



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Whipple Memorial Town Hall

6:30 PM

BUDGET COMMITTEE PRESENT: Chris Lorio (Chair), Lou Botta (Vice Chair), Mark Christensen, Charles Kelsey, Karen Epstein, John Tilley, Lyndsay Harkins, Bebe Casey

Absent: John Wilson, Megan Brown

STAFF: Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator; Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Will Kidder

Rich Epstein

Colin Beasley

Chair Lorio called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and welcomed all and thanked them for attending.

He began the meeting by announcing that the purpose of the meeting is to approve changes in the revenue section of the MS-737 and asked the Town Administration to present the changes required.

Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, thanked the committee for agreeing to meet on short notice to correct the estimated revenues that are included with the MS-737. She also thanked Karen Epstein who alerted staff of the errors.

Ms. Hallquist pointed out the four revenue entries that are incorrect:

1. In State sources, the water pollution grant, \$104,593 was included and the correct amount is \$26,148.
2. In the Interfund Operating Transfers from Capital Reserves, \$1,634,606 was included and it should be \$817,303.
3. In trust and fiduciary accounts, \$80,000 was included and it should have been \$40,000.
4. The proceeds from long-term bonds and notes included \$1,910,000 and it should have been \$955,000, essentially it was doubled.

Committee members were provided with the updated MS-737. Ms. Hallquist pointed out that none of the amounts in the expense portion of the budget have changed, just the four revenue amounts.

Karen Epstein observed that at the last meeting, there was a discussion of the changes in the comparative budget totals dated January 29th from the totals contained in the January 30th dated version. These changes were the result of amounts being removed from capital expenditure totals as the selectmen were agents to expend; John Wilson commented on the changes at the last meeting. She suggested that when significant changes like that occur, it would be helpful to have them identified and addressed more transparently. Ms. Epstein noted that with more information, it would raise the awareness of members, and they could do a better job of evaluating

the numbers being considered, and that way, the committee can provide a check and balance on the process and reassure themselves that what is being approved is what they have seen and considered. Ms. Epstein guided committee members through areas of the budget demonstrating the various totals should be tied into other areas of the budget, to prove the accuracy of the numbers.

Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer, discussed how the errors happened. It appears that when she posted expenses and revenues into the DRA portal, in some cases the posted amounts were also inadvertently added to the next warrant article, creating additional revenues than what was intended. Ms. Lewis noted that if she had proved the numbers as Karen demonstrated earlier, she would have caught the errors and regretted not doing so.

She noted that as she posted the numbers, she saw it on the screen that looked okay, however, when she printed the reports, it pulled in those extra numbers. She has not yet spoken with DRA staff about the issue and is uncertain if the posting errors were a computer glitch or her posting error.

Ms. Epstein reviewed the appropriations section of the budget, as she previously did with the revenues, and determined that the totals listed could be confirmed by checking various areas of the budget handout and the MS-737. She concluded by noting that they have lots of really good checks and balances to use, and it is good to get into the practice of using them.

IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Charlie Kelsey) to approve the revised revenues as presented. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Charles Kelsey asked if the corrected forms would be included in the Town Report, Kim Hallquist confirmed that they would be.

Other business

There was a discussion of the committee having a postmortem of the just completed budget preparation process. Karen Epstein suggested that including the new members who would be elected in March and also the members who were going off the committee (John Wilson and Mark Christensen), will result in a broad range of opinions. She pointed out that in her experience, after a season, a process, an event, it's part of the course that you do a postmortem. In this way the committee can examine what they did, how they did it and consider how they may want to do it going forward. Members expressed a willingness to meet to discuss ways that the process could be improved.

Given that two members were not present, it was agreed that the Chair would send out some dates to see when committee members are available for the meeting.

IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Charlie Kelsey) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Hallquist
Town Administrator

Note: RSA 91-A:2, II provides that “*Minutes of all such meetings, including nonpublic sessions, shall include the names of members, persons appearing before the public bodies, and a brief description of the subject matter discussed and final decisions.*” A video of the entire meeting may be available for viewing on the town website, New London.NH.gov, if more than the brief description contained in these meeting minutes is desired.