

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
BUDGET TASK FORCE MINUTES
Tuesday, August 8, 2023**

Attendees:

Dan O'Donnell, Erika Kohl, Kristen Las, Kristina Greene, Chris Chew, Shana Farnsworth, Valery Young, Vibhu Jain, Jenny Lin

Administrative actions:

Young called meeting to order at 12:33 pm.

The budget challenges and new revenues group voted to approve the working group minutes of July 5th, 2023 & July 12th, 2023.

O'Donnell moved to approve minutes of July 5th, 2023. Motion seconded by Kohl. Approved 3-0-1; Chew abstained.

Farnsworth moved to approve minutes of July 12th, 2023. Motion seconded by Chew. Approved 4-0-0.

The group voted to approve the full committee minutes of July 12th, 2023 & July 19th, 2023.

Greene moved to approve the minutes of July 12th, 2023. Motion seconded by Farnsworth. Unanimous approval.

Greene moved to approve the minutes of July 19th, 2023. Motion seconded by O'Donnell. Approved 8-0-1; Chew abstained.

The group voted to approve the minutes from the open forum on July 24th, 2023.

Greene moved to approve the minutes of July 24th, 2023. Motion seconded by O'Donnell. Approved 8-0-1; Chew abstained.

Prepare for the Update for the Joint Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee meeting on August 15, 2023

The group discussed using the public forum slide presentation for the upcoming meeting. They talked about providing an update and allowing time for questions and discussing at the meeting the idea of continuing the task force past October. They also discussed revisions to the slides to shorten the presentation time. They talked about including potential impact and timeline of implementing new revenues. The group also discussed incorporating public feedback into presentation. Lastly, they talked about providing high level overview of the efficiencies and plans to discuss further at the next committee meeting.

Prepare for the Strategic Planning Retreat to be held at Kimball Farms on September 7, 2023

The group talked about having table discussions with the public. They want to discuss the level of service and the associated cost with the public to inform them and get their feedback. They talked about having one person give a more detailed speech at the beginning and then have each of the members at the different tables give a summarized speech to help inform the public.

Update from Benchmarking / Efficiency Working Group

Young talked about how the working group is having interviews with departments. Young will work with Chew & Lin to setup interviews on the school side.

Update from Budget Challenges / New Revenue Sources Working Group

Young talked about the updates the working group gave earlier in the meeting on how the new revenue information is in the draft report. They talked about the updates that will be made to the slides for the Aug 15th presentation.

Discussion about Departmental and Municipal Interviews Towns

Greene discussed how the working group is halfway through the departmental interviews and talked with several other communities. Greene talked about how there are not many areas within the departments to find new efficiencies and the budgets are already tight. Las talked about the discussion with Chelmsford and how they operate very lean, and their facilities department maintains the town and school buildings and that allows them to not need new buildings as frequently. Group discussed reaching out to departments to get their feedback on potential service reductions in their departments.

Future Activities

The task force members agreed to meet again on Wednesday August 16, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 1:58pm.

A full recording of the meeting is available online.



Tom Clay, Budget Task Force Chair