

Meeting of the Candia Municipal Budget Committee

April 13, 2016

Town Offices, Candia, NH

Members present: Chair Allyn Chivers, Kevin Coughlin, School Board Rep. Rebecca Cronk, Susan Gill, Jodi Hedstrom, Paul LeBlond, Bob Stout, Selectman's Rep. Susan Young

Members absent: none

Chairman Chivers opened the meeting at 7:00pm

Pledge of allegiance

Introduction of New Members:

Each member offered a short introduction.

Election of Officers:

Motion: To nominate Lynn Chivers as Chair (1st – Stout, 2nd – LeBlond). **Approved 8-0.**

Motion: To nominate Paul LeBlond as Vice-Chair (1st – Stout, 2nd – Coughlin). **Approved 8-0.**

Motion: To nominate Susan Gill as Secretary (1st – Young, 2nd – Coughlin). **Approved 8-0.**

Selection of New Member:

Two letters provided – one from Todd Keating, one from Dana Buckley. Buckley was in attendance. Keating could not make it.

Chivers raised the issue that there are currently eight members present, not nine as usual. So there could be a tie. Prior to the vote, the board needed to come up with a consensus on what in the case of a tie. Coughlin suggested that Chairperson be the tie-breaking vote. Chivers had looked that up, but the only option was for her to choose not to vote to break the tie. If she were allowed to break the tie, she would effectively be voting twice. So that was not an option. Stout suggested we use guidance from the school board where in the case of a tie, the board would first have further discussion to see if a majority agreement could be reached. If not, per RSA 197.26, it would go back to Selectman to make decision.

Chivers had consulted Robert's Rules of Order which stated that the Board must make a decision. So suggested that if there is a tie, the Board would have further discussion to see if a majority could be reached. Hedstrom asked whether we wait until Keating could come to the next meeting & table until

he could speak. Chivers replied no, it has been on the agenda and would be voted on tonight. Coughlin felt we should be able to resolve a tie within the Board, and not have to defer elsewhere. Chivers confirmed Board agreed to proceed with plan to continue discussions until a majority was reached.

Chivers requested nominations for new board member. Coughlin nominated Buckley. The reason is he had a seat for a year and the learning curve is steep. There is a high turnover, and Buckley is already up the curve a bit. Keating appears very competent, but Buckley has more direct experience. Young seconded.

Hedstrom nominated Todd Keating. His resume was pretty impressive from a finance perspective & what his background offers. And the town is looking for change. Cronk seconded.

Discussion: Young offered reasons to support Dana. She had reviewed budget committee meetings from the last year, and Buckley has solid attendance record. He appears well informed. He asks thorough & reasonable questions. He submitted letter of interest ~ March 17th and therefore exhibits a desire to continue to serve. Finally, on March 8th, 2016, 443 people voted for him, out of 903. Almost 50%. That shows support & confidence in his previous service. Stout added that Buckley came onto the board shortly after he did last year and felt he was engaged early on. He did a lot of homework. He asked really good questions, and felt he brought diversity of opinion to the discussions. He did a lot of legwork bringing information to the meetings.

Leblond said that he echoed what the others had said. He had had an opportunity to speak to both candidates within the past 24 hours. He knows Keating through affiliation with CYAA. When he spoke to Keating, Keating assured him that he could attend meetings despite his work schedule. Keating added he would be objective, and would not be a rubber stamp. From what Coughlin knows of him, he believes he would be the type of person to engage. Coughlin added that he was torn, and believed they could both be good members. Chivers stated that in the past we've made an effort to select people who went to the trouble to run for office. Buckley only lost by 17 votes. So 443 people wanted him on the committee. As a member of the community, I don't want to disenfranchise the community members who voted for him.

Vote: Dana Buckley selected as Budget Committee Member. **Approved 5-3.**

OLD BUSINESS

Approve minutes

Motion: To approve minutes from February 4th, 2016. (1st – LeBlond, 2nd – Stout). **Approved 6-0** (2 abstained).

Motion: To approve minutes from February 10th, 2016 (1st – Coughlin, 2nd – Stout). **Approved 6-0.** (2 abstained).

Answer questions from last month's meeting

Chivers said the first question was for Young – it was previously asked of Robie – was about the miscellaneous revenue line item of \$44,076 from the last revenue report. Young took the action to answer at the next meeting.

Chivers said the other question on the revenue report was the sale of tax deeded properties. It shows \$0, but the town sold tax deeded property. So why is it showing zero? It does not show on the 2016 report either. Young took the action to answer at the next meeting.

The next question was on the Cadillac tax under Affordable Care Act. Chivers found information on the Cigna website that said on December 18th, 2015 Congress voted to delay implementation of the Cadillac tax from 2018 to 2020. So it may become an issue, but is not an immediate one. This was in regards to the Teacher's contract. This is a tax that the employer pays. As an example, for individual-only coverage, a \$12,000 plan would have tax of \$720 for the employer. For a family coverage, a \$32,000 plan would have tax of \$1800. However, these amounts are examples only, and will change by 2020.

The next question concerned the warrant articles getting to the Budget Committee so late. Cronk replied she was not aware that the warrant articles were late. Chivers said the warrant articles were first seen at 7:00pm at the meeting where the vote had to take place. She thought that was because the School Board weren't voting that far in advance. Cronk could not recall. Chivers asked if Cronk could make note that we would like to get warrant articles in advance so that we could prepare questions to discuss at the meeting, rather than get them at the meeting. Cronk said that she wasn't at the last meeting – there was an SAU meeting that same night. She thought they would have voted on them the Thursday beforehand. She offered to try to make sure they are distributed after the Thursday vote next time. Chivers added that hopefully there wouldn't be another SAU meeting the same night so we could all discuss.

The next question for Cronk was how they got to the estimated cost for the heating oil. Cronk confirmed that it was a dollar amount that was averaged, and checked the school reports for exact numbers. Heating oil #2 fuel. 18,000 gallons annually, based on average usage. Divided by cost of \$48,000 gets you the \$2.67 / gallon.

Discussion of voting results

Hedstrom noted it was interesting that every article passed. Chivers said that the town budget passed, despite the difference between the town budget and the default. So perhaps people understood it was a good budget. It was recommended by the Budget Committee unanimously. Stout added that the people who work for the town do a good job of managing their budgets.

Chivers had a question about the Pinkerton vote. In the contract, does it specify how the transition works? For example, if a child goes to Central as a freshman, do they stay at Central? Or do they have to go to Pinkerton? Cronk confirmed that if they start at Central as a freshman, they have the option to stay at Central and finish up. That is the way the contract is worded. Chivers asked even if that was outside the 5% that's allowed. Cronk confirmed yes, if someone starts before the 2018 school year, they will be allowed to finish.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Town Budget Expenses & Revenues

Chivers clarified that the dates are 2016, not 2015.

Stout asked about the revenue from building permits going up. Young responded that she had already looked into that, and a lot of it was due to electrical or plumbing work. Not necessarily new housing permits, although there are at least two new houses going up in town.

Coughlin commented that the winter highway expense is down due to the nice winter and asked if there is a special highway allotment that we put aside that that gets back rolled into? Dennis Lewis (Road Agent) confirmed that last year we spent everything including the \$75k winter emergency fund. This year the selectmen choose to bump that up to \$100k. We still have ~ \$60k left in the winter budget for Nov / Dec. Chances are we won't touch that at all and it will just get rolled back in. So if we don't use it then it's basically not even appropriated.

Review School Budget Expenses & Revenues

Chivers explained the Expenditure Report is through the end of March, so there are three months remaining in the school year. The Projected Financial Position report provides an estimated position at the end of the school year. The Proposed Budget Adjustments shows where money was transferred from one account to another. For example, money was transferred from a few different accounts to cover the increased school legal fees. Chivers explained that the school uses a slightly different accounting method than the town. The school moves funds to cover overruns so at the end of the year, no line item is overspent. The town does not, so at the end of the year the highway fund may show as overrun by \$20k, and the building inspector may show as underrun by \$20k. However, the school does provide a report at the end of the year that shows the original budget vs. final expense, so that transparency is not lost. Cronk confirmed that the report will show you the original budget was by line item for each of the past two years.

Hedstrom asked about the unexpected services / placements lines. Chivers said that could be to cover a new student who moved into the district, or potentially a child who moved out. Cronk added it may also be to cover a student who was currently in the system who is subsequently identified as requiring additional services that weren't originally anticipated.

Young asked about the 'Additional survey on school owned property' under the Legal and Consulting Fees. Cronk agreed to look into it for the next meeting.

Stout asked what additional equipment was purchased for \$8,750. Cronk said that the school had some smart boards that were no longer functional that needed to be replaced. The school wound up going with a different set-up for the older kids, and moved the smart boards that were working down to the younger kids' classroom. The school is finding that the smart boards aren't really being utilized at the higher grades, so is going with a different model that allows them audio capability and more streamlined function for the kids in the classroom.

Chivers asked if there were any questions on the enrollment reports for the Moore School or for the high schools, and noted that there are 9 different high schools that Candia students attend.

Coughlin asked how it is broken down in terms of reimbursement. Chivers said that Jessie Remington or Trinity would be out of pocket. However if the school board gives a student permission to go to Raymond, for example, then the town would pay. Cronk added that there has to be a valid reason before the town will pay. There are certain criteria that need to be met. For example, manifest education hardship where a student would have to meet 5 specific criteria. Or best interests, where there may be some special circumstance that really as to why a student cannot attend a specific school. And the reason that the grad 11 is higher is that is that that was the year Central was not in compliance, so the school board was allowing kids to go to other schools because of that reason. It was just that one year though. Gill asked if this related to the 5% who were allowed to attend other schools discussed earlier. Cronk explained no, that in our new contract with Pinkerton, 5% of our students are eligible to go to an outside school without us giving Pinkerton justification. Hedstrom added that in our current contract with Manchester, it is 0%. There is no justification; every kid has to go to Manchester schools. Chivers explained that we also pay for students to attend Memorial, West and MST, but the student needs to provide their own transportation.

Email addresses for Budget Committee Business / Contact Information on the Town Website

Hedstrom said that if we're communicating with each other, she would prefer not have to use our personal email because of privacy laws. It would behoove us to have a town address so that if someone ever wants our information, they don't have the right to use our private email addresses. Because whatever we do for public, if it's in our private email, they can have full access as we all know from the media. It's unclear from the town why they don't provide email addresses (cost, enough addresses, etc.), but it would be better to do budget committee business on a town email account than in a personal one because of privacy laws. Chivers explained from what she understood, it will cost additional money and that is the reason that it hasn't been done. There are a couple of options. They had it set up for a while that you could have a town email address, but then it automatically got directed to your private email address, which doesn't alleviate that problem. The second option is for everyone to set up a separate, specific gmail account. And then if someone had a question, they would only have access to that one gmail account.

However, Chivers said, bear in mind for the people that are new, we don't discuss things over email. We can send out information, and you can send a question back. But under the right to know law, we don't have any discussions over email. So the only thing we're talking about is the information that gets sent out, and that is all public information anyway.

Hedstrom added that she knows other committees are dealing with this same issue. If they're emailing to each other or corresponding, that could be an issue for their own privacy as well. If an issue comes up, they could demand access to your full private email. Stout said he's on the Board of Pharmacy of New Hampshire, and they have secure server through the state they can use to access information if it's private. But under no circumstances do they communicate via email on anything with each other. He thinks it's a better policy rather than going to the expense of setting up a system, just don't use email to communicate any business. Coughlin asked about sending reports. Stout said they're public documents anyway. And if we had a non-public session with non-public minutes, you wouldn't want those on the server anyway because you would want to limit access. Chivers agreed that we don't discuss things that way. Cronk said that she has a secure email through the SAU for school board business, and she probably logs into it 5 times a month. Once to get the budget packet, or to check correspondence from Dr. Littlefield. But overall, she rarely uses it. And while she would like the option of having anything from

the Budget Committee go to its own email, she doesn't see that she would use it very often. So perhaps gmail is a good option. Chivers said that would be an easy solution.

Hedstrom added she wasn't aware that we don't discuss anything in the emails, so that changes things. Chivers agreed that we don't and can't. So it would only be the public information (e.g. budgets, reports, etc.) and maybe confirmation of meetings or schedules. Coughlin said that last year they got an email from someone who was questioning a decision. So in theory someone could put all our emails in the public domain somewhere, so a separate gmail account sounded like a good thing.

Chivers said I don't know if anyone has noticed but they have changed the town website a little bit. So they have emails for all the selectman. But I think they then get switched to private emails. Yes, said Young, and there is some discussion about that. Chivers said the last time she looked the Budget Committee contact information as still blank. Hedstrom agreed it was still blank.

Chivers added that she thinks it's important that the public can get a hold of us. She thinks it's important if we say or do something and our minutes get posted and they say, why did you say that for or why are you voting that way, it's important they be able to email us. Hedstrom agreed, and added people should be able to contact her if they have an issue with how she voted, or with what she said or did.

Chivers suggested we find out what it would cost to add everyone to the town email, and what the potential issues would be. Then asked if anyone objected to setting up a gmail account. Everyone agreed. Gill added if the town emails were just going to get redirected to a personal email anyway, we might as well go ahead and set up the gmail anyway. Chivers added we could even just post the gmail addresses right on the website. We just needed to agree on a format. Cronk suggested first initial, last [name_candiabc@gmail.com](mailto:candiabc@gmail.com). All agreed. Chivers said she would send the agenda to everyone's original email for the next meeting, and we'd confirm then that everyone is set up.

Cronk offered to set up all email accounts. All agreed.

Motion: To adjourn (1st – Coughlin, 2nd – Stout). **Approved 8-0.**