

Town of Andover
Board of Finance
Wednesday, March 17th 2021 at 7:00 P.M.
Virtual via Zoom Platform

Special Meeting Budget Workshop Minutes

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Marc Brinker called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Members: Chair Marc Brinker, Vice Chair Diane Choquette, Louise Goodwin, David Hewett, Curt Dowling, Robert England, Linda Fish

Town Administrator: Eric Anderson, Admin Assistant/Board Clerk: Amanda Gibson

Town/AES Finance Director: Sherry Holmes

AES Superintendent: Valerie Bruneau

Board of Education: Chair Shannon Loudon, Gerry Crème

AHM Youth and Family Services: President Steve Fish

Public Present: Anne Crème, Cathy Palazzi, Mike Palazzi, Carol Lee, Joanne Hebert, Leigh Ann Hutchinson

2. Public Speak

Shannon Loudon thanked the Board of Finance for their hard work and recommended that Superintendent Valerie Bruneau answer any pertaining questions along with Board of Education member Gerry Crème.

3. Budget Workshop

a. Review the AHM FY 2021-22 Budget

Members reviewed the Andover Hebron Marlborough's Youth and Family Services agency's municipal 'Youth Services Bureau' formula. Linda Fish explained that the new agreement allocates funds directly from the town budget in one allotment instead of independently from the town and elementary school. Members stated that the town budget includes the Andover Elementary School and RHAM Middle School and High School budgets. The agreement states that the Town of Andover as a whole will allocate \$88,684 to the partner agency for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget. Valerie Bruneau stated that the proposed AES budget included the school's portion for AHM and will be modified. AHM President Steve Fish explained logistics of agreement and shared that the AHM Oversight Committee will be meeting on Monday, March 22nd at 1:00 P.M.

b. Board/Department Presentations

Members discussed proposed budgets from Region 8 RHAM Board of Education and Andover Elementary School Board of Education. Valerie Bruneau explained tuition costs for preschool program, grant funding and teacher salaries. Sherry Holmes stated that the upcoming new software system will help provide answers in detail. Diane Choquette highlighted importance of tracking COVID related expenses.

c. Discuss and act upon the Proposed FY 2021-22 Budget

Marc Brinker shared his created excel sheet with proposed target goals for Board of Finance to reach in regards to mil rate increases with various tax level scenarios.

Members discussed possibility of utilizing fund balance for capital projects.

Members discussed possibility of eliminating Resident State Trooper position.

Members discussed possibility of reducing the AES budget.

Curt Dowling suggested educating the residents on the budget process and reasoning behind decisions. Eric Anderson shared that he sent a draft letter to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, and that the Board of Selectmen requested edits prior to sending out to the community. Members discussed options for distributing survey questionnaire to the town residents. Members agreed to reach out to the board and commission chairs to request reductions in their budgets. Members shared necessity for additional budget workshops. Per Marc Brinker's suggestion, members agreed to ask AES for budget decrease scenarios to see impact on reductions, suggesting three scenario options. Diane Choquette inquired on how the town can increase their revenue. Members discussed reality of stringent town budget and lack of sufficient funds.

d. Schedule Additional Budget Workshops

Diane Choquette MOVED to schedule the following Special Meeting Budget Workshops:

Wednesday, March 31st, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, April 7th, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Wednesday, April 14th, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Rob England SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

Members discussed possible dates for Town Budget Meeting and Referendum.

4. Public Speak

Gerry Crème commended the Board of Finance for a monumental job, applauding members for their efforts.

Valerie Bruneau reiterated Gerry Crème's statements.

Joanne Hebert *see attached for comments.

5. Adjournment

Louise Goodwin MOVED to adjourn the Special Meeting.

Curt Dowling SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

Marc Brinker adjourned the Special Meeting Budget 10:17 P.M.

*Please visit our town website at www.andoverct.org for upcoming VIRTUAL meetings with instructions on how to join. The following boards/commission Zoom Video Recordings are posted to the NEW Town of Andover, CT YouTube Channel: Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Board of Assessment Appeals, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals. Like our www.facebook.com/townofandoverct page for community updates!

Helpfully submitted by the Board Clerk/Administrative Assistant, Amanda Gibson. *Amanda Gibson*

Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for the approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.

Public Speak Comments Submitted:

I would like to also commend the BOF with the ideas they came forth with tonight as far as setting a target amount and backtracking to get to that number. However, I feel that 5% will still be too high

and they should aim for the 3.5% number instead. I believe that the BOF is going to have to impose a dollar amount of cuts to the BOE because it is just not in their nature to cut on their own. We are

in this situation from years and years of allowing higher than necessary budgets pass, so I believe this is the year to do the hard work and try to get it back in line with where it should be as far as

student enrollment and other Town comparables, which have been brought to all of the Boards attention in Town through emails and public speak sessions. It is not right to consider that RHAM only

has a smaller percentage increase in budget, we need to look at the total budget number as a whole as the starting point. I do also want to compliment Curt and Eric for coming up with suggestions or at least being willing to go back to their budgets and see where cuts could possibly be made or items put off until another year.

I want to add one other thing because this has been brought up in multiple meetings. Although I always favor keeping educational costs in line and to where they should be, I would never be in favor

of Andover breaking away from RHAM. It is one of the only draws to Andover from outside people looking to purchase property in Town. I would want every student in Town to have the same opportunity

that those before them have had. RHAM, although I personally did not see too many extras provided to my children, has a stellar reputation in the educational circles and looks terrific on college applications. We still had to pay to play sports, pay to be a cheerleader or on the dance team, pay to park, and finally to pay to join a club that does good in the community! All of that being said, I would not favor a move to break away, rather continue to ask for reasonable budgets. Thank you.

Joanne Hebert