

Town of Andover
Board of Finance
Wednesday, March 31st 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, Linda Fish, Louise Goodwin, Curt Dowling, Rob England, David Hewett.

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

Finance Director: Sherry Holmes

Town Clerk: Carol Lee

Board of Selectmen: Adrian Mandeville, Paula King, Jeff Murray, Scott Person.

Board of Education: Daniel Foran, AES Superintendent: Valerie Bruneau

Public Present: Dianne Grenier, Leigh Ann Hutchinson, Joanne Hebert.

2. Public Speak

Valerie Bruneau announced that all vaccinations are completed for Andover Elementary School.

Adrian Mandeville apologized to AES Superintendent Valerie Bruneau on his comments during a previous meeting and shared that they discussed possible budget solutions together. Shared numerous recommendations to the Board of Finance.

Daniel Foran stated that some of the facts presented at the last Regular Meeting were false in regards to the Andover Elementary School budget, recommending asking the Superintendent for factual information.

Jeff Murray recommended for the AES budget to make significant cuts to proposed budget. Expressed disagreement with having 10 students and a para-professional in one class.

Joanne Hebert: *See included.

Marc Brinker thanked the public for input.

3. Budget Workshop

- a. Discuss and act upon the Proposed FY 2021-22 Budget
Members discussed requested proposed reductions.

1. Elimination of the Building Department Administrative Assistant position, combining the position with the Assistant Town Clerk.
No motion.

2. Eliminate Board of Finance legal budget entirely.
Marc Brinker MOVED to remove the Board of Finance legal line item of \$2,500 from the budget.
Curt Dowling SECONDED
MOTION CARRIED 4:2:1
Curt Dowling, Louise Goodwin, Linda Fish and Marc Brinker voted in favor of.
David Hewett, Diane Choquette voted not in favor of.

Rob England abstained

3. Reduce all wage increases.
No motion.
4. Reduce the Board of Selectmen salary stipend from \$1,200 to \$1,000.
No motion.
5. Reduce the Assessor legal counsel line item.
No motion.
6. Eliminate Old Firehouse Alarm Maintenance and stop heating the building completely.
No motion.
7. Reduce overtime for snow removal.
Marc Brinker MOVED to reduce the Snow Removal line item by \$10k and set for \$15k total with understanding to cover out of the Contingency Fund if needed.
Louise Goodwin SECONDED
MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0
8. Street Lighting.
No motion.
9. Reduce the fire commission budget by 3%.
No motion.
10. Reduce the library payroll and operations budget by 3%.
No motion.
11. Reduce the Recreation commission budget
No motion.

Members discussed making reductions to capital projects.

1. 25k Fire Department Equipment Fund
No motion.

2. 25k Tree Removal Fund

Rob England MOVED to remove \$25k from the Tree Removal Fund, and instead fund the \$25k from the Unexpended Funds.

Linda Fish SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

- 15K Building Maintenance Fund

Rob England MOVED take \$225k in excess funding from current budget and utilize the funds in the Road Improvement Fund for the proposed budget.

Linda Fish SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

Marc Brinker MOVED to reduce the Building Department fund by \$45k for salary in anticipation of possible combined position with Building Administrative Assistant and Assistant Town Clerk, which can be reversed in a future meeting.

Rob England SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

Marc Brinker MOVED to schedule the Annual Town Budget Meeting on Thursday, May 6th, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Louise Goodwin SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

Marc Brinker MOVED to schedule the Budget Public Hearing on Wednesday, April 21st, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

David Hewett SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED

4. Public Speak

Jeff Murray thanked the Board of Finance and recommended for the members to ask the Andover Elementary School Board of Education to make additional budget cuts to proposed budget. Expressed concerns for possibility of future consolidation of AES with other schools in the region.

Joanne Hebert: *See included.

5. Adjournment

Curt Dowling MOVED to adjourn the Special Meeting.

Diane Choquette SECONDED

MOTION CARRIED 7:0:0

Marc Brinker thanked everyone and adjourned the Special Meeting Budget Workshop.

*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.

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First Public Speak (called in on phone)

Hello Everyone,

I know that this is a meeting where important decisions will be made. As many boards know, I am a familiar voice that has attended most all meetings for the past year, so anything that I say and propose comes with over a year's worth of being very involved and more importantly listening to all of the stakeholders involved.

Fact: We know the budget must be cut because there is no way that a 7.5% tax increase will pass nor should it. The time is now

to look for cuts wherever they can be made in order to bring this increase down to a manageable number for all. I believe that the Town side of the budget and our Town Manager has done a good job in looking for cuts where he could as far as combining positions, reducing some hours, etc. Now, we must look to the educational side of the budget for further cuts to be made. The data supports this happening. The BOF has been sent countless emails/docs/facts supporting this. I want to let everyone know that I make this statement as a very involved Town Resident/a mother of 3 young adults that have gone through our Town's educational system and RHAM, and also as an employee of a School System who works extensively with budgets and funding and personnel. I would like to speak directly to parents.....I hear your voice.....you support your beloved school.....you are afraid

if money is cut, the educational value your child receives will suffer.....I don't believe that at all.....quite the opposite....in order for our school to be able to keep running, we must cut the budget now in order to get it to be sustainable. I work with many young

people with growing families that are looking to move into more rural areas, but are not even considering Andover because we don't offer many amenities for the taxation. They are looking to Towns such as Hebron and Ellington, where their children or themselves will get more for their tax dollar. So please, think outside the box, we need to keep the budgets level or realistic

in order to draw more families to the area when people sell their houses. If we don't enrollment will keep declining causing

AES problems and regionalization of our elementary students to be a necessity. Please see the big picture here for all!

Thank you

Joanne Hebert
Town Resident

2nd Public Speak:

Thanks for the hard work of the BOF. I agree with what Jeff Murray just said as being a person that is in support of keeping

AES up and running, but with a fair budget. We have just heard the Town's budget being gone through again for the second week, where even more cuts were made to a minimal budget, as it was dissected. I am looking forward to next week's budget meeting so that we can hear what the Superintendent has done with the budget for AES. We know that enrollment continues to decline and that it will be hard to sustain a school with that enrollment and a 4,000,000 budget. Thanks,

Joanne Hebert
Town Resident