

 TOWN OF NORTHWOOD

 BUDGET COMMITTEE

 MEETING

 JANUARY 31, 2017

 7:00 P.M.

Chair Dole calls the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Ginger Dole, School Board Representative Bree Gunter, Tom Chase, Bunny Behm, Betty Smith, Dave Ruth, Hal Kreider, Joe McCaffrey, Selectmen Representative Scott Bryer,

Town Staff Present: Board Administrator Linda Smith, Land Use Secretary Susan Austin, and Town Administrator Joe Gunter.

**ABSENT:** Excused: Thomas Chase, Dan McNally and John Boudreau, Cove Village District Representative Brad Hall, Betsy Colburn. Unexcused: Mike Carlton, John Jacobsmeyer

**MINUTES**

**January 9, 2017: Motion is made by Mr. Ruth, second by Ms. Gunter to accept the minutes as amended. Vote: 9/0**

**January 11, 2017: Motion is made by Selectman Bryer, second by Ms. Behm to accept the minutes as amended. Vote: Vote: 9/0**

**January 12, 2017: Motion is made by Selectman Bryer, second by Mr. Ruth to accept the minutes as amended. Vote: Vote: 9/0**

Mr. Chase stated that he felt that the committee should discuss the procedure for meetings when the public is speaking. He stated that there were instances where Chair Dole has responded to comments made by the public, but he was under the impression that they weren’t to respond to the public based on the statement made by Chair Dole that they were there to hear from the public and to respond to the questions and statements. He stated that he would like to discuss what the ground rules and what was appropriate. Ms. Behm stated that she felt that the confusion arose because in the past years when public comment was open, they didn’t say anything. The questions were answered usually by the school board. It wasn’t until the last meeting where they were told that they were to be answering, not the school board. Chair Dole stated that she understood from the budget workshop is that when they have their final public hearing, whether they have had one prior to work sessions or not, when they are presenting the budget committees proposed budget to the voters before deliberative. That being the case, that last hearing is for the budget committee to respond to any questions.

Chair Dole stated that in past years they have offered to use the minutes to reference discussions on particular questions that may come up in the deliberative session to explain how the committee made the decisions they did. Mr. Kreider suggested that if a question came up related to the budget committee, He could recognize Chair Dole to speak. If other members wanted to speak, he would leave it to Chair Doles discretion to recognize them.

Mr. Kreider made a motion to have Chair Dole speak for the Budget Committee utilizing the minutes and giving the opportunity for others to speak if they wished. Ms. Gunter seconded. Motion carries 9/0.

Mr. Kreider stated that he thought that since the committee owned the budget, then perhaps they could request that it be put in a spreadsheet that the public could pull into their own spread sheets. Selectman Breyer stated that he was all for transparency, but he feels that the town as well as the school has limited resources, so to have someone put it into spreadsheet is time constraining. Mr. Kreider stated that he didn’t think it was much more work than allowing it to be readable by a character recognizing program. Ms. Behm stated that according to the RSA, they were not required to put the budget into any other form than what is being put out by the town or the school. They can ask the school district for any format, but they are not required. Chair Dole stated that the concern is numbers being manipulated or changed. Ms. L. Smith stated that the Town already puts their budget into excel, the school board uses a different format. Mr. Ruth stated that allowing the public to pull the numbers into their own program allows for more confusion because then the numbers can be manipulated. Ms. L Smith stated that the fear is somewhat unfounded because if someone really wanted to, they could put all of the numbers into an excel sheet and create whatever they wanted to.

Chair Dole stated that she wanted to discuss the petition warrant article 9 for the school regarding the proposal to delegate the default budget to the Budget Committee. Since they are Budget Committee members, she felt that they should discuss it so they could at least understand what was involved in it. She stated personally she did not see how the budget committee could do it. The Town can vote to have the budget committee prepare the default budget for the town and school. She stated that her concern was gathering the information needed for the default budget. All of that information is contained with the school board or the SAU. Ms. Behm stated that they didn’t have the expertise. They would need to sit with a finance person to walk them through it.

Chair Dole stated that she also wanted to discuss scheduling the reorganization meeting. The committee agreed on April 19 at 7:00 PM.

 **ADJOURNMENT**

Selectman Bryer makes a motion to adjourn at 8:07. Mr. Ruth seconds. Motion carries 9/0

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Austin, Land Use Secretary.