 6:30pm.

Interview with Tia Hooper

- Opening and Attendance
 - Meeting took place on 2020-12-30 at 1:15pm.
 - Members in attendance were Dan Butler and Tia Hooper
- Agenda
 - The Topics addressed in the Agenda of Budget Advisory Committee Meeting 1 were addressed and Tia was able to offer insight and guidance on several of the Committee's recommendations.
 - Specifically, Tia was able to:
 - Confirm the value of the second ambulance.
 - Explain plans for future billing of the waste water treatment facility,
 - Explain where the collected money from community concerts gets deposited,
 - Explain how the police phone lines on line 341 are specific to the police department and so a bulk rate outside of police vehicles isn't possible,
 - Confirm that the building repair listed in Solid Waste line 430 is not a duplication.
 - Provide further insight into the value of the CAP program and how it benefits the town, and
 - Explain why we currently need multiple servers and firewalls in the Town Office.
- Plan going forward.
 - Take this new data to the Budget Advisory Committee on 2021-01-12.

Interview with Joe Devine

- Opening and Attendance
 - Meeting took place on 2021-01-06 at 11:00am.
 - Members in attendance were Dan Butler and Joe Devine.
- Agenda

- The Topics addressed in the Agenda of Budget Advisory Committee Meeting 1 were addressed and Joe was able to offer insight and guidance on several of the Committee's recommendations.
- Specifically, Joe was able to:
 - Provide the committee with an updated Budget Report that included expenses until 2020-12-31,
 - Explain why we don't currently have forecasting capabilities,
 - Confirm that the street lights are owned by the town,
 - Explain reporting complications with the Library,
 - Confirm and further explain the benefits to the town in having a second ambulance,
 - Elaborate on the billing process of the Waste Water Facility,
 - Confirm where the money collected in Community Concerts goes, and how it gets reported,
 - Explain the specifics of the police phone lines listed on line item 341,
 - Explain why we can't bill people for blood alcohol tests,
 - Inform us about the Athletic Departments expense breakdown tied to the website and the minute takers,
 - Explain the benefits to the town in giving to White Birch and the CAP Program,
 - Confirm why we have different servers and need different firewalls in the Town Office.
- Plan going forward.
 - Take this new data to the Budget Advisory Committee on 2021-01-12.

Interview with Marc McMurphy

- Opening and Attendance
 - Meeting took place on 2021-01-07 at 10:15am.
 - Members in attendance were Dan Butler and Marc McMurphy
- Agenda
 - The goal of this meeting was to ask Marc for a more thorough breakdown of what expenses the town's approved donation would cover and if the donation from the town makes sense since non-residents can use the services.
 - Marc explained benefits of having White Birch Community Center programs available for our elderly residents, what kinds of programs they offer, how many of the participants are Henniker residents, and sent an email to the committee explaining how the requested amount was calculated and why the amount is what is requested.
- Plan going forward.
 - Take this new data to the Budget Advisory Committee on 2021-01-12.

Budget Meeting 2

- Opening and Attendance
 - Meeting took place on 2020-12-29 at 6:30pm.
 - Members in attendance were Dan Butler, Lori Marko, Heidi Aucoin, Jarrod Gleason, Joe Devine, and Tia Hooper.
- Agenda
 - The goal of this meeting was to re-examine the discussion points from Meeting 1 with the new information provided by Tia Hooper, Joe Devine, and Marc McMurphy.
 - The group discussed a new potential software for the town offices that could provide improved accounting capabilities.
 - Plans were made that in future years we would be able to start with the Budget Binders as of October 31 but that we would also get new files that would include data that would complete the year each year going forward.
 - The Committee discussed the Library Department.
 - The Committee Recommends a cut to the Library's overall budget of \$14,000.
 - The Committee requests that in the future the Library provide their financial and operational records to their annual budget requests so that the committee can have a better understanding of how much money the Library is spending and how much it needs each year.
 - The Committee discussed the Fire Department.
 - The Committee decides not to cut funding for the ambulance.
 - The Committee discussed the Waste Water Department.
 - The Committee decides not to cut funding to Waste Water Department.
 - The Committee discussed the Community Concerts.
 - The Committee decides not to cut funding to Community Concerts.
 - The Committee discussed the Police Department.
 - The Committee decided not to cut funding to the Police Department.
 - The Committee discussed the Solid Waste Department.
 - The Committee decided not to cut funding to the Solid Waste Department.
 - The Committee discussed the Athletics Department.
 - The Committee decided not to cut funding to the Athletics Department.
 - The Committee discussed the Community Chapter of the Budget.
 - Given the restrictions in programs this year set by Covid 19, the likelihood that Covid 19 restrictions will be in effect until summer, and that money was returned from White Birch Community Center this past year, the Budget Advisory Committee has decided to reduce this year's donation from \$65,000 to \$50,000.
 - In regards to the Henniker Beautification Alliance, it is the recommendation of the Budget Advisory Committee that the \$14,915 requested in line 4659

be moved to Solid Waste Department as a line item reserved for the Beautification Alliance Operations. We also recommend that the amount, \$14,915 be reduced to \$2,500.

- The Committee discussed the Town Offices.
 - The Committee decided not to cut funding to the Town Offices.
- The Committee discussed the Executive Offices
 - The Committee decided to recommend reducing the Historic District Line 615 by \$250
- After a review of the binder, the Committee recommends eliminating all unnecessary paid minute takers.
- Plan going forward.
 - To present the recommendations of the Budget Advisory Committee to the Board of Selectmen on **2021-01-19**.

Recommendations of the Budget Advisory Committee are as follows:

- The Committee Recommends a cut to the Library's overall budget of \$14,000
- The Committee requests that in the future the Library provide their financial and operational records to their annual budget requests so that the committee can have a better understanding of how much money the Library is spending and how much it needs each year.
- Given the restrictions in programs this year set by Covid 19, the likelihood that Covid 19 restrictions will be in effect until summer, and that money was returned from White Birch Community Center this past year, the Budget Advisory Committee has decided to reduce the recommendation of this year's donation to White Birch Community Center from \$65,000 to \$50,000.
- In regards to the Henniker Beautification Alliance, it is the recommendation of the Budget Advisory Committee that the \$14,915 requested in line 4659 be moved to Solid Waste Department as a line item reserved for the Beautification Alliance Operations. We also recommend that the amount, \$14,915 be reduced to \$2,500.
- The Committee decided to recommend reducing the Historic District Line 615 by \$250
- The Committee recommends eliminating all unnecessary paid minute takers.