

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
ENFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
ENFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, September 18, 2018
Time: 5:00 PM
Location: Public Works Facility, 74 Lockehaven Road

Board of Selectman: Meredith Smith, John Kluge, Katherine Plumley Stewart

Budget Committee: Sam Eaton, Shirley Green, Eric Crate, Erik Russell, Jean Patten, Mike Diehn

Administrative Staff: Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager; Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager (Recording Secretary); John Pellerin, Enfield Fire Department (Presenter); David Crate, Fire Chief; Ken Wheeler, Fire Ward; Lloyd Hackeman, Fire Ward

Others: Michael Akillian (Center for Strategic Governance); Cecilia Aufiero; Richard Martin

I. Call to Order

Ms. Smith called the Selectmen's meeting to order at 5:002 PM.

Mr. Eaton called the Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

II. Introduction

Aylesworth welcomed everyone in attendance and announced that the Fire Department presentation will be made this evening. Prior to the presentation, Mr. Aylesworth brought to the attention of those present that a memo was sent to department heads to have 2019 budget requests in by the last week of September. Budget worksheets will be prepared by department heads in Excel worksheets which will then be imported into the new Accufund accounting software. This will eliminate data entry errors due to rekeying information. CIP request sheets were also provided to department heads. CIP sheets will be used by the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee, as well as the Capital Improvement Program Committee.

III. Presentation of Department Strategic Plan

Mr. Pellerin gave a detailed presentation for the Fire Department. Throughout the presentation, members of both the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee asked clarifying questions.

The Fire Department included an update to their mission statement as the work of the Fire Department extends beyond fighting fires, but includes hazardous materials, education and prevention.

The Fire Department presentation included, but was not limited to: organization structure, firefighter call response statistics, call volumes with historical date by incident type including mutual aid response, basic issues of training and manpower, department equipment, facility quality and space issues.

Also discussed were ISO insurance ratings, how they are calculated, how the Town's rating can be improved and the resulting effect on insurance rates for Enfield homeowners. A better ISO rating reduces

insurance rates. There is room for improvement as the department has added equipment since 2004 when the Town was last reviewed.

Throughout the presentation, members of both the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee asked clarifying questions. Discussion followed regarding facility needs and possible solutions, as well as ways to recruit new members.

Mrs. Smith and Ms. Stewart had to leave the meeting at this time.

Upon the conclusion of the Fire Department Mr. Akillian gave a “wrap up” presentation (see enclosed slides). All of the department presentations are completed. Community & Economic Development needs further work.

It is up to the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee to determine which plans to pursue. More information that can assist in the decision making will become available by the end of the year, including the municipal facilities optimization study, and water and wastewater asset management plans.

Mr. Akillian recommended rolling up all of the initiatives and capital projects presented by the various departments and see what the 5-year window would look like based on what is pursued now and what may be pushed out past 2023. Based on what the fiscal year 2019 Budget Committee decisions the departments can adjust their plans, restate outcomes, initiatives and projected costs.

Discussion ensued regarding how best to engage the citizens of Enfield. Community engagement is critical. The Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen need to review and prioritize initiatives and evaluate the horizontal linkages between the vertical plans developed by each of the operating departments.

Mr. Akillian informed those present of the Community Heart & Soul program, an 18-24 month process. The Town can take elements of this program and use bit size pieces for Enfield.

It is important to inform the public what Strategic Governance is all about. Do the Selectmen and Budget Committee set priorities and see if the community agrees with those priorities or should the community be engaged earlier in the process and let them decide the priorities?

Ms. Aufiero noted that nowhere in the presentations was there a place departments can save money. She was informed that departments can think about that.

Mr. Aylesworth would like to work with the Center for Strategic Governance on a scaled back version of the presentations for public engagement. He asked the Budget Committee members how they felt about the direction we’re headed.

Mr. Eaton said we need to be sure people know these are plans, not necessarily the direction the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen are going.

Mr. Aylesworth agreed. Dominic Albanese mentioned this at the last strategic governance meeting as well. Departments were directed to not reign in thinking, but that qualifier needs to be very prominent.

Mr. Akillian asked if it’s too soon to put the budgets up and post them. Maybe the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen want to take the plans and set priorities first. Mr. Kluge thinks that takes from community engagement, to which Mr. Akillian responded the announcement and priorities should be posted in close proximity.

Mrs. Patten noted as Budget Committee members they have a lot before them. Minutes will be posted and people will be wondering what's going on in the background. We need engagement sooner rather than later to get them involved.

Mrs. Green asked when the plans would be posted on the Town's website.

Mr. Aylesworth said thoughts on that have changed. Originally we planned to put them up with an introductory paragraph, but then started to think through the options. We want people to understand the process we're going through so they don't jump to conclusions due to lack of information. Mr. Albanese's previously voiced concern is valid – people won't read through methodically. There's a delicate balance to be reached.

Mr. Eaton suggested a paragraph explaining the process and post the plans below that. Explain that departments were told to think big with no budget limitations after which the Budget Committee, Board of Selectmen and Town Manager will look them over and set priorities.

Mr. Akillian suggested noting where departments may be in good shape, but note exceptions and show where investments are needed.

Mr. Kluge noted that the need for new or improved facilities, which have been noted across all presentations, could overshadow other needs due to their high price tag.

It was noted that the facilities needs are real, but decisions about priorities should wait for the completion of the Facilities Optimization Study.

Mr. Russell said "plans" is the wrong term. The presentations are really visions for each department not Town plans. People will have questions and it's part of our job to educate them.

Mr. Diehn agreed. If told it's a vision and input is needed an individual is more likely to do the survey.

Discussion of how to present facility needs and the timeline to present that information followed. Mr. Akillian suggested stating the 'X' number of dollars are wrapped up in facilities, even if the information from the study isn't yet known.

Mr. Aylesworth summed things up: It's agreed there should be a qualifier and a distinction should be made between plans and wanting feedback vs. visions and actions the departments want to take. What is the Committee's feeling on direction?

Mr. Diehn noted that departments were asked to develop budgets based on their priorities and this is what they came up with.

Mr. Aylesworth agreed. Plans were developed to provide a level of service we think the community wants. With an executive summary, is it realistic to have citizens do homework by reading the plans first?

Mrs. Green feels there will be more involvement after the facilities study is complete.

Mr. Aylesworth suggests a solid break between dissemination of the plans and the issuing of a survey.

Mr. Diehn suggested a question regarding whether the Town got the priorities right. Many times people want to be sure something works, but are less concerned about how it works.

Mr. Akillian stated that people will care about the vertical, but people also care of the horizontal. The bigger question for citizens, rather than their feelings on the details of one plan, is whether our take on the vision for the community is what they want. Did the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen get it right? The survey may want to garner the feelings of citizens on department performance, but perhaps ask the townspeople to rank priorities of the broader horizontals.

Feedback provided on horizontals in two independent conversations with the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee ranked fiscal condition in the top three. A road map has started to emerge. Public Safety may be a priority, but people feel safe, so it may be more about what needs attention next.

A synopsis of the department visions should be written and finding a way to link the department visions to the horizontals.

Mr. Aylesworth will work with Mr. Akillian to draft something up for the Committee to use at a working session. This draft can be discussed as a group to set priorities.

Mr. Eaton thanked Mr. Akillian for coming.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Mrs. Patten moved to approve the minutes of August 21, 2019, Mrs. Green seconded.

On page 4, Mrs. Patten asked to have stricken the words “awesome and” from the 5th bullet point from the bottom, so the sentence reads, “I think this is a great tool for discussion.” She asked that the last sentence of her first comment under Q1 be stricken from the record.

Vote unanimous in favor of approving the August 21, 2018 minutes as amended.

V. Adjournment

Mr. Kluge moved to adjourn at 7:39 PM, Mrs. Patten seconded the motion. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Alisa Bonnette, Assistant Town Manager

Approved:

Meredith C. Smith, Chairperson

John W. Kluge

Katherine D.P. Stewart
Enfield Board of Selectmen

Approved:

Sam Eaton, Chairman
on behalf of Enfield Budget Committee