MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE Ways and Means
BURLINGTON, MA
December 12, 2018

Present: Roger Riggs-Chairman, Steve Morin- Vice-Chairman, Diane Creedon, Doug Davidson, Phil Gallagher, Michael Hardy, Susan Harrigan, John Iler, Frank Monaco, Brad Bond, and Jayashree

Absent: Tom Killilea, David Tait, Sonia Rollins and Nicholas Priest

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 7:00.

Guests:
John Petrin- Town Manager
Paul Sagarino- Town Accountant
Dr. Eric Conte- Superintendent

Public Comments
Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion and setting the guideline for the 2019-2020 Budget –
Mr. Sagarino reviewed the tax levy and what he sees as necessary for going forward. He stated he felt there should be a training on accommodated funds, explaining how the fund works. He spoke about financial information and how it impacts the families. He reviewed the spreadsheet and pointed out Burlington has a lower taxes than our neighbors. He explained the sheet with the scenarios – tax levy’s and operating guidelines. The recommendations are for a 4.5% Levy 3.5% Operating increases.

Further discussion included previously request for Public Safety personnel had been denied due to stress it creates on the budgets and there is hope some of these positions will slowly be filled. An Economic Development Position is being added to help keep Burlington going.

Dr. Conti spoke about the school department budget and pointed out the stressors such as salary and enrollment. Smaller classes are graduating and larger classes are moving in and it is difficult to know the needs of the students enrolling. He noted the Special Education budget came in, therefore they have a better idea of cost, and all contracts are settled with the exception of transportation, which is being looked at very closely. He added the guidelines are tight, but they able to maintain services.

Discussion included the need to monitor the blending aspect because previously it was 50/50 and now education continues to increase. Revenue from the meal tax has slowed down; it is based on how the economy is and the recent transitions with hotels and restaurants. When tax breaks are given to businesses, the town generally gets it back in other ways. The possibility of consolidating some of the school departments with town to avoid overlapping was discussed with the point being made HR and IT are both, school accounting process was explained, with the town side providing checks and balances.

Further discussion include; population of school is changing with over 50 different languages being spoken, best use of free cash, bond ratings, debt schedule, and a levy cap.
Motion made and seconded to support the recommended 4.5 % levy and a 3.5% increase budget guideline. 11-0 in support

Mr. Petrin stated that he would like to suggest the elimination of the 1 of the 3 Town Meetings. It is time consuming and costly to have the 3 and most towns only have the two.

**Update on the School Financial Investigation**

Mr. Iler presented an update on the subcommittee’s investigation and pointed out it was an investigation not an audit required due to the over 400 people requesting the report. He will be presenting the report before the Town Meeting. A discussion about public feedback on the report and it was pointed out the meetings have been open to the public and the subcommittee has completed their research.

**Budget for ByLaw review committee recording secretary**

A discussion regarding the new Bylaw review committee and where the budget should go. Because it is a new committee, the total amount is unknown and a request for a breakdown of cost was made.

Motion to adjourn 11-0-0