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# Citizens' Taskforce Minutes

Monday, March 7, 2016 6:00PM

Sealing Cove Business Center

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**Citizens' Taskforce Members:** Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Lawrence SpottedBird,  
Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Hugh Bevan, Alene Henning  
Tristan Guevin (Assembly Liaison)

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Rule called the meeting to order at approximately 6:01PM.

## II. ROLL CALL

Present: Vice Chair Maxwell Rule, Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Hugh Bevan, Alene Henning

Absent: Chair Rob Allen (excused), Deputy Vice Chair Lawrence SpottedBird (excused)

Assembly Liaison: Tristan Guevin (absent - excused)

Staff: Municipal Administrator Mark Gorman, Administrative Coordinator Renee Wheat, Chief Finance and Administrative Officer Jay Sweeney, Public Works Director Michael Harmon, Assessor Wendy Lawrence, Fire Chief David Miller, Centennial Building Manager Don Kluting, Library Director Robb Farmer

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**M - Bevan moved to approve the February 29, 2016 minutes with the following corrections: Item A of Draft Grand Budget Framework fourteenth sentence add "using budget reserves" before rather. Motion carried unanimously.**

## IV. REPORTS

Chair - Vice Chair Rule handed out the Town Hall Meeting legal notice to the Taskforce. He relayed the Raven Radio piece had been scheduled. He mentioned a new public comment was posted to the Taskforce webpage.

Members - Bevan relayed he attended the Sitka School District (SSD) budget work session. He spoke of their budget deficit and reserves. They made the assumption there would be no CBS utility increase. He conveyed the SSD eliminated three and a half para positions.

City Staff - Municipal Administrator Gorman relayed he was in Washington DC with Mayor McConnell last week. They spoke with Senator Murkowski regarding Secure Rural Schools. Murkoski sounded less optimistic than prior years as it had been difficult to find funding off-sets. He spoke of subsidizing the Electric Fund to keep utility increases to a minimum. He relayed there had been a meeting with City Hall staff that morning regarding budget cuts and City service reductions.

Assembly Liaison - None.

Other(s) - None.

## V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/CORRESPONDENCE

None.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Draft Grand Budget Framework**

The Taskforce reviewed and edited the spreadsheet created by Vice Chair Rule.

**B. Discussion of property tax mill rate increase**

**M – Bevan/S – Henning moved to recommend to the Assembly to have two – one mill property tax increase ballot questions. Motion passed unanimously.**

**M – Bevan/S – Gibson moved to recommend to the Assembly that one of the one mill ballot questions be dedicated to the debt reduction in the Electric Fund and sunset when paid in full on or about 2048. Motion failed one to four.**

Discussion occurred regarding the belief voters would be in favor of voting for a mill rate tax increase if it had a sunset date and the increased tax dollars were to go to a dedicated fund. There was a review of the spreadsheet regarding the financial impact of the Grand Bargain Budget as it pertains to each household depending on family size and age.

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Assembly final report recommendations**

Vice Chair Rule reviewed the Draft Final Report outline and suggested further discussion occur at the March 14 meeting.

**B. Discussion of property tax code**

Consensus was reached not to make a recommendation to the Assembly to uncap the mill rate.

**VIII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

Municipal Administrator Gorman thanked the Taskforce for their efforts and commended them on the progress they had made. He conveyed it was the responsibility of the CBS staff to recommend cuts to assist with the passing of the Grand Bargain and gave examples of recommendations made to date. He welcomed ideas from the Taskforce and citizens.

Fire Chief Dave Miller thought removing sales tax on groceries was a great idea and suggested to lift the exemption during the summer months of the year. In addition, he noted he had considered cutting a position from the Fire Department but decided against it after he calculated the cost of over time that would have to be paid to cover required duties.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**A. Agenda items for the next regular meeting of March 14, 2016**

Agenda items for the next meeting would include the Draft Grand Budget Framework, and Assembly final report format recommendations.

**M –Bevan/S Gibson moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:52PM.**

Attest:  
Renee Wheat, Administrative Coordinator