

Joint Town Council & School Board MEETING AGENDA

Monday, February 11, 2019 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Scarborough Municipal Building, Council Chambers A

Joint Meeting Facilitators: Peter Hayes (TC), Sarah Leighton (SB)

Invitees: Don Hamill, Peter Hayes, Alicia Giftos, April Sither, Julie Kukenberger, Tom Hall,
Ruth Porter, Larissa Crockett, Jo Anne Sizemore, Kate Bolton

I. Call to order

II. Those Present: Don Hamill, Sarah Leighton, April Sither, Alicia Giftos, Peter Hayes, Julie Kukenberger,
Tom Hall, Katie Foley, Paul Johnson

III. Old Business

a. Review Committee Norms and Goals

Reviewed past document (December 2017). Original norm setting was to set expectations for working together and build team relationship. History lacked engagement, trying to bridge differences and find a way to hear one another. Tried to practice listening first. Last year's focus was on communication and outreach. Added "to do"s to ensure that we articulate and record the commitments we've made.

Mention that Sarah and April are also on Communications and will commit to circle back to that team with feedback.

Agreed that we will move forward renewing these norms and goals; can revisit if needed.

i. Roles & Responsibilities

[same as above, nothing unique to cover]

IV. New Business

Listen to Learn sessions debrief (Tom & Julie)

i. What are the key themes that we're hearing?

Less well attended than last year, but small groups allowed deeper conversations, those who came seemed to benefit. Broke up times of day and locations, trying to reach the most constituents.

Higgins Beach folks came out in force to one session, feedback was good, they like what we're doing and should keep it up.

Last year seemed like very clear themes on school side, not so much this year. Not as many people with school age children this year. Wentworth session had the most conversation about school topics.

Some topics were a pool and/or Community Center, club offerings, possibility of a Title IX student activity survey.

Sessions were advertised on websites, school calendars, social media, signboard by SEDCO.

Added listening sessions for school staff this year, informing continuing conversations with school leaders as we build the school budget. Emerging themes from school were:

- Class sizes (keeping them small)
- Increased need for student support at K-2
- Professional development
- Flexibility in instructional supplies
- Lack of substitutes.

Wonders about increasing numbers of students with special needs. Is there a relationship with the opioid crisis? Focus on earlier identifications and interventions. Focus on academic accountability, test scores, now shifting to a higher level of attention to social & emotional learning. There is a perception that families move en masse to Scarborough for our robust Special Education programming, but that belief is not reflective in our comparative data with other similar school districts.

No significant feedback on the budget process itself, although Larissa did do separate focus groups on the budget documents. Some conversation around shared Town/School positions - grant writer, communications coordinator. Tom is working on a proposal for a communication coordinator position that may (or may not) go into FY20 budget proposal.

Questions last year were perhaps more detailed, more substantive, probably in relation to lower turnout. Anything we could do differently to encourage higher turnout? Does changing the times and locations really help? Daytime hours for seniors? Concern about not reaching very many people. What conclusion can we draw? Is everyone satisfied? May just be a function of people being so overbooked and overscheduled.

Potential for using online survey methods - Thought Exchange - discussing with Sebago Alliance as a shared service. Collects and organizes data, allows people to read, share and comment; confidential, anonymous; has analytics.

b. Budget Drivers for FY20

i. Town

- Wage and health care costs.
- More than 10 new positions proposed by departments, BUT not all will come forward, but all have merit. Town leadership team has met to hear and prioritize ideas. Public Safety, communications among the new requested positions.
- Debt Service should be modest increase.
- Question of shifting funding of capital items to operating budget vs. bonded funds. Potential of creating a reserve fund for replacement of equipment which we currently fund with bonding.
- Revaluation this year will add property value, need to be cognizant of tax impacts.
- Consideration of revenue changes this year: more from state, revaluation, but want to be cautious about not setting expectation that we will increase budget.

ii. School

- Personnel costs (= 75% of operating budget):
 - Teachers & Professionals CBA is under negotiation
 - Anthem rates projected to increase potentially by as much as 10% - numbers will be refined in next two months
 - MainePERS employer rates increasing from 3.97% to 4.16%
- Enrollment and class sizes may drive need for additional staff and classroom space.
- Capital project planning include modular classrooms at Eight Corners, HVAC failures at Middle School.
- Student needs for services may drive need for staff as well as professional development.

Add agenda item: Budget Targets

- Discussion of 3% overall increase in expenditures. Possible to show 3% increase and show what we would not be able to do?
- Historically 3% has been on tax rate. We will have uncertainty about revenue from revaluation. Need to be clear on what target we're setting.
- Concern about making assumption. Will we still have tax rate ranges? Total assessed value is now at \$4 billion. Do we need a different set of markers this year since revaluation will create uncertainty?
- Budget is always finalized prior to the town property valuation being set, this year is just a bit more complicated to predict. Tom will be able to do some modeling. Recommends that value increase goes into funding new development in town, since services will continue to increase in a growing town.
- What about targets for the fund balance? Do we have sufficient fund balance to accomplish any fiscal goals? Looking at unfunded liabilities (GASB/OPEB).
- What's the right mix of investment, savings, future planning knowing that we may have an unusual revenue increase?

- Why has 3% been the target in recent years? Research shows that municipalities and schools are different from households and other businesses. We looked at CPI and added room to acknowledge municipal economic pressures. Is this still the right number? Recognition that 3% increase on the tax rate was the upper limit of what the community would find acceptable.
- Worry about people who may see large increases in their revaluation driving large tax increases. Same house, same services, not new development.

Town Council Finance Committee will discuss further and bring back their thoughts to the next Joint meeting. Once we are agreed on the target, we can add as a goal to the Norms/Goals doc.

Observation that the schools don't have an opportunity to raise revenues so may be different approach than the Town budget. Both Town and School teams will weigh in and plan will be for us all to collectively support the goal. Effort toward "one town one budget" collaborative approach.

V. Review schedule – calendar of meetings & events

Dates on the draft calendar so far are confirmed. Town Council members are invited/encouraged to attend the Leadership Council/School Board workshops April 2 and 3. Tom and Kate will work together to make sure all planned dates so far are on the calendar. Potential for adding one-topic Joint Finance meeting for February 27, Sarah will check with Shawn for availability. Would address budget targets only. Keep scheduled meeting on March 13 for full agenda.

VI. Meeting Recap- "Take Aways and To Dos"

- a. Round table if any questions or reference materials needed prior to next meeting

VII. Public Input

- John Cloutier has been reviewing data on school spending - notes that we have lower expenditures than surrounding districts and receive less state funding. We're trying to compete with high-caliber school districts with significantly less funding.

VIII. Adjournment