

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 29, 2021

*NOTE: Due to COVID-19, this meeting was held virtually (via ZOOM),
and was live streamed on the City's website*

Mayor Casavant called the Budget Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call: John McCurry, Jr., Stephen St. Cyr, Robert Quattrone, Jr., Norman Belanger (joined at 6:08 p.m.), Michael Ready, Doris Ortiz, Marc Lessard

William Emhiser and Amy Clearwater were excused.

Discussion of FY22 Proposed City Government & School Department Budgets:

City Manager Jim Bennett updated the Committee, informing them that he recently found out that Biddeford has the real potential to receive an additional \$900,000 in revenue sharing. In light of this unexpected revenue, he suggested that the Budget Committee consider and approve the School Department budget and hold off on finalizing the City Government budget until the additional \$900,000 revenue is confirmed and he can determine some recommendations on use of those additional funds.

Overview of Property Valuation – City Assessor Nicholas Desjardins

City Assessor Nicholas Desjardins explained the overall process for determining the property valuation for the upcoming fiscal year. Part of the process is to determine the appropriate ratio target level for FY22 to be able to declare 100% ratio, as well as to create equity amongst all classes of properties (i.e. Residential, Commercial, Condo, Water Influence, etc.) In order to maintain valuation equity, assessed to sale ratio valuation patterns and trends are looked at in specific neighborhoods to determine whether building values need to be adjusted below or above the average ratio for that class of properties.

The Budget Committee had extensive discussion about property valuation and what the results will mean for the FY22 budget and future budgets.

To recap, the School Department budget came in at a \$494,265 increase; which reflects a \$110,175 cut by the School Committee to the originally proposed budget.

Motion by Councilor McCurry, seconded by Councilor Lessard to accept the original FY22 School Department budget increase of **\$604,440**, which included the \$110,175 that had been cut by the School Committee.

Vote: 2/5; Councilors McCurry and Lessard in favor.

Councilors St. Cyr, Quattrone, Belanger, Ready and Ortiz opposed.

Motion fails.

Motion by Councilor St. Cyr, seconded by Councilor Belanger to accept the FY22 School Department budget at the proposed \$494,265 increase.

Vote: 6/1; Councilor McCurry opposed.

Councilors St. Cyr, Quattrone, Belanger, Ready, Ortiz and Lessard in favor.

Motion carries.

With the School Department budget officially finalized and approved by the Budget Committee, Jim Bennett suggested that the City Council hold a Special Council Meeting for the 1st Reading of the School Department budget on May 11th, which will include a Public Hearing on that budget; and then the 2nd Reading to be held at the May 18th Council Meeting. This keeps us on target for the June 8th School Budget Validation Referendum Election. He also suggested that the Council have a Workshop on May 11th, after the Special Council Meeting, to continue working on certain pieces of the City Government budget.

As part of the City Government budget discussion, Councilor McCurry asked for information regarding recycling/tipping fees and how these fees will affect the solid waste budget.

Motion by Councilor Belanger, seconded by Councilor Ready to forward the City Government budget on to the City Council, with the understanding that more work still needs to be done and no recommendation is forthcoming from the Budget Committee.

Vote: 5/2; Councilors McCurry and Lessard opposed.

Councilors St. Cyr, Quattrone, Belanger, Ready and Ortiz in favor.

Motion carries.

Motion by Councilor McCurry, seconded by Councilor Ready to adjourn.

Vote: Unanimous.

Time: 7:15 p.m.