

**MINUTES OF MEETING
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
April 4, 2012**

A meeting of the Municipal Budget Committee was called to order at 6:30 PM in the Professional Development Room at Kennett Middle School with the following members present: Chairman David Sordi, Doug Swett, Dick Klement, Betty Loynd, Bill Marvel, Ted Sares, Maureen Seavey, Ray Shakir, Greydon Turner, Joe Mosca, John Edgerton, Maury McKinney (arriving at 6:35 PM) and Kelly DeFeo. Excused: Brian Charles and Karen Umberger. Absent: Mike DiGregorio and Danielle Santuccio.

Doug Swett led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Sordi thanked the members for coming and stated that there were just a few things to clean up before the Budget Committee is called to order after the elections. Chairman passed out a list of all of the Minutes with the dates of approval and seven sets to go through to approve tonight.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Edgerton moved, seconded by Betty Loynd, to consider and accept the Minutes of January 25, 2012. In favor: 13; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0.

Ted Sares asked if this was the set of Minutes discussed prior to the start of the meeting. The Recording Secretary advised that the Minutes Ted was looking for was February 16, 2012.

John Edgerton stated he had a correction on Page 3, third line from the bottom; should be Dr. and not De. for Dr. Nelson. Chairman Sordi questioned the date of the Minutes John was discussing. John stated he was sorry, he was looking at the Minutes of January 18, 2012. Chairman stated the Minutes of January 18, 2012 had already been approved.

John Edgerton moved, seconded by Greydon Turner, to consider and accept the Minutes of January 30, 2012. In favor: 12; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 1 - Kelly DeFeo.

Ted Sares asked that somebody advise him of the date when the Police were before the Committee and Lt. Perley was giving the discussion on crime.

Chairman Sordi stated in the Minutes of January 30, 2012, Lt. Perley talked about the Prosecutor and on page 25 he talked about the most serious crime, he talked about robbery and murder and he talked about DWI's.

Ted Sares stated so it establishes it there that crime is on the rise. Chairman Sordi stated yes.

Ted Sares moved, seconded by Greydon Turner, to consider and accept the Minutes of February 4, 2012. In favor: 11; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 2 - Joe Mosca and Kelly DeFeo.

Joe Mosca moved, seconded by Greydon Turner, to consider and accept the Minutes of February 6, 2012. In favor: 12; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 1 - Kelly DeFeo.

Joe Mosca moved, seconded by Greydon Turner, to consider and accept the Minutes of February 15, 2012. In favor: 12; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 1 - Bill Marvel.

Bill Marvel stated that he did not have a copy of the Minutes for February 15th. Bill further stated that he picks up his copies of the Minutes at the Town Hall so he was not sure if he ever received same.

Chairman Sordi stated that on February 15th, February 16th and March 7th, there were no Preliminary Minutes.

John Edgerton moved, seconded by Joe Mosca, to consider and accept the Minutes of February 16, 2012. In favor: 13; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 0.

Chairman Sordi stated he had one correction on the first page: the meeting was held in the Professional Development Room at the Kennett Middle School and not in the Auditorium at Kennett High School.

Joe Mosca moved, seconded by John Edgerton, to consider and accept the Minutes of March 7, 2012. In favor: 12; Opposed: 0; Abstain: 1 - Joe Mosca.

Chairman Sordi stated these Minutes were from the short meeting held after the Deliberative Meeting.

Bill Marvel stated he didn't have them in front of him, but knows that he read them. He noted that the vote on the Amended Town Budget, the Chairman had Danielle (Santuccio) down as abstaining; was that because she wasn't there because he went to her and asked and she said she was against. Chairman Sordi stated he spoke with her after that and she wasn't sure and asked to be abstaining because she wasn't really sure what was being voted on.

Ted Sares asked if Chairman Sordi had him down as voting against that, against the additional Police Officer. Chairman stated the Committee voted 10-3-1; Ted Sares, Ray Shakir and Doug Swett voted no.

OLD BUSINESS

Ted Sares stated he wanted to call attention to page 32 of the February 16, 2012 Minutes and put that in the spot light a little bit because it calls attention to the need for people to be here as many times as they can be here. This is where he argued with Karen (Umberger) and she's not here and he felt badly talking about her, but Lt. Perley came in and said that crime was up; Karen said no it's not. Ted told her she was wrong; she told Ted he was wrong. She's wrong and he wanted to make sure that people understand she was talking through her teeth. There are stronger words for it and he would say them to her.

John Edgerton stated one of the things that has come up after reading everything this past week was that there are Budget Committee members who

are members of the Budget Committee, but did not read the 800 pages to make sound decisions on the Budgets.

Chairman Sordi questioned John Edgerton stating members didn't read the 800 pages to make sound decisions. John stated he didn't think they read the Budgets to make the decisions that they made. It's his personal opinion. Chairman stated if we're going to go down the path of attacking people, he wasn't going to let that happen. Ted Sares stated we stand chastised. John stated he didn't want any names, but there are people that didn't read the Budget. They make emotional decisions for the budget answers. Chairman stated that's their choice. John stated absolutely and the one that should be on the record is that the person on the School Board that stood up last year and made an amendment to the Budget, he feels personally that person was speaking for the School Board because if a member of the School Board speaks for the School Board at a meeting, it is the same as a Selectmen speaking for the Board at a meeting unless the Chairman of the Board says no, wait let's discuss that. That goes along with a lot of other things. When a person is in public office, they are in public office and if they say something and it's in public form, they are speaking for the Committee they are on unless the Committee says no, we don't back you with that.

Chairman Sordi asked John Edgerton how that related to the Budget Committee. John stated he was talking about the budgeting process. If that had been done, he's including ignorance in here not stupidity, the difference is if they know the laws and the Rules and the Regulations, the amount of money that would have been presented by the School Board would not have impacted the Warrant Articles. However, the amount of money they set forward was not in accordance with the laws and Rules of budgeting and they lost the Warrant Articles. Chairman stated he now understood what John was saying.

Ted Sares stated now he was going to talk in favor of Karen (Umberger). Assuming you did that for the sake of discussion, if Karen starts examining something and you listen to that, that gives you the same benefit because she goes through it from A to Z. Even if you haven't done it, you still get the benefit of her examination which is pretty thorough. Drinkhall used to do that when he was on the Budget Committee, a very thorough analysis. They don't wing it; these people don't wing it. Karen rarely wings it. She did it that one time which shocked him, but they usually don't wing it and we get the benefit. Even if we don't have a chance, which he always does do, but if we don't, we still get the benefit of those among us and he would also add that all of the Budget Committees that he's been on, this is the least one to be criticized for that because he's been on some that was just plain awful. It was just screaming and yelling, there was no analysis and no debate. Here we have had, he thought, pretty good debate. Joe (Mosca) went through the Police thing and he covered it and Karen covered it and then they came out about \$500.00 apart. That was pretty darn good, even if he disagreed. Ted stated to John that he thought on balance the Committee gets what it needs, but he gets John's point.

John Edgerton stated it's not the discussion factor, it's when you put forward items to the public that's to be voted on, you are then speaking

either for the Budget Committee or the School Board or the Town or a Precinct and that's where the sticky part comes in.

Chairman Sordi stated to John Edgerton to go back to John's first comment about members not reading the 800 pages or whatever the number of pages, as Chairman he had to disagree with him. He thought that everybody participated in the discussions over the last two months, some more than others but he thought that everybody had pertinent questions that had to be answered and he didn't think those questions could have been as insightful as they were without reading through the documents. Karen (Umberger) may have read it much more thoroughly than any of us, but he thought as Chairman that's an unfair characterization because he thought everybody on here put a lot of effort into this Budget season. If people were really trying to derail the process of the budget hearings, they just wouldn't have showed up for the meetings and just voted at the end, but everybody came to the meetings and he thought everybody participated. There were some very long nights and everyone stayed to the end and he thought that we may have different opinions, but at least we were all here through it and earned the right to vote the way we felt needed to be voted.

Dick Klement asked John Edgerton to explain in 25 words or less in plain English what his subject was about a School Board member not speaking for the School Board, but speaking personally. John stated procedure only; procedure should have been if the School Board didn't like the Budget Committee's Budget and they looked at the law and they looked at their lawyer and their advisors and came up with an answer that was appropriate, then last year wouldn't have happened. They didn't. Somebody came up with a figure that was 11% more and they said "you know you can't do that", the law books say you can't do that. Dick stated now he understands what John was saying and he didn't even want to talk about that any more. Thank you. John stated it's not that particular case as there are other places in the Town that the same thing happened. Dick stated he would agree, but from his perspective he thought he made it very plain sitting on the Board that he gives the opinion of the School Board unless he digresses and says "speaking for myself" and he thought that was very important because he didn't know if everyone that's in an appointed position feels that they can always try to speak for their particular panel that they are representing.

Chairman Sordi stated he thought during this season, Mike and everyone who is appointed on here if they were stating a personal opinion said that and if they weren't then they stated otherwise.

Betty Loynd stated she just wanted to raise the issue and was sure if Bill (Marvel) read Syndi White's article and she guessed Syndi had spoken to the Albany School Board and they voted last November for all-day Kindergarten and based on Jane Grey's vote and she carried quite a bit of weight because that swayed it to the 4 to 4 and that's why it's on the Ballot. She did not represent Albany; she's suppose to represent Albany and Eaton, but her opinion only represented Eaton she guessed, it did not represent Albany.

Chairman Sordi stated he read what was in the paper, and no disrespect to the paper, but you never know the whole story until you talk to

everybody. Betty Loynd stated she had spoken to Syndi (White) and she was quite certain that is so. She spoke with Colleen in Albany. Chairman stated he understood that, but he also saw some comments from the Eaton representative. It's a disagreement that he didn't think would ever be resolved unless we all sit down together in a room and figure it out. He understood what Betty was saying. Betty stated she just wanted raise that issue. Bill Marvel asked why. Betty stated because you (Bill) have such a high opinion of her (Jane Grey). Bill stated he did and her opinion includes the belief which he thought Dick (Klement) shares that Kindergarten is not adequately funded under this and that contributed probably substantially to her and as far as her representing Albany and Eaton, he didn't think she ever said she was representing those two. Bill thought that was something speculated at this point. Betty stated she is the Albany and Eaton representative; she is the representative for both Boards so Betty would think to express an opinion like that she (Jane) should have gotten the opinion of the Albany School Board as well and they did say they told her last November that they voted unanimously for all-day Kindergarten. Bill stated if you have one Board of the two that you represent that does support it and another that doesn't, what do you do; go with the larger Board maybe. Betty stated that's a tough one. Bill stated he didn't find that relevant. Chairman Sordi stated that's complicated; it ended up in a 4 to 4 tie on the School Board Budget Committee because there wasn't an odd number to break the tie. Betty stated maybe Albany should have their own representative, it sounds that way.

John Edgerton stated he had one other thing; the Middle School 4 versus 3 really is not a budget decision at all. Chairman Sordi asked John to repeat what he was saying. John stated 4 teams versus 3 teams at the Middle School shouldn't even be considered. That's a School Board administrative decision and Kevin (Richard) was really good when he came here and explained what he's doing in his school. He thought it was the best explanation that anybody's given the Budget Committee and he's doing a good job. The 4 versus 3 came long ago, 5 or 6 years ago he guessed when the School Board asked the Administration when were they going to do something about cutting with the population of the Middle School going down and 400 to 300 was the figure. Now they can't even figure out who said 4 to 3, that's really not the decision.

Betty Loynd stated Kevin Richard has been absolutely wonderful about looking at this and saying we'll cut here, we'll cut here, we'll cut here. He did everything to try to maintain 4 teams because that works. He's got 7th Grade and 8th Grade. Doesn't that work perfectly; two 7th Grade Teams and two 8th Grade Teams. If you look at his budget, it was \$4.3 Million in 2007, it's now \$3.9 Million. That's incredible that he went down that much. He still has the same building to maintain so those all remain fixed costs and he's really done a lot and it's really a crime that's on the Ballot, that should just be "go away". He should be able to run the school the way he sees fit. He's a good Principal.

John Edgerton stated that should be a School Board issue; that doesn't belong outside the School Board. Some of these other issues belong in the School Board and they come to us because there's a 4 to 4 or something.

Ted Sares asked didn't they make it a Warrant Article. Chairman Sordi stated they did make it a Warrant Article. John Edgerton stated because of the split. Betty Loynd agreed. John stated his view after reading all of this and this is 2 or 3 years of this, he's got two teams per grade and it makes sense. Betty stated perfect sense. John stated as a Math major, when you start screwing this up with odd numbers and even numbers, it doesn't make sense, it doesn't make sense at all. Betty stated thank you, he's right.

NEW BUSINESS

Ted Sares stated let's assume everything moves on and new people are elected, how do we convene, what's the basis for convening. He knows Chairman Sordi will be gone and he regrets that because the Chairman has done a superb job. Chairman stated thanks; Danielle (Santuccio) since she's the Vice Chair will have to convene the first meeting after the election and everyone takes their oath and then at that time a new Chairman and Vice Chairman will have to be elected. Ted stated so then we will have to wait to hear from Danielle. Chairman stated correct since her term is carrying on and she will be the one to call it. She has the contact information, but obviously he can get her everyone's e-mail addresses.

John Edgerton stated the Middle School reduced its population by 25% and they've got a 3.5% reduction in expenses so it's not really relevant. Twenty-five percent reduction in students and a 3.5% reduction in expenses. Chairman Sordi stated but it's not always linear between and John stated he understood.

Chairman Sordi reminded the members that they needed to return their binders and tabs to the Town Office so they can be recycled for next year. Betty Loynd asked if the contents should be in or out. Discussion followed on returning the binders for the Town and the School and where to leave same.

Chairman Sordi thanked all the members and wished them good luck for next year.

John Edgerton stated to Chairman Sordi thank you very much, you've done an outstanding job and we'll miss you. Ted Sares asked that the members give it up for the Chairman and there was a round of applause.

Dick Klement brought a Point of Order to Chairman Sordi's attention that he had skipped an item on the Agenda. Chairman apologized and asked if there was any public comment and there was none.

Joe Mosca moved, seconded by Greydon Turner, to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Iris A. Bowden, Recording Secretary