November 10th Budget Committee Meeting

Middlesex Town Hall

4:00 PM

Present: Samantha Beaudoin, Dorinda Crowell, Elias Gardner, Mark Harris, and Matt Rkiouak

Guests: Eric Metivier, Liam Abbate, Cheryl Grandfield, and Susan Clark

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Quick recap

The meeting focused on the Fiscal Year 2028 budget build, and the fire department's budget. Eric reported that most fire department costs remained the same, with slight increases for supplies and truck fuel, and he requested an additional $500 for courses and seminars. The committee discussed fire engine replacement, noting that Engine 6 is the oldest and would likely need replacement within five years, with options including buying new, used, or refurbishing. The group also reviewed the capital funding survey, which had 78 responses, and discussed plans for a public meeting on December 10th to present budget options. They talked about the need for a multi-year capital funding plan and the need to communicate tax implications to town residents. The conversation ended with a brief discussion on the timeline for presenting the budget to the Select Board.

Next steps:

- Post the capital funding survey one more time on Front Porch Forum and Facebook to encourage more responses.
- Reach out to Caroline May to confirm if the Rumney gym is available for the public meeting on December 10th from 5:30 to 7:30.
- Prepare a summary of the capital funding survey results for review at next week's meeting.
- Schedule time on the December 1st Select Board meeting to discuss salary/benefits and the operational budget.
- Reach out to the Solutions Committee to find someone to handle the online/remote access for the December public meeting.

Summary

The November 10th Budget Committee meeting focused on the Fiscal Year 2028 budget build. l. Eric presented the Fire Dept. budget with minor changes, including increased supplies and fuel costs for trucks. He also requested to add $500 to the courses and seminars budget, bringing the total to $1,000. The committee discussed dispatch funding, with Eric noting that call numbers haven't been high, and he based the projection on previous years' data, which generally fell into a consistent/flat range.

The discussion also covered Fire Department budget items including insurance and workers' compensation costs, with clarification that fire alarm maintenance falls under building maintenance rather than fire department expenses. Regarding fire engine replacements on the Capital Asset

inventory, Eric indicated that Engine 6, though newer, would likely need replacement within five years due to pump costs and water damage, while Engine 1 could potentially last longer.

Capital Planning and Fire Engines

Matt discussed setting aside funds for fire engine replacement, using level funding annually based on the revised expected replacement year for the engines.

Eric believed Engine 6 would require replacement by 2032, and Engine 1 by 2037-2042. When Engine 6 is replaced, Engine 1 would be rotated to the other station, to balance usage levels of the two engines.

Discussion focused on fire department equipment replacement costs and capital funding survey updates. Eric discussed three options for replacing engine 6, including purchasing a new truck, acquiring a used truck, or refurbishing an existing engine, with estimated costs ranging from a few hundred thousand to over half a million dollars.

The group reviewed the capital funding survey results, which had received 78 responses, and decided to extend the submission deadline to November 16th to reach a potential target of 100 responses. They planned a public budget meeting for December 10th and discussed presenting options to the Select Board on December 15th, with the goal of having the final budget ready for the first Select Board meeting in January.

Public Meeting Outreach

Mark mentioned that he wasn't sure December 10th was available for the Rumney gym. Dorinda volunteered to check with Caroline May on the proposed date and time.

Susan asked about the approach and structure of the December public meeting. Mark reported that the April public meeting went well, and the plan was to build on that structure – informal, with both in-person and remote attendance, the use of flip charts, and food/drink availability. Matt mentioned that having time at the beginning of the meeting to snack and chat with residents would be beneficial in establishing a positive atmosphere for the meeting.

Susan also asked if there were thoughts about the future budget process, and if this year's approach would become an annual process. Mark replied that this year's approach is a kind of 'test case', and that the intent is to establish a standard, repeatable budget build process. The optimal scenario would be to start the process earlier next year, so that the public meeting on the draft budget would happen in early November.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 PM.