



TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

Sustainable Budget Study Committee

Kevin Forsmo, Chairman
Mark Haddad
Jack Petropoulos
Bud Robertson
Art Prest
Patricia DuFresne
Michael Hartnett
Kevin Brogan
Alison Manugian

MEETING MINUTES

Date: Thursday, September 1, 2016
Time: 7:00 AM
Location: 1st Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
Members Present: Mark Haddad, Alison Manugian, Jack Petropoulos, Kevin Brogan, Bud Robertson, Michael Hartnett, Art Prest, Patricia DuFresne
Absent Members: Kevin Forsmo
Others Present: Robin Eibye, Ellen Baxendale (Resident), Ana Eliot, (BOS)

Vice Chairman, Kevin Brogan called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. The agenda was reviewed.

A discussion ensued as to whether or not the meeting should be recorded for reporting purposes.

Art Prest motioned against allowing today's meeting to be recorded. Bud Robertson seconded and the motion failed 2:4. (Mark Haddad, abstained; Kevin Forsmo, absent; Patricia DuFresne, absent)

DRAFT RFP REVIEW FOR OPERATIONAL REVIEW

Mark Haddad provided the Committee with the Operational Assessment of the Town of Groton's Operations handout. Mark noted that he drafted two articles as requested and will seek the Board's approval at the next BOS meeting. Bud Robertson said he felt it was important to include "Best Practices of Comparable Communities" that have been approved by the Town of Groton. The Committee agreed to add Best Practice of Comparable Communities to page 3 as letter D.

Alison Manugian wondered if a preliminary meeting with the consultants is necessary to ensure the Town's expectations of the report will be met. Mark Haddad noted that on page 3 under letter E, it states the Town is seeking to have a draft report and recommendations within 90 days of Notice to Proceed.

Ellen Baxendale asked for clarification as to why the report is needed. A discussion ensued as to why the Committee feels the report is warranted.

At 7:30 a.m. Patricia DuFresne joined the meeting.

Mr. Petropoulos said he would like the report to provide methods and suggestions for ongoing self-evaluation. Mr. Haddad agreed to add the request to page 3 as number 5.

Mark Haddad motioned that the BOS advertise the RFP as drafted, subject to any revisions the BOS may request. Bud Robertson seconded and the motion carried 8:0. (Kevin Forsmo, absent)

DISCUSSION OF SUBMITTED SOLUTIONS AND IMPACTS

Mr. Haddad provided the Committee with the “Sustainable Budget Committee Recommended Revenue Sources” handout. The handout was reviewed and a discussion ensued about what models should be presented to the Board of Selectmen.

Room Occupancy Tax - Mr. Haddad said that a room occupancy tax has been added to the Warrant. Mr. Haddad reported that some departments have already begun reviewing current fees and analyzing the benefits of changing current fee structures. Mr. Petropoulos said he would like to see the analysis of such and recommended that all departments begin reviewing fee structures. Mr. Haddad said he will direct all department heads to begin reviewing their current fee structures.

Country Club Plan - Mr. Haddad said his goal is to have the Country Club’s subsidy will be at 0% by the beginning at FY19. Mr. Brogan asked if a plan is in place to attain the 0% subsidy by FY19. Mr. Haddad confirmed that there is a plan in place.

Non-Profit Entities and Annual Pilots - Mr. Haddad said his goal is to negotiate a \$50,000 pilot payment from each of the two new non-profit entities in town, the Hindu Temple and Indian Music. A discussion ensued about the Town’s Annual Pilot Program and current practices.

Standardize Enterprise Department Intergovernmental Payments – Mr. Haddad said his recommendation is to charge intergovernmental departments the same amount for services received from the Town.

Boat Excise Tax – Mr. Haddad noted that a Boat Excise tax could potentially generate \$2,000 to \$5,000 annually for the Town.

Review of Potential Regional Collaborations – Mr. Haddad said the Town of Shirley recently contacted him to discuss Groton taking over Shirley’s dispatch needs.

Feasibility Study of Installing Parking Meters on Main Street – A discussion ensued about limited revenue opportunities and the possibility of charging rental fees for using municipal buildings.

Art Prest provided the Committee with the “Potential Revenue Opportunities to Be Considered by the Budget Sustainability Committee” handout. Mr. Prest provided an overview of the handout. Mr. Prest also provided an overview of the “Groton Economic Development Committee 2016 Economic Development Priorities” handout. A discussion ensued about commercial properties that use septic systems. Ms. Manugian asked about charging for beach stickers. Mr. Haddad explained that the Town is unable to charge for beach stickers due to the fact that the beach is conservation land and state funding was received at one time.

Mr. Petropoulos stated that the Town currently receives \$500,000 in CPA funds from taxes and the State match is approximately 18%. Mr. Petropoulos went on to explain that the State used to match 100%; however, the percentage has declined over the years and if the City of Boston participates, the State match will decline even more. He stated that the Committee should consider the benefits to the Town of not participating in CPA. \$500,000 could go back into the budget without raising taxes. A discussion ensued about CPA funding.

Eliminate the Health Reimbursement Account – It was confirmed that this item is bargainable.

Increase Employee Cost Share – Every 5% saves the Town \$60,000. Mr. Haddad said his recommendation would be to move to 75% the first year and then to 70% the second year saving the Town \$120,000 over two years.

Increase Retiree Cost Share – Mr. Haddad said his recommendation would be 60%, 55%, 51% over three years. Ms. Manugian noted she is not supportive of decreasing retirees’ share while leaving working employees’ share lower. A brief discussion ensued.

Establish Health Insurance Buyout for Employees – Mr. Haddad said he will have a more specific proposal later and noted that the number needs to be a worthwhile for a savings.

The committee agreed to continue the Expense Discussion to next week.

MINUTES

Draft minutes from Thursday, August 18, 2016, were reviewed.

Bud Robertson moved to accept the August 18, 2016, minutes as written. Ms. Manugian seconded and the motion carried 5:0. (Kevin Forsmo, absent; Mark Haddad, abstained; Michael Harnett, abstained; Patricia DuFresne, abstained)

Draft minutes from Friday, August 26, 2016, were reviewed.

Mark Haddad moved to accept the August 26, 2016, minutes as corrected. Mr. Robertson seconded and the motion carried 8:0. (Kevin Forsmo, absent)

Mr. Brogan moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Robin Eibye, Executive Assistant

APPROVED: September 8, 2016

APPROVED