

Town of Eliot  
Budget Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024

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1           **1. ROLL CALL**

2     In attendance in person were Jeff Leathe, Chair; Brad Swanson; Jim Latter; Gene Wypyski; and Donna  
3     Murphy, and remotely via zoom was Diane Holt, Secretary. Reggie Fowler, Vice Chair, was excused. The  
4     Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

5           **2. 10-MINUTE PUBLIC INPUT SESSION (Community Participation is Encouraged)**

6     The Chair opened the floor to public input. There was no public input.

7           **3. CONTINUED REVIEW of TOWN MANAGER’S FY2025 BUDGET**

8     The Chair directed members to the notice submitted to the Budget Committee by a subcommittee of  
9     the Select Board concerning four changes proposed to Section 6 of the Charter.

10    The first item addressed the role of a member of the Budget Committee in Town labor negotiations  
11    under Article 6, Financial Procedure, 6.3, which reads: “One member of the Budget Committee or a  
12    designee shall serve as a member of the town’s negotiating team that will negotiate all labor contracts  
13    for the Town of Eliot.” The Select Board proposed that this entry is in conflict with Charter Article 2,  
14    Select Board, and specifically, 2.7 Powers and Duties of the Select Board, item J which reads: “Be the  
15    sole negotiating and contract authority for the Town of Eliot in labor negotiations.” Members discussed  
16    the proposed change. **Mr. Latter moved and Mr. Swanson seconded that the Budget Committee**  
17    **support the Select Board’s recommendation. The motion passed by a roll-call vote of 5-1 with Ms.**  
18    **Murphy voting no.**

19    The second item addressed Article 6.3 in the Charter, specifically the second paragraph which reads:  
20    “Vacancies of the Budget Committee members, other than anniversary term expirations, may be filled  
21    by the budget committee as soon as possible, after posting the vacancy for 14 days. Each appointee  
22    shall serve until the next Town election.” The Select Board proposed that the Select Board assign  
23    vacancies on the Budget Committee when there are less than three members on the Budget Committee.  
24    Members discussed the proposed change. **Ms. Murphy moved, and Mr. Swanson seconded that the**  
25    **Budget Committee not support the proposed change and make no change to the current language as**  
26    **written in the Charter under Article 6.3 paragraph two. The motion passed by a roll-call vote of 5-1**  
27    **with Mr. Wypyski voting no.**

28    The third item addressed Article 6.5, Budget Review Process and Schedule, in the Charter, specifically  
29    the third paragraph which reads: “The Town Manager shall provide copies of supporting plan documents  
30    for the proposed budget as requested by the Budget Committee. The documents shall be submitted to  
31    the Budget Committee within five (5) business days of the request. If a document is not available, a  
32    written explanation as to why it is not available shall be provided within said five (5) business days.” The  
33    Select Board subcommittee recommended that the time period of five business days be removed and  
34    replaced with “in a timely manner.” Members discussed the proposed change. **Ms. Murphy moved, and**  
35    **Ms. Holt seconded that the Budget Committee supports the current language in the Charter that**  
36    **requires five business days. The motion passed with a roll-call vote of 4-2 with Mr. Latter and Mr.**  
37    **Wypyski voting no.**

38    The fourth and final item addressed Article 6.6, Select Board Action on the Budget, in the Charter,  
39    specifically item A, Final Review and Approval, which reads: “The proposed final budget prepared by the

40 Town Manager shall be reviewed for final approval by the Select Board at a Select Board meeting after  
41 the receipt of the recommendations of the Budget Committee. At such a meeting, the Select Board shall  
42 consider the recommendations of the Budget Committee and approve the proposed budget with or  
43 without amendment.” The Select Board proposed adding that the final review be by the first Wednesday  
44 of March each year. Members discussed the proposed change. **Ms. Murphy moved, and Mr. Latter**  
45 **seconded that the Budget Committee support this change to the Charter. The motion passed by roll-**  
46 **call vote of 6-0.**

47 The Chair directed members to the Town Manager’s memorandum sent to the Select Board and Budget  
48 Committee regarding Fiscal Year Draft Budget Adjustments (attached). Members discussed the  
49 memorandum. Mr. Wypyski asked that the Town Manager provide the Budget Committee with  
50 clarification on the two line-items he is referring to as “apples-to-apples” comparison between the 2024  
51 budget and the proposed 2025 proposed budget.

52 The Chair directed members to page two of the memorandum and the eight bulleted proposed  
53 allocations to various reserve accounts. Members discussed the proposed changes. The Chair said no  
54 motion was needed on the matter as the Budget Committee will ultimately be voting on the budget  
55 which will include these proposed changes.

56 The Chair directed members to the Town Manager’s responses to the Budget Committee’s questions  
57 from its February 14, 2024, meeting. Members reviewed the responses and there was no discussion.

58 The Chair directed members to the Town Manager’s forwarded email titled “MSAD #35 FY 25 Budget”  
59 (attached) that was sent to the Chair that afternoon.

60 The Committee returned to its review of the proposed FY 25 budget, specifically the Highway  
61 Department and Community Services Department. Discussion turned to the voting process and what  
62 information will be listed on the ballot. The Chair said the Committee will be voting on nine warrants.  
63 Mr. Leathe said that for the Committee’s March 27 meeting, the Committee will request from the Select  
64 Board the language of the nine warrants. Mr. Wypyski noted that given the revision to the Town  
65 Meeting ordinance that was voted through, the Committee needs to know about changes to the Citizens  
66 Option meeting and the ballot format. **Ms. Murphy motioned, and Mr. Wypyski seconded that Chair**  
67 **Leathe attend the Select Board meeting the following night as a representative of the Budget**  
68 **Committee to get clarification on the warrants and articles as presented on the ballot including**  
69 **recommendations and vote numbers.** During discussion, Mr. Wypyski said he would email the Chair an  
70 email he received concerning ordinance changes (attached). **The motion passed unanimously by a roll-**  
71 **call vote of 6-0.**

72 Discussion returned to the Committee’s review of the Highway Department proposed FY 25 budget. Mr.  
73 Latter asked that the following question be sent to the Town Manager for clarification: Why is the salary  
74 line for the Highway Department going up 27%?

75 Members reviewed the paving budget and noted that of the \$1.24 million budgeted for paving this year,  
76 the Town has only spent \$323,000 to date. Members agreed there may be more paving slated for the  
77 upcoming season. Ms. Murphy asked that the following question be sent to the Town Manager for  
78 information: Is there additional striping being done this year causing additional costs?

79 Members discussed the Transfer Station Q costs and practices. Members also looked at snow and winter  
80 costs and stormwater costs under Public Works.

In their review of the Community Services Department, members asked that the Town Manager provide brief information concerning the decrease in salaries in the department.

**4. BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBER INPUT: REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS AND/OR ANY OTHER COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS/QUESTIONS**

There was no member input.

**5. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES**

**Mr. Latter motioned, and Mr. Swanson seconded, that the minutes for the February 14, 2024, Budget Committee meeting be approved as amended. The motion passed unanimously 6-0 with a roll-call vote.**

**6. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**7. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**8. SET AGENDA AND DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

- a. Continue FY25 Budget Review
- b. Next Meeting Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 @ 6:00pm
- c. Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 @ 6:00pm

**9. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**Ms. Murphy motion, and Mr. Wypyski seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Jeffrey Leathe, Chair**

**Date Approved: March 18, 2024**

**Diane Holt, Secretary**