

Meeting convened at 5:04 pm in the Mezzanine Room of the Brooks Memorial Library

Present: Conor Floyd, Oscar Heller, David Levenbach, Franz Reichsman (chair)

Absent: Maya Hasegawa

Visitors: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Millicent Cooley

1. OKed agenda
2. Approved Minutes of 16 December
3. Discussion w/ Elwell on '21 budget
 - Public service union agreements
 - Police union agreement completed
 - More complicated agreements with restructurings this year
 - Future agreements should be largely across the board raises
 - Non-union employees' pay plan
 - Recent history of 2% increases but no account given to longevity, skill development, equity
 - Some positions classed in families
 - 4 steps w/ 4% increments
 - Step increases on anniversary date if satisfactory or outstanding on performance review
 - Some increases appear in utility fund budget rather than general fund given employee assignment
 - All told will increase budget proposal by \$36,875
 - Budget as it heads to RTM includes \$22,139 increase from Administration proposal because of Selectboard actions (these imply 3.5 cent increase in the tax rate, 2.9%)
 - Specifically:
 - Human services committee recommendations
 - Community marketing fund (indexed to room and meals collections)
 - Project Care costs
 - 3.5 cent increase does not include non-union employee salary plan, so tax rate increase is 3.75 cents in municipal tax rate (schools tax rate a different matter)
 - Library postage budget up to cover increases in courier costs for interlibrary loan
 - Good results from local option sales tax
 - Running ahead of projections, probably due to internet collections
 - Fund balance
 - Town has a target of 10%, not the "good practices" recommendation of 17%

- Town is doing pretty well at hitting its 10% target, while comparison towns are not meeting their own commitments, be they higher or lower
 - Long-term capital equipment plan has a one-year bump for '21 because less was spent last year, but this one-time bullet bite will permit stabilization of equipment expenses
 - Relative to activities for job creation and business development, Town cooperates with Brattleboro Development Credit Corp and State on project opportunities
4. Schools
- 2.5% budget increase expected even though Act 46 was supposed to hold down increases (other districts looking at substantially bigger increases)
 - But effect on Town taxpayers will be higher, \$80 per 100K (compared to municipal \$37.50 per 100K)
 - Expectation that budget will be finalized on 22 January
 - 3-year plan for Academy School improvements
 - Athletic fields on hold pending study results

Adjourned 6:27 pm

Submitted by Levenbach, Clerk