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Town of Norton

AdHoc Committee Norton Town Hall

October 8, 2019

7:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

The October 8, 2019 meeting of the AdHoc Committee was held at in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Norton Town Hall, and was called to order at 7:04 PM by Chairwoman Sheri Cohen. Committee Members include: Mr. Brad Bramwell, and Ms. Mary Steele (representing the Board of Selectmen), Ms. Sherri Cohen, and Mr. Deniz Savas (representing the School Committee) and Mr. Bill Rotondi, Mr. Aaron Smith, Ms. Aimee Sawyer, Mr. Mike Fiore (representing the Finance Committee)

Absent on 10/8/19: Mr. Bramwell, Mr. Fiore

Review of Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes – Minutes from meeting of 8.19.19 reviewed. Motion to approve minutes as written by Mr. Savas. Second by Mr. Smith. Vote 4-0-2, Ms. Sawyer and Mr. Rotondi abstain.
2. Review of Budget Requests:
 - a. Budget requests were received from town and school departments – goal was to identify shortfalls in what we provide in Norton as compared to other towns of similar size.
 - b. Discussion of best path forward with the information. A few call outs include – the need to level set on large capital projects like the Athletic Complex, Town Hall and Community Center. After discussion, the committee determined these items would be included, but would not be a focus of our review going forward. Our refined focus will be the ongoing operational and extraordinary capital/technology expenses.
 - c. Need to ensure as we continue to look at the budget numbers submitted that we are looking at recurring costs vs. one time costs. We are trying to get our arms around the big picture of what is needed in town, and be able to identify what is ongoing operational needs vs. one time expenses.
 - d. In order to better review and report on the requests, we want to create two new categories in addition to Personnel, Capital and Operational, we will add and reclassify Debt Exclusion and Technology.
 - e. There are 3 main departments that have not submitted budgets to date: Highway, Water/Sewer and Public Health. The town manager was notified those departments had not responded.
 - f. We need a better plan to address technology obsolescence. We are good at keeping public safety vehicles on a rotating basis, but people are using very old computers, or we are having to replace large #'s or promethean boards all at once because they aren't being rotated out.

- g. As we discuss department budgets we are going to capture questions that we have and send them back, and then invite them to join a meeting to discuss the questions that their requests have generated.
- h. How do we account for ongoing capital needs without building one time purchases into ongoing budgetary values? Do we just advocate a set additional amount for capital, as there are needs that go unfunded EVERY year?
- i. Some general questions for all departments:
 - i. Does the average town our size have that? Have you reached out to other communities to research your requests? If so, where?
- j. Review of Dept Budgets and generation of questions:
 - i. **Assessor** – What are you trying to accomplish with Adobe Pro? What version of MS Office are you running? Are you converting files from or to PDF? For the Pictomerty, why is there a 6 year recurrence? Is it a 1 time purchase of a 6 year contract, or an annual subscription that will continue after year 6?
 - ii. **Council on Aging** – Is the Human Svc. Director line item a new role/title, or is this a salary increase? If this is a pay raise, it would be outside the scope of our project. Can we hear more details on what the funding for social programs would cover?
 - iii. **Conservation** – All requests are for personnel. No Questions.
 - iv. **Fire** – 2nd Deputy is showing 50% already in budget, can the estimated annual amount be confirmed as \$52,500? Can we get a backstory on the additional 8FF's? Is there a reason the accreditation is only 7 years? Should this be operational? Can we get a better explanation of the technology requests and station alerting hardware? What are the ongoing maintenance costs for the bay doors at Burgess Stn.? We'd like to align on the # of years, and annual costs – For example turnout gear cleaning equipment 400/year for 20 years? We are unclear on some of these line items.
 - v. **Library** – We'd like to know the plan for the expansion to the 2nd floor and what their goals are for that space? What are the parameters of the Balfour trust and how much is currently in it? What can it be used for?
 - vi. **Schools** – Can we get more details on the lack of heat at the NMS locker rooms? It appears that there are 3 line items duplicated in the LGN listing. Is the additional parking at the LGN included in the paving and grading line item \$? If not, no amount was included. What is the difference between the rolling book room shelves(30K) and book carts(1,800)? How much \$ could be saved by moving some of our outsourced SPED requirements to in-house management? Are these things that we are behind in? Do other school districts have iPads for all classrooms, etc? For example the HAY sensory break space? Is this becoming a standard thing in all schools? Same for the rubber playground surface? Can we prioritize into A/B groups? Group A being things we are truly behind in, and Group B being things that would make us even better and more competitive? The list is so comprehensive it is hard to know what to prioritize. We need to try to estimate the impact on health insurance for the new FTE's that are in this budget.

Questions will be directed to Town Manager Yunits to be funneled to each Dept. and with notes that they can contact us directly with any questions or follow ups.

For next meeting, Ms. Sawyer will put together some town comparison info from the Mass.gov Dept. of local statistics.

Once we have reviewed everything, we will need to determine where we are lacking and what we can reasonably achieve. The point of this exercise isn't to support an override, but rather to give information to the public so they can determine if that is what's needed, because we have never put the actual information together for this in the past.

We will start with the Planning Dept at our next meeting.

2. Board Updates: Fincom – Article on Fall Town Meeting Warrant to hire an outside consultant to evaluate capacity and usage at NPS. Fincom, after discussion, would like to have this discussion internally, as to save the estimated \$45,000 for the outside consultant.


New Business

1. Schedule next Joint Meeting of 3 full boards prior to start of budget season – Sheri to put dates out to board chairs.
2. Next AdHoc meeting to be held 10/29/19 at 7pm, location TBD.


Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:10 pm by Ms. Sawyer, Second by Mr. Savas. Unanimous. 6-0

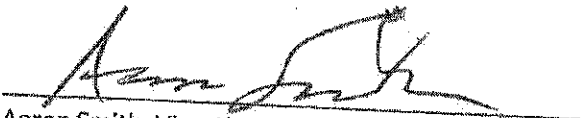
Respectfully Submitted:


Aimee D. Sawyer, Secretary


Date Approved: 10/29/19

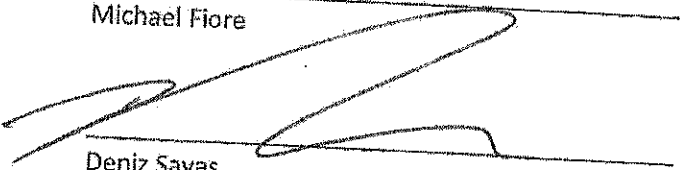

Sheri Cohen, Chairperson



Bill Rotondi


Aaron Smith, Vice Chairperson


Michael Fiore


Brad Bramwell


Deniz Savas


Mary Steele