



# Joint Town Council & School Board MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Scarborough Municipal Building, Council Chambers A

**NOTE: THIS JOINT MEETING HAS BEEN INCLUDED AS AN AGENDA ITEM FOR THE PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED & POSTED TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (5:30-7:30). PLEASE SEE TOWN COUNCIL WEB PAGE FOR FULL AGENDA.**

Joint Meeting Facilitators: Shawn Babine (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. Introduction
  - a. Review of objectives and goals (SL/SB)
  
- II. Budget Targets
  - a. Town (Shawn)

At a Town Council workshop on February 20, Council members reached a consensus on an FY20 budget goal that all could support (no formal vote was taken). There was discussion about the appropriate metric to use, and on the importance of clear and accurate messaging about the goal. It was agreed that the current residential revaluation would not be considered in calculations, but that the usual organic growth estimate of 1% to 1.5% would still be used. It was also agreed that high/medium/low values would be used to establish a projected range of change to the tax rate as in recent years.

The goal was formally captured as follows:

**GOAL: Tax Rate increase not to exceed 3%**

**Tax rate projection will adhere to policy regarding valuation increases and the impact of the residential revaluation shall not be considered in these projections.**

**Clear and consistent messaging regarding the factors to be considered in the projection of estimated tax rate.**

b. School (Sarah/April)

At a School Board Finance Committee meeting on February 27, the team discussed the goal-setting conversation by the Council on the 20th. They agreed to work toward the target of no more than a 3% increase on the tax rate, but wanted to be sure that it is understood this does not mean less than a 3% increase in *expenditures*, or in the net increase on the school budget alone, but rather on the bottom line tax (mil rate) calculation.

The School Board is considering significant needs for resources connected with growth in student population, and will likely want to have targeted discussions around the impacts of housing development in our town.

General discussion followed...

How to ensure that the public clearly understands the budget goal.

We still want to be able to have conversations about investments that may cause us to exceed the budget goal. Tom and Julie will be expected to articulate potential adds, unmet needs and leadership recommendations.

Sensitivity to the media latching on to the numbers at first reading and leaving the public with the assumption that is the final budget. How do we ensure that the public knows this is a long and thoughtful process? Some suggestions:

- Use data on prior year budget processes to inform the public (e.g. change from first reading to final approved budget; change from estimated tax rate at budget approval to actual tax rate set by the assessor).
- Create a visual representation of steps on the “budget journey”.
- Set expectations with media outreach even before first reading.
- Use the Town Manager’s/Superintendent’s opening presentation as an opportunity to reinforce the steps in the process.

We need some clear explanation for the public about the increase in school GPA and where that comes from, also the consequences of not approving Scarborough's membership in the Greater Sebago Educational Alliance.

III. Agreement on next steps and next meeting agenda

- The Joint Communications Committee will take up the work of budget messaging and bring back ideas to share with Joint Finance.
- Larissa and Sean will be working on the Budget Portal starting next week.
- The March 13 scheduled Joint Finance meeting will be cancelled.
- On April 2 at 8:30 am and April 3 at 4:00 pm, the School Board and Leadership Council will have budget workshops. Town Council members are welcome to attend.
- There will be a Joint Finance meeting on Monday, April 8, at 5:00 pm. This is the school budget's portion of the TC Finance Committee's usual department-by-department review, but will be conducted in our usual Joint Committee workshop format.
- The next regular Joint Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 10, at 5:30 pm