

Salisbury Budget Committee
Approved Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2023

A meeting of the Salisbury Budget Committee was held on Monday, April 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Academy Hall.

Jason Hood, Chair (2024)	Present	Marcia Murphy, Vice-Chair (2026)	Present
David Kelly (2024)	Present	Bill MacDuffie, Sr. (2026)	Present
Jennifer Hoyt (2026)	Present	Kevin O'Neill (2025)	Present
Eric Swendsen (2025)	Present	Jeff Blanchard (2025)	Present
Brett Walker, Selectman (2024)	Present	Vacant	
April Rollins, Town Administrator	Present	Jennifer King, Recording Secretary	Present

Several members of the public were in attendance.
No one attended via Zoom.

Chair Hood called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Election of Officers

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **nominated** Jason Hood to serve as Committee Chair.
Brett Walker **seconded** the nomination which passed successfully.

Chair Hood **nominated** Marcia Murphy to serve as Vice-Chair.
Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the nomination which passed successfully.

Board Vacancy

Chair Hood **motioned** that the committee accept David Croft's resignation with regret.
Brett Walker **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

Discussion occurred regarding the best way to proceed in filling the vacancy on the committee.

Eric Swendsen distributed copies of the results of the most recent election, noting that there were a number of names submitted from voters via write-in balloting on Election Day indicating who they would like to see on the committee.

Three of those parties have expressed interest and were in attendance to introduce themselves, express their interest and answer questions from committee members:

Louise Andrus told the committee that she has lived in town for 40 yrs and serves as a State Rep. She has worked as a bookkeeper for 20 years. She enjoys working with figures and isn't afraid to express her opinion on important matters. She would like to join the committee because she wishes to continue her service to the community.

Lorna Carlisle has run a small farmstand in town since 2005. While she considers herself frugal, she isn't cheap and she feels it's important to hear all sides of an issue. She is interested in joining the committee because she is retired and would like to participate more in town affairs.

Al Romano has lived in town for about 20 yrs. He is cutting back on his time in his career as a CPA as he is semi-retired and would like to lend his talents to the committee and stay involved in numbers.

Kevin O'Neill asked what in particular interests you in the Budget Committee as opposed to other committees?

Al Romano answered that he is a CPA and is familiar with budgets. He was curious about some of the discussions that led to the creation of this budget and decided to try and get involved.

Lorna Carlisle said that she has an interest in the budget and taxes as a taxpayer, and she feels that her experience aligns with the work that this committee does.

Louise Andrus responded that she is very interested in budgets and taxes at any level. They are getting to a point where they are going to end up with a sales or income tax in the state if they aren't careful. She would like to work on the committee to find ways to remain frugal.

Eric Swendsen noted that while preparing this year's budget, they struggled with inflation and salaries and costs of everything while also trying to adequately fund items in the budget that were underfunded for many years. What are their thoughts on funding things in the future that may not be fun to pay for now?

Lorna Carlisle answered that it certainly does make sense in some situations to pay a little at a time.

Al Romano feels it is very appropriate to plan for future capital expenditures but it's also important to pay attention to each line item in the budget to make sure the budget being requested is what is actually being spent. He wants to be involved to try and help to catch those things.

Louise Andrus feels that capital reserves should be used more and make it as long term as possible to reduce cost to taxpayers. Expressed concerns about a potential looming recession. There is a certain percentage of the people that don't have access to extra money. We have a lot of capital reserve accounts, she thinks they should look at their capital reserves and adjust them as needed.

Jeff Blanchard **nominated** Lorna Carlisle to the Budget Committee with a term expiring March 2024.

Discussion: Brett Walker noted that Lorna did receive the most write-in votes on Election Day. Chair Hood expressed that he is inclined to support the results of the write-in vote as well.

Eric Swendsen **seconded** the nomination which **passed successfully** with one vote against (*Murphy*).

Jennifer Hoyt swore Lorna Carlisle in as the new member of the Budget Committee.

Approve Minutes

Brett Walker **motioned** to accept the draft meeting minutes from the Budget Committee meeting of February 6, 2023.

Chair Hood **seconded** the motion which **passed successfully**.

AGENDA ITEMS

Recommendations for the 2024 Budget

Discussion took place regarding the overall budget process between the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Jeff Blanchard **motioned** to use the following process to create the 2024 Budget for the Town of Salisbury, NH:

- That the Excel spreadsheet provided at the initial Fall 2024 Budget meeting will have a blank column heading and blank cells in place of the column labeled 'BOS'.
- That the budget schedule will be published with dates for department heads to meet with the Budget Committee for an initial presentation and an optional second meeting to be held only if additional information is needed.

- That a vote on any motion relating to the budget will not occur any sooner than the meeting following its initial presentation, to allow time for appropriate research and discernment to take place.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **seconded** the motion for discussion.

Jeff Blanchard feels that with their current process, they aren't doing as effective a job as they could be doing. Therefore, he feels that making sure they receive all of the information first-hand is a better way to ensure that they have a better understanding of all of the budget components. He feels they should be meeting with the department heads first, rather than the Selectmen.

TA Rollins said that the numbers are not filtered. The numbers that are given to the committee are the same numbers provided to them from the department heads. Jeff Blanchard feels that those numbers should always come directly to the committee first, and not be filtered through the Board of Selectmen. It's normal for the BoS and the Budget Committee to disagree on figures and they make adjustments accordingly.

David Kelly said that they meet with each department head to go through their budgets line by line. He feels that it is a team effort in the end.

Brett Walker **motioned** to move the question.
Jennifer Hoyt **seconded** the motion.

Brett Walker stated he is not certain what the purpose of this is aside from looking to usurp the role of the Board of Selectmen. Jeff Blanchard countered that that is not his intent, he is trying to make sure the committee can effectively do the job they are charged with doing.

Marcia Murphy said when the Budget Committee meets, it is up to them to have the discussion with the department heads to get the information they are looking for. They should not be considering the Selectmen's input when they are doing their portion of the budget deliberations. It is their right to question those department heads on any item they wish.

The motion to move the question **passed successfully**.

Jeff Blanchard's motion **did not carry**.

Discussion continued regarding the best way to disseminate budgetary information and the manner in which information was presented during budget deliberations last year.

Bill MacDuffie Sr. is open to the Selectboard's recommendations because they work with many of these departments all year long and they know what the spending looks like. TA Rollins stated that she can switch the schedule so that the department heads meet with the Budget Committee first.

Discussion occurred regarding why some department heads don't make an appearance at meetings. TA Rollins said that many times, she is the person that fills in a lot of the budget items because she knows what was spent the prior year (postage, etc.), so she is well-versed in what is needed

Bill MacDuffie Sr. **motioned** that they leave things pertaining to their process the way they are.

Brett Walker **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

Discussion occurred regarding a joint work session between the BoS and the BC prior to the Public Hearing. Chair Hood does not feel that a joint meeting just prior to the Public Hearing was at all effective. In his opinion, the timing doesn't matter because they don't have to take the Selectmen's recommendations into account when they deliberate.

Kevin O'Neill feels it's more of a timing issue than a process issue

Chair Hood's recommendation for next year is that they not get caught up in assuming there is excessive discretionary spending. He would like to see the Building Inspector become a more revenue-neutral position. He would like to see it funded by the people building in town rather than by the taxpayers. TA Rollins noted that a permit fee of \$1000 was suggested by the current building inspector. David Kelly asked if there are any monetary penalties for failing to follow the rules. Brett Walker said he is not sure what available remedies there are at this time.

Eric Swendsen stated that his goal is to gain a better understanding of the capital reserve accounts.

Selectman's Report

Brett Walker had nothing to present on behalf of the Selectboard. Marcia Murphy asked if the paper/cardboard container costs them. Brett Walker said that they save money overall, but he doesn't feel that it is net positive right now.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next Budget Committee meeting will be held on Monday, October 16, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hood **motioned** that they adjourn the meeting.

Brett Walker **seconded** the motion which passed successfully.

The Budget Committee adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer King, Recording Secretary