

Lebanon Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2015 7:00 pm

Members Present - Laura Bragg, Chris Gilpatrick, Chip Harlow, Bettie Harris-Howard, Nancy Neubert, Skip Wood

Selectmen Present - Chairperson Thompson, Royce Heath

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Neubert at 7:03 pm. Nominations were taken for Secretary for the 2015-16 Budget Year. Nancy Neubert was nominated, seconded and voted in unanimously by a 6 - 0 vote.

Nominations were then taken for Chairperson. Chip Harlow was nominated, seconded and voted in unanimously by a 6 - 0 vote. Neubert informed the committee that Corinna Cole has been appointed by the Select Board as an alternate to the committee for this year.

The Committee discussed meeting schedules, days and times. Wednesdays at 6:30 worked best for the committee members. The Selectmen would like to start the budget process earlier this year to allow for the town voting to take place in May with the School Department vote. This would probably mean starting budget meetings in November. Harlow expressed some concern over not having 6 months of expenses to look at for the larger departments. After some discussion it was decided to do the small budgets first and leave the larger budgets until January if possible.

There was much discussion concerning the referendum article about removing the wall between the CEO office and the Selectmen's Office to create a conference room. This article would not exceed \$8,000. and be paid from the Contingency Fund. The CEO would move to Christine Torno's office and Christine would move to a desk in the main office. The town maps will stay in the conference room. The occupancy limit for the new conference room would be 18 people. There is currently \$68,000. left in the Contingency Fund and the job would go out to bid. Members of the committee wanted the total cost of the project to be reduced and amended the article to read -

"Shall the Town of Lebanon authorize the removal of the wall which currently divides the Selectmen's Office and the Code Enforcement Office to create a larger room for the attendance of Selectmen meetings and other town functions?"

Bids will be requested on this project with an overall cost not to exceed \$6,000. and to be paid from the current Contingency Fund."

The Committee voted 4 - 2 on in favor and the Selectmen agreed to re-vote on the amended article.

The Public Hearing for all ballot articles will be held on October 20.

Other topics discussed -

Old Town Hall - no plans for this building right now, some selectmen would like to have an article for the building on the ballot in May.

Assessing and Tax Commitment -

Assessing is almost done. Tax commitment will be done next week. The town has lost \$4.8 million this year due to re-assessment of mobile homes. The loss will be offset by the \$5 million the town received from CMP for the line expansion and new substation. Selectmen are considering increasing the tax on all base lots from \$32,000. to \$35,000. This would increase the average tax bill by \$48. (\$24. in October, \$24. in April).

Department Heads and Budgets -

Committee members expressed concerns over department heads not knowing what is in their budgets when they meet with the committee. The new purchase order process was also discussed since the expense detail reports were very difficult to follow last year when the system was put into place. Jeannette is looking into ways that would make the process more transparent, less work for her, and the reports easier to read.

Absent Committee Members -

Chairperson Harlow will contact the absent committee members as to whether they will be attending meetings this year or wish to resign.

Chris Gilpatrick made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Bettie Harris Howard. The meeting adjourned at 8:13.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Neubert

Approved 11-4-15