

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE  
TOWN OF MADISON  
December 11, 2018  
MINUTES**

**Members Present** –Bill Lord; Selectmen Representative John Arruda; School Board Representative Jim Curran; Ron Force; Jeff Balogh; Ned Rogerson; Nicole Nordlund

**Others Present** – Selectmen Josh L. Shackford; Finance Director Su Stacey; Police Chief Ted Colby; Fire Chief Richard Clark; DPW Director Jon Cyr; MES Principal Heather Woodward; Town Clerk Michael Brooks; Resident Denita Dudley; Recording Secretary Linda Shackford; Madison TV Videographer Carol Dandeneau

**Where and When Posted** – Town Hall upper & lower bulletin boards and Madison & Silver Lake Post Offices on September 18, 2018.

**Meeting Called to Order** – By Lord at 6:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion** by Curran, seconded by Force to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2018 meeting as written. The motion passed with Nordlund abstaining.

**SCHOOL BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE REVIEW** - Curran informed the committee of the school budget meeting scheduled. There will be meetings on:

- December 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm Budget Hearing
- January 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm Public Hearing
- February 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm Deliberative Session

**ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE SCHEDULE REVIEW** – The Committee discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. There will be meeting on:

- January 7<sup>th</sup> after the 6:00 pm School Board Public hearing
- January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm Budget Committee Meeting
- February 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm Public Hearing

**CURRENT DRAWDOWN REVIEW** - Arruda noted that we are 95% of the year with 88.9% of the budget utilized. The projected amount to be encumbered of things obligated to pay but not yet expended is \$32,000. Arruda expects \$225,000 to be rolled back at the end of the year and may be used to reduce the 2019 town portion of the tax rate. Chief Clark stated he is still working on some purchase orders and spoke to his concern that there is still work to be done to the washer/dryer installation. The washer/dryer was funded with a non-lapsing warrant article and if not finished by year end could cause the need for \$5,100 out of the regular budget for completion. Arruda noted that the highway budget is at 94% and expect them to come in right on; Director Cyr added to keep in mind possible snow storms necessitating salt and sand. Arruda complimented Cyr and his crew on a great job during this last 14” snow event.

**OPERATING BUDGET** – There was minimal discussion regarding the operating budget. The 2019 amount is 0.01% less than 2018. The total warrant before further discussion is at 4.46% over 2018. Arruda asked if there has been a more definite number found for the cost to improve the fire station parking lot. Chief Clark responded that between the highway department and GMI the estimate is about \$41,000.00.

**LORD'S DISCUSSION ITEM** – Lord cited the Town Budgeting Ordinance from 1991 Town Meeting which gives direction for this committee. There is a paragraph that states “The Advisory Budget Committee shall submit to the School Board and the Selectmen on or before 15 January the budget amounts proposed by the budget committee for inclusion in the Town Report.” From this verbiage, Lord feels the committee is charged with sending a letter to the Selectmen and School Board with suggestions for how much the budgets should be. Lord asked the committee if they feel we should comply with this ordinance.

Stacey noted that the January deadline may be set by dates mandated in 1991, not in the present. Arruda sees that this committee already mirrors the process as we go through and make recommendations on each warrant article. Arruda is in agreement with a report adding that if there is a difference in the amount proposed by the budget committee versus the selectmen's amount it would need to be explained.

Lord would be willing to draft letters to the Selectmen and Board of Education for committee review to be in compliance with the town ordinance. Which reminded Lord on an unrelated matter, Lord is in receipt of memos from both the Selectmen and the Madison TV to all town boards, committees and commissions reiterating the proper procedure for videotaping of meeting. As per RSA 91-A the cameras remain on during regular session of the committee.

J. Shackford feels that this process is how we are complying with the ordinance. Each year we try to keep the budget level and stating an unattainable goal has no benefit as everyone tries to keep the budget as low as possible. Nordlund likes the idea of a letter which is better served as a way for the SB2 school voters to know how the committee feels.

Brooks is curious how the process worked back in 1991 wondering if this letter should have been a first meeting duty because it doesn't line up with today's timeline. Brooks also feels that the process is much more open than back in 1991 when this ordinance was created. Brooks suggested putting this before Town Meeting and asking them to clarify how it should be done as no one presently on these boards or committees was involved in the 1991 creation of the ordinance.

Lord will propose a method to see if this needs to change so not to be in violation of the ordinance.

#### **FORCE DISCUSSION ITEM:**

Force suggested an idea to have the warrant articles prioritized feeling that this would allow some control over a soft target would not being first choice. Arruda explained that this year the warrant articles are up 4.38% with an average over the last eight years of 3.79% increases; we need an operating budget, we don't need everything on the warrant and at the same time, these articles are not frivolous. J. Shackford reminded everyone that over the last few years the town has purchased a backhoe, police cruiser, fire truck and paid for a major truck repair all in cash.

#### **WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW/DISCUSSION:**

*Transfer station* has proposed three separate articles of \$40,000 for containers, \$10,000 for compactor funnel system and \$21,000 for funnel system roof were discussed. Cyr explained that the only way to save money is by decreasing the hauling costs, especially on weekends and there are several open ends that seem to be preventing this project from coming together for this year. Arruda reiterated some discussion a selectmen's meeting that would remove these three articles and instead propose one article that would place \$30,000 into the ETF. The committee was in agreement with this change.

**Fee collection** in the form of adopting RSA 41:9-a is on the warrant again this year after a failed vote in 2018. Arruda will have this placed on the next selectmen's meeting for discussion.

**Operating Budget** - Lord and the committee were in agreement that further review of the budget at this time is not necessary as all are fine with the numbers.

**Petition Charity Articles** – Nordlund has volunteered to review the information, there have been four submitted thus far.

**Street paving/road improvement** in the amount of \$100,000 is an annual article. Force asked if there are specific roads that this is for. Cyr listed Forest Pines, Fox, Knight and West Shore as slated for improvement.

**Rubber Tired Excavator** – Arruda asked Cyr to explain how this equipment will have the town money. Cyr explained that this excavator can be used for the annual roadside mowing which would cost \$26,000 a year in rental equipment charges. The excavator will be used for roadside ditching instead of the grader allowing for less materials in the road while ditching which in turn allows us to utilize personnel for actual ditching versus traffic control.

**Dump Truck** – Arruda again asked Cyr to explain. Cyr noted that the 1-ton replacements have been skipped over for a long time now. The big trucks are all set adding the mid-size trucks allow for sanding more efficiently and does not require a CDL license endorsement.

**Police Cruiser** – Chief Colby will be replacing the expedition as part the of 6-year rotation.

**Fire Command Vehicle** – This is being purchased off the state bid. Current vehicle is 10 years old.

**Fire Station Parking Lot** – The \$50,000 paving project was brought down to \$41,000 with recent estimates.

Lord asked if there were any other discussion points.

Nordlund shared with the committee some issues about the school budget. Nordlund's original support for the 1.3-million-dollar bond has changed. After researching meeting video tapes, she feels that the school has overspent and that this has been happening for a while. Nordlund cited that grants were not obtained; the lighting upgrade was paid for when financial assistance was available and the entire roof was replaced when only a portion was failing. Nordlund spoke to the salaries of the administration with the superintendent receiving a 5.5% raise over three years, the principal is the most expensive in the valley and the new position of Dean of Students has a combined salary/benefits of \$94,000.00. Concerns Nordlund also cited were the large number of kindergarten teaching staff. Nordlund has a passion about equal treatment for the school's teachers and find this very unbalanced.

Lord noted that recent data shows that the performance comparisons with other towns based on state testing has Madison's school in the bottom 25-30 percentile while being in the top ten for per student costs.

Curran noted that there is a small portion of the overall school budget that is not set in place. Tuition is not under the school board's control and special ed is mandated. Lord added that the budget committee has very little control over the school board budget; to change things it would happen at the deliberative session at the school.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** – There were none.

**NEXT ADVISORY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING** – The next Advisory Budget Committee Meeting will be on Tuesday, January 22, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the lower level of Town Hall.

**8:05 PM** – Curran made a **motion** to adjourn, seconded by Rogerson. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Shackford  
Recording Secretary