

Town of Sterling
Capital Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Butterick Building
February 23, 2023

Capital Budget Committee called to order by Lynne Sheppard, Chair at 6:30pm.

Capital Budget Committee Attendees: Lynne Sheppard, Chair; Paul Austin, Joe King, Liz Pape (Remote)

Other Attendees: Dick Maki, Resident; Valerie Handy, Recording Secretary (Remote)

Discussion of Upcoming WRSD School Budget Meeting Monday February 27 along with Proposed Budget Scenarios:

WSRD's February 27th meeting will be the first budget hearing for WRSD. The completed audit of WRSD was unsatisfactory and WRSD had zero response to findings. There has been no due diligence reported. The committee voiced that WRSD was not taking their responsibilities seriously; Paul Austin suggested WRSD adopt a zero-based approach to budgeting as this would necessitate justification for each individual item resulting in a serious look at the budget. In addition, the budget should not be approved if 4% or higher until audit findings are addressed.

Joe King presented scenarios to offset WRSD funding. Joe's goal is to smooth the town's budget spending over several periods and the basis for his analysis is last year's tax basis, FY23 tax Levy, WRSD budget request greater than 4% and the current Omnibus budget. The scenarios range from a 1.5% Tax Increase to a 1.5% Tax Decrease. The Capital Committee thanks Joe for his comprehensive look at Town Budget Spending relief.

Members also discussed dollar sourcing for material capital items, i.e. using ARPA funds or Free Cash funds as this would not impact the tax rate. It is important to focus on "wants" versus "needs". Liz Pape recommended a Multi-Year Budget Projection to gauge the total impact on Debt Servicing and Capital Planning as well as a departmental prepared building and equipment maintenance schedule. Members will take a second look at the scenarios and funding sources after the WRSD school budget meeting of February 27.

Discuss FinCom/CBC Input the to the 2022 Annual Town Report: The final version was reviewed and is complete. The committee thanks Lynne Sheppard for her major contribution in producing the report.

Other/New Business:

Town Warrant: To promote transparency for voters, it was agreed that the town warrants should not group disparate items together into a single warrant. Taxpayers should vote on standalone items. Also funding sources should be separate.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:15pm. Motion by Joe King, 2nd Paul Austin. Roll call vote unanimous.