

**SUSTAINABLE BUDGET STUDY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, May 12, 2016**

**Present:** Jack Petropoulos, Bud Robertson, Art Prest, Patricia DuFresne, Michael Hartnett, Kevin Forsmo, Kevin Brogan, Alison Manugian, and Mark Haddad

Meeting convened at 8:00 a.m.

Mark Haddad called the meeting to order since this was their first meeting and no Chair had been elected. He went over the proposed agenda for the meeting. The first thing would be to organize, then pick a permanent meeting time and review the Charge of the Committee and determine next steps.

Kevin Brogan nominated Kevin Forsmo as Chairman. With no other nominations, the Committee voted unanimously to elect Kevin Forsmo as Chair of the Committee.

Mr. Forsmo took over as Chair. He asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Bud Robertson nominated Kevin Brogan as Vice Chair. With no other nominations, the Committee voted unanimously to elect Kevin Brogan as Vice Chair.

Mr. Forsmo asked for nominations for Clerk, who would be responsible to take minutes of the meeting. Initially, no one offered to serve as Clerk and no nominations were made. Mark Haddad stated that he would serve in that role. With no other nominations, the Committee voted unanimously to serve as Clerk and take the minutes of the meeting.

The Committee then discussed when it should meet and how often. To that end, Mr. Forsmo asked for a copy of the Charge to be submitted so that the Committee determine what is expected of them and what the deadline was to complete the work. Mr. Haddad distributed a copy of the Charge (attached to these minutes as Attachment #1). Bud Robertson thought it was important for the Committee to understand the definition of "Sustainable Budget." He felt that the Committee needed to understand growth in revenue as well.

Mr. Haddad gave a breakdown of what he thought the Committee needed to accomplish and by when. The Committee is charged with bringing forth a recommendation to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen in time for the FY 2018 Budget Process, which commences in October. Mr. Hartnett felt it was important to bring in the proper expertise to understand various aspects of the budget, including health insurance and pension liability. Mr. Forsmo agreed and would like to see this added to future agendas. Ms. Manugian felt it was important for the Committee to have copies of collective bargaining agreements over the last two cycles to see how they have evolved.

Mr. Petropoulos asked Mr. Haddad to provide the Committee with a copy of the summary sheet that was developed by the Human Resources Director that has a breakdown of benefits by particular contract. He also felt it was important to develop a list of comparable Towns to Groton. Ms. Manugian pointed out that the towns that are comparable to Groton, may not be comparable to the School District. The Committee would need to take into consideration different Towns.

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Mr. Forsmo felt that the Committee needed to accomplish the following:

- Define Sustainability and seek Selectmen and Finance Committee input into the definition. Each Committee member should come up with a definition that would be shared with other Committee members prior to the next meeting so that the Committee could come up with one formal definition.
- Determine how information developed by this Committee can be used/recommended for use to the Regional School District.
- Develop a mechanism for the Committee to have access to information. It was determined that the best way to accomplish this would be to develop a home page for the Committee on the Town of Groton Website that would contain all documents that the Committee members and public would have direct access.
- Request that the Town Clerk provide Open Meeting Law Training so that the Committee conducts itself within the law. Mr. Petropoulos requested that the video of the Open Meeting Law Training provided by Town Counsel be made available to Committee members.
- Request that the Vice Chairman of the Committee develop a project plan for the Committee to accomplish its tasks.

The Committee determined that its regular meeting schedule would initially be every Thursday Morning at 7:00 a.m.

Mr. Haddad made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Hartnett seconded the motion and it was unanimously voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Haddad  
Clerk

## ATTACHMENT #1:

### A. CHARGE

The Sustainable Budget Study Committee shall be established for the purpose of identifying and understanding the underlying causes of growth in Groton's Municipal Operating Budget, as well as, making recommendations on specific actions that can be taken to ensure the Town is on a sustainable financial path. The Committee's work should include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Identify specific budget growth areas that are increasing in a non-sustainable manner.
2. Analyze non-sustainable budget growth areas to determine underlying causes.
3. Benchmark municipal budget growth against comparable Towns.
4. Develop a list of potential actions prioritized on size and duration of financial impact, ability of Town to adopt and any potential risks to successful implementation.
5. Deliver a final report to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee outlining findings and recommendations.

The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee should be consulted regularly for advice and progress updates. The Committee should seek out citizens, professional individuals or organizations with the skills and knowledge required to complete its work. The Committee shall endeavor to bring its recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and the Town's Finance Team prior to the start of the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Cycle.

### B. CONDUCT

All meetings are to be held in a public location, properly posted and open to the public in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Minutes of each meeting shall be prepared and approved by the Committee within thirty (30) days of any meeting and distributed to the Town Clerk.

### C. MEMBERSHIP

**Committee Members:** The Committee shall consist of nine (9) members appointed by the Board of Selectmen as follows:

One Member of the Board of Selectmen

One Member of the Finance Committee

One Member of the Personnel Board

One Member of the Groton Dunstable Regional School Committee

Two Residents of the Town of Groton

Town Manager

Town Accountant

Town Treasurer/Tax Collector