

Minutes
Brandon Budget Advisory Committee
22 August 2024

Committee members present: Neil Silins, Jan Coolidge, Tricia Welch, Barry Varian.
Public present: Steven Jupiter, Seth Hopkins.

At 6:02PM the meeting came to order. The agenda was adopted 4-0.

Discussion regarding the purpose and scope of the budget committee followed. Neil Silins led off with a question about what was different in last year's process (which left so many dissatisfied and yielded a budget that required two revisions to pass).

Jan Coolidge suggested the budget advisory committee should have staggered terms for continuity. Seth Hopkins advised as town manager that the current orientation of the board and any action on the budget advisory committee is to make appointments for one budget cycle only, with a definite end of term when a budget is adopted by the voters.

Tricia Welch stated that budget advisory committee members felt their contributions were disregarded and suggested the committee as a group offer a list of budget recommendations to the selectboard.

Barry Varian noted that previous years were more informal and collaborative, so the budget advisory committee members felt part of the conversation. The tone was friendlier.

Tricia Welch recommended a capital budget be considered. Jan Coolidge recommended guidelines be agreed to at a pre-meeting (which Seth Hopkins believes to be the inclination of the selectboard). Barry Varian emphasized the success of a cohesive team approach rather than discrete roles during prior budget seasons. Tricia Welch encouraged more community input early on. A consensus believed that department heads should be present, not just the town management.

During public comment, Steven Jupiter raised the issue of coverage of budget workshops in The Reporter and the nature of feedback received related to that coverage. Neil Silins and Steven Jupiter engaged in a colloquy to establish facts of the matter and discussed how The Reporter might best describe the different roles of the budget advisory committee and the selectboard in the process.

Adjournment came at 7:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Seth M Hopkins, town manager