
Citizens' Taskforce Minutes

Monday, September 28, 2015 6:00 PM

Sealing Cove Business Center

Citizens' Taskforce Members: Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Lawrence SpottedBird,
Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson, Mary Magnuson, Jack Ozment
Tristan Guevin (Assembly Liaison)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Allen called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Rob Allen, Maxwell Rule, Lawrence SpottedBird, Dyan Bessette, Cynthia Gibson,
Mary Magnuson, Assembly Liaison Trisan Guevin

Absent: Jack Ozment

Staff: Municipal Administrator Mark Gorman, Chief Finance and Administrative Officer Jay
Sweeney, Deputy Clerk Melissa Henshaw, Administrative Coordinator Renee Wheat

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**M - Rule/S - Magnuson moved to approve the minutes from September 14, 2015.
Motion carried unanimously.**

IV. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/CORRESPONDENCE

Tim Ryan asked the Taskforce to consider a year round Sales Tax, to watch for Senior Tax
exemption fraud, to cross reference utilities and property tax and he believes we should not
have designated taxes (ie. schools and hospital).

Assembly Liaison Guevin relayed that he will take the lead on communication between the
Taskforce and the Assembly, he questioned the lack of a representative from the school on
the Taskforce and he could review the idea at the next Assembly meeting, Allen stated it
could be an item on the next agenda, Rule agreed since the school could be affected by what
the Taskforce recommends to the Assembly, Administrator Gorman relayed the City does
not have representation on this Commission.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and Decision on Final Report Target Date

Discussion occurred regarding the date and time frame that would be most helpful for the
Sitka School District (SSD) to be advised the dollar figure the City would fund. A general
consensus was January 1, 2016.

B. Economic Overview

CFAO Sweeney gave a presentation on City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) 2015 Economic
Overview, he offered suggestions on how to review the complex CBS budget such as
factoring out interdepartment transactions and take into account that capital expenditures
do not expire, Sweeney pointed out three potential concepts regarding balancing the
budget, first - subsidize from the general fund, second - increase user fees and third - cut
services, Sweeney encouraged each individual to go to the State of Alaska Governor
website to find the link to perform a mock balance of the State budget as a helpful exercise.

C. Consolidated Operating Budget Overview

Sweeney went over broad numbers of the CBS budget; told enterprise funds need to provide sufficient profit for infrastructure renewal; quasi-enterprise funds take in money out of the General Fund; 20% of SSD funding comes from the CBS; he showed workforce numbers back to 1995; told of built in management fees, annual budget by revenue category; gave examples of state reductions; told of collective bargaining; that sales tax has been flat; and fielded questions from the committee members and the public.

D. Questions and Answers for Information Gathering Stage

Discussion occurred regarding CBS Projects such as Harrigan Centennial Hall (HCH) and Kettleon Memorial Library (KML) regarding the facilities funding and maintenance, Administrator Gorman relayed to the Taskforce that presentations would be made by senior CBS staff in Assessing, Electric, Human Resources, Public Works and Harbor Departments regarding minimum required services and funding, it was agreed that the Electric Department and Human Resources would be asked to present at the next meeting.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Rebecca Himschoot asked why the increase in City employees in 1995, she asked Allen and Rule if they are serving as citizens or on behalf of their employers, both stated as citizens, key parts of the CBS budget are the SSD and Sitka Community Hospital (SCH), will the Taskforce be scrutinizing SSC and SCH budgets.

Lois Rhodes thanked the Taskforce for their services, she stated that we need to know what are our duties, how are we going to pay for it and what can the citizens afford, she read the CBS employee salaries in the handout provided and asked if it could be broken down into annual salaries.

Caleb Comas told of statistics with regard to personnel and increased unemployment, he relayed he felt a progressive property tax would do well in Sitka.

Michelle Putz felt our property taxes are low, suggested having a priority list by the end of the year, agreed with splitting out pieces of the budget, pointed out if we outsource services it may cut cost to the government but it may not save the citizens money, asked about possible intragovernment loans, and thanked the members for their willingness to serve.

Alene Henning appreciated all members of the Taskforce and for the information that was offered during the meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A. Set next meeting date

The next regulatr meeting is October 5, 2015.

B. Review of Materials to be Completed Prior to Next Meeting

State of Alaska Governor interactive balance budget link will be posted to the CTF web page.

Magnason moved to adjourn, seeing no objection, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:07pm.

Attest:
Renee D. Wheat, Administrative Coordinator