

**TOWN OF WESTFORD  
BUDGET TASK FORCE MINUTES  
Wednesday, August 16, 2023**

**Attendees:**

Dan O'Donnell, Erika Kohl, Tom Clay, Kristen Las, Kristina Greene, Shana Farnsworth, Valery Young, Vibhu Jain, Amy Lundquist

**Administrative actions:**

Clay called meeting to order at 12:32 pm.

Kohl moved to approve minutes as amended of July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Motion seconded by Young. Approved 9-0-0.

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

The group talked about removing the school feasibility study from the budget challenges list since it would be a capital item. They discussed increasing their public awareness/discussion to try and get more feedback from the public. Greene talked about creating a table showing the services the town provides with a dollar value for each service and comparing that to other market communities and getting public feedback on what level of service they want. Young talked about including something about the task force in the town manager's newsletter.

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

The group discussed goals for the retreat including increasing public awareness of the budget challenges. They talked about creating summaries of the budget challenges, benchmarking, and potential tradeoffs to present. They discussed having handouts on the tables with key information and having a feedback form on each table. Clay discussed following a similar approach as Belmont and do a higher-level service trade off summary. Clay discussed creating a summary following the Belmont model and getting the reactions from the department heads. They discussed having an online poll for questions or feedback. Lastly, they discussed creating a high-level comparison between the benchmark communities and the town on how the budget is allocated among the departments.

**Update from Benchmarking / Efficiency Working Group**

The working group gave an update and discussed how they are in the process of pulling together all the data they have collected. They discussed creating a high-level summary of the benchmarking with a narrative. The group discussed how completing a detailed comparison with the benchmark communities is very time consuming and additional time may be needed. They have had several more conversations with benchmark communities.

**Update from Budget Challenges / New Revenue Sources Working Group**

Farnsworth gave an update and talked about how the group is waiting for more information on MBTA and some school fees.

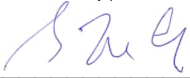
**Future Activities**

The group discussed reviewing the public feedback in the next meeting.

The task force members agreed to meet again on Wednesday August 23, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 1:59 pm.

A full recording of the meeting is available online.



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Tom Clay, Budget Task Force Chair