

Meeting Minutes for Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee - Operating Budget Subcommittee

Mar 19, 2025 05:41 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 817 4582 8115

Committee Members Present: Lillian Woo, Chris Lauzon, Chris King, Tom Keane

Staff Present: Mark Milne

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM

Quick recap

The Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee's Operating Budget Subcommittee was organized, with members agreeing to handle various sections of the budget. The team discussed the operating budget for the upcoming year, the allocation of funding, and the impact of demographic changes on the school population. They also planned to schedule meetings with department heads and circulate a draft of their report to other members of the subcommittee.

Next steps

Mark to send the previous year's operating budget report as a Word version to the committee members.

Mark to schedule DPW and Police departments for presentations on April 14th, or April 28th if not possible on the 14th.

Tom to contact Chris Dwelley for additional help with the school budget section if needed.

Tom to circulate a draft of the school budget section to other subcommittee members before the April 9th meeting.

Mark to provide reserve balance information to the committee.

Subcommittee members to review the school department budget presentation on Monday, March 24th.

Subcommittee to meet on April 9th to discuss the school budget and general fund figures.

Chris King to email Mark with questions about fixed costs data for documentation purposes.

Summary

Organizing the Operating Budget Subcommittee

The meeting focused on organizing the Comprehensive Financial Advisory Committee's Operating Budget Subcommittee. Lillian led the discussion, welcoming new members and outlining the typical structure of the subcommittee, which usually includes five sections. The attendees discussed the allocation of sections, with Tom Keane agreeing to handle the schools section, and Christopher Lauzon volunteering for the Dpw and police sections, respectively. Chris King expressed interest in handling the enterprise funds and fixed costs.

Operating Budget Planning and Meetings

The team discussed the operating budget for the upcoming year. They agreed to receive the town manager's proposed budget by May 1st and aim to complete their report by the end of May. The school department budget will be available by April 2nd. The team also planned to schedule meetings with the department heads, including the police and DPW, in April. They decided to postpone their subcommittee meetings until they start working on their sections.

The team also discussed the possibility of circulating a draft of their report to other members of the subcommittee.

Budget Allocation and School Department Funding

Mark discussed the 60% allocation of funding, which was agreed upon to provide predictability and eliminate infighting among departments. He mentioned that other departments are seeking more than 40% of the budget. Mark also mentioned that the school department is facing the elimination of positions due to the expiration of ESSER funds and is trying to reduce their dependency on reserves. He stated that they have healthy reserves for times like this and that the reserves provide a mechanism for a softer landing when implementing reductions.

Student Population Trends and School Choice

The meeting focused on understanding the student population trends in the school district. The discussion revealed that the student population growth is relatively flat, but the number of EL and special needs students has significantly increased. The committee also discussed the impact of demographic changes and the potential effects of anti-immigration policies on the school population. They also touched upon the school choice program, where students can enroll in other school districts, and the need to make their schools more competitive in this environment. The committee plans to have a presentation from the school superintendent on Monday and will begin discussing the general fund figures in their first official subcommittee meeting on April 9th.

Meeting adjourned 6:25 PM.