

**Participatory Budgeting Commission**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
**Thursday, January 21, 2021, 3:30 p.m.**  
**Virtual Zoom Meeting**

**Members Present:** Holly Bowser, John Fenske, Meg Gage, Liz Larson, Jon McCabe, John Page, Cathy Schoen (7)

**Members Absent:** None.

**Guests:** None.

Prepared by John Page.

Meeting called to order at 3:33PM.

1. **Review Agenda** – Meg reviewed the agenda identifying the following goals:
  - To finalize plans to interview with key staff and committee members, including review of materials.
2. **Determine Minute-Taker** – John Page volunteered to be the notetaker for this meeting.
3. **Approve Minutes**

VOTE: To approve the minutes from the January 7, 2021 meeting as corrected.

MOTION: Cathy Schoen

SECOND: Holly Bowser

VOTE PASSES 5-0-1, John Page abstaining since he was absent from that meeting.

Meg and Holly are gathering past minutes for archiving and requested that commissioners send the final versions in to be posted.

John McCabe joined the meeting.

4. **Planning interviews with Town staff and committee leaders**
  - a. **Review materials** –

Meg thanked Liz for preparing the draft materials. The commissioners discussed the “What is participatory budgeting” introductory language as well as the question to be asked of stakeholders including the “bonus questions” for the Town Manager and Town Council President. After discussion of the value of its addition, the commission concluded to insert the sentence, “Funding sources can be an allocation of the town budget, charitable contributions or a combination.” to the end of the first paragraph describing “What is participatory budgeting?” John Fenske noted that the background information including the three strategies (A,B, and C) to augment current processes was otherwise good. Fellow commissioners agreed and conversation turned to the questions. Liz suggested sharing all

the questions with all the interviewees. However, after reviewing the questions, and determining that not all questions would be relevant to all the stakeholders and could cause confusion, the commission confirmed the plan to entrust each interview team with the task of narrowing down the questions to those most relevant to the interviewee. Liz reminded the commission of the importance of including the other stakeholders PBC is interviewing in our request to the interviewee.

**b. Review plan for reporting –**

Each team will write a summary of the discussion they have, including questions that come up. Bullet form is acceptable. Each team should review the interview notes before they are circulated. Interviews are meant to be candid conversations, and therefore can be conducted on a personal Zoom or other platform and do not need to be recorded. Commissioners then moved on to the timeline to execute these team interviews and report back to the full commission. Meg suggested canceling the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of PBC and instead conduct interviews that week, submitting a report to Meg by January 11<sup>th</sup> for distribution to the whole commission. The next PBC meeting would be January 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:30PM where teams will share out about their interviews.

**5. Topics the chair did not reasonably identify 48 hours before the meeting.**

Scott Merzbach of the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* had sent an inquiry to the Chair, asking for an update. Commissioners decided, while coverage of PBC's work is very important to engaging the public, it would be best if Mr. Merzbach could wait three-four weeks when the commission would have more to report.

**6. Public Comment – None.**

**7. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 4:30PM.**