

**TOWN OF RYE - BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, July 25, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Rye Public Library**

**Members Present: Chair Jeffrey Ross, Clerk Steven Borne, and Dania Seiglie**

**Others Present: Resident Joe Cummins**

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Ross called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Business**

Chair Ross reported to the subcommittee that the Budget Committee is having a meeting in September with the School Business Manager to discuss the school budget. The chair of the Budget Committee would like a report at that meeting about the work of the subcommittee. He noted that whatever the subcommittee comes up with in regards to the executive summaries for the budget, may not be implemented this year. He also noted that any ideas the subcommittee comes up with for the templates is only a recommendation to the Budget Committee, ultimately the Town will have to agree to work with the templates.

The subcommittee discussed the information that they received from department heads, as that was on the list of next steps from the previous meeting.

Referring to the school budget, Chair Ross noted that a lot of what is throughout the budget is an executive summary, narrative, and addressing questions that were directed by the Budget Committee the year before. When SAU 50 Business Manager Sue Penny started in her position, the Budget Committee asked for the school budget to be presented in a more insightful fashion.

The subcommittee reviewed what has been provided by SAU 50 Business Manager Sue Penny. It was agreed that what she has provided is comprehensive and well done. Business Manager Sue Penny explained to Chair Ross that the information and data is exported into Excel and is not a burden to meet the Budget Committee's request. The Town should be able to do this same type of reporting; if not with Excel, there are other software programs that can be used.

There was some discussion about SAU 50 providing long-term projections for a three to five year span, which would also be beneficial for each town department to provide. It was pointed out that demographics is a factor that will impact the three to five year projections, which would be helpful for SAU 50 to provide. The projections should be considered when looking at what it

means for the Town in providing a strategy for future budgeting. There was discussion about key indicators that should be included in the budget narrative.

Member Borne noted that he met with DPW Director Jason Rucker. Director Rucker has only been through the budgeting process for Rye once, so he did not have suggestions for improvements.

Member Borne noted that he has generated a list of questions to ask other budget committees in the State. He is having it put into a Google form to use as a standard format to collect that information. It was agreed that collecting this information from other town budget committees would be beneficial to bring to the Budget Committee meeting in September, as there may be an adoptable idea for Rye.

There was some discussion about having the narratives from each department available for the public to view on the Town's website. It was agreed that the goal of the subcommittee is to think critically about what has to be in a department's executive summary; such as, ten different items that can be delivered in a standard template. The information should be standardized, so it's more digestible and readily available to the public. The executive summary should cover the key items affecting each departments' budget. Graphic representation should be included, as effectively as possible.

Member Seigle met with Police Chief Kevin Walsh and Fire Chief Mark Cotreau. The narrative submitted to the Budget Committee from Chief Cotreau is incredibly detailed. His narrative could be used as an example of what the Budget Committee would like to see. Chief Walsh and Chief Cotreau were asked what the Budget Committee could do to help them with the budgeting process. Chief Walsh suggested that new budget committee members meet with each department head to see what the departments do. Both chiefs mentioned the issue with timing of submittals. For example, they were given only one week to submit documents for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

The subcommittee members agreed that anything that is done to streamline the budgeting process should not be a major time consumer for the department heads. It was noted by Member Seigle that both chiefs felt the current system used for the budget information is not automated enough and they have to keep inputting the information. It might be important for the Town to have a conversation about adding money into the budget to cover software that might help maximize everyone's time.

It was pointed out by Member Borne that Fire Chief Cotreau does customer satisfaction surveys every quarter. This helps with the question of what the residents' expectations are for the services they are buying and whether they are being delivered. It was agreed this may be a good tool for other departments.

Member Borne discussed how leadership NH teaches people how different segments across the State operate (education, health, judicial, government, north country, recreation, arts, etc.). Leadership Rye could be helpful for cross education for new board and committee members to tour town departments. It would also be helpful for new hires to be included. It was noted that

this is outside of this subcommittee's charter; however, it will be added to the list of things that were heard through different conversations. It was noted by Member Seiglie that a summary of her discussion with Chief Walsh and Chief Cotreau is going to be reviewed by them before she shares the information.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Member Seiglie to draft a summary of her discussion with Chief Walsh and Chief Cotreau, and submit to both chiefs for review.
- Member Borne to follow up on the Google form and data from towns similar to Rye.
- Subcommittee members to consider what questions and information should be included on a narrative, which will be done by looking at past executive summaries. Chair Ross to start working on drafting questions.

### **III. Public Comment**

**Joe Cummins, 990 Washington Road**, expressed his original thoughts for this subcommittee; such as having specialty subcommittees for the different town departments.

There was discussion about having the Budget Committee broken out into subgroups for each town department to help build knowledge about that department. It would be like having a representative of that department on the Budget Committee.

Mr. Cummins also spoke about his hope that the Budget Committee will assume it's rightful role as strong agents of the town's people.

- **Next meeting scheduled for August 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 p.m., Rye Public Library**

### **Adjournment**

**Motion by Steven Borne to adjourn at 7:00 p.m. Seconded by Dania Seiglie. All in favor.**