

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
AD HOC BUDGET PROCEDURE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 20, 2024 @ 6:30 P.M.
REMOTE MEETING

Members Present: Ian Thomas-Chairperson, Jennifer White, Mike Whitney

Also Present: Jackie Massett, Tom Olson

Chairman Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Discuss the Charge of the Committee – Mr. Thomas stated that the Board of Education formed this committee in light of concerns on how the Board’s budget process was rolled out this past cycle. The committee will look at some overarching ideas on how to present information to the town. Mrs. White concurred that the charge of the committee was to review the budget process, establish procedures and guidelines, and set expectations.
2. Overview and Outline of Budget Preparation, Presentation Format, and Content – Mr. Thomas stated that he would like to follow the format that the town of Groton uses to construct its budget. They have a Table of Contents, and each department has its own section fully broken out. Mrs. White stated that she also likes the town’s format. Dr. Whitney thought that maybe there are updated budget software options specifically tailored to education that could be looked at as the municipality software appears to be outdated. Mrs. White would like to see the budget formatted with prior year actuals, current year budget, adjusted budget, and the superintendent’s budget. Mr. Thomas will provide a mock-up budget page taking into consideration the comments from the committee. Mrs. White also suggested having a grants section in the budget book. Dr. Whitney suggested having a grants page on our website.
3. Overview, Identify and Discuss Possible Policies, Procedures or Practices Related to the Planning, Preparation, Presentation, and Oversight of the Board’s Budget That May Be Relevant to the Purpose of the Committee – Mrs. White would like to see the budget process begin earlier than it did this year. She felt the Board was missing transparency during this year’s budget process. Dr. Whitney would like to receive information in a timely manner and would like to see a level services budget as well as narratives. His observation of this year’s process was that the budget was discussed, the Board gave feedback, and then the Board voted on the entire budget. He feels there needs to be a step added where perhaps there could be a section by section review instead of voting on the entire budget a one time. The committee discussed the need to have the Board track the budget’s development throughout the year. Mrs. White suggested receiving a monthly report to track where we should be based on the estimated budget versus actuals. Dr. Whitney thought a narrative could accompany the monthly report entailing an interpretation of the data. The committee wants to keep budget software options at the forefront of its discussions in order to offer software recommendations to the full Board. Dr. Whitney mentioned asking about software choices during the business manager interviews. Mr. Thomas stated that there was an amount of money rolled over from the previous school year and that early on in the budget process, there was reconciliation that had to be done from the previous school year. He suggested looking at what practices/policies could be put into place to prevent this from happening in the future. Mrs. White thought that her suggestion regarding receiving a monthly report would be beneficial in that regard.
4. Identify Date of Next Meeting – July 11, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.