

Budget Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes
March 21, 2012, 5:30pm

Attendees: Tom Clash, Michael Cohen (Co-Chair), Dan Cunningham, Joan Gavrilik, Chris Kidera (Co-Chair), Tim Maniccia, L. Arturo Palmer, Kim Phelan, Bill Reinhardt, Sandra Shapard, Nick Smirensky

Elected Officials & Town Staff present: John Clarkson, Jeff Dammeyer, Erik Deyoe, Kyle Kotary, Jeff Kuhn, George Lenhardt, Nancy Mendick, Rich Mendick, John Smolinsky, Joann Dawson, Nancy Mendick, Robin Nagengast, Gregg Sagendorph

Meeting Summary

Mike Cohen gave some background on town banking and Arturo Palmer presented his research on using a lockbox for collecting water and sewer fees. Nancy Mendick raised the concern of how to handle errors, which in her experience, do happen. Mike Cohen discussed some of the preventative measures that the bank can enforce to avoid errors in processing checks. There will be a presentation to the Town Board at the March 28 meeting.

Tim Maniccia discussed the process for drilling down from 932 New York State towns down to 8 comparable towns, by focusing on upstate towns identified as “suburban” in nature by an earlier OSC study, then removing towns with villages, or without comparable police forces, or vastly different in size. He explained that there is no identical town to Bethlehem, but the group feels they have a manageable and meaningful sample for comparison. Overall, Bethlehem spends 25% more per capita than these comparable 8 towns spend on average. As a result of this analysis, it was concluded that each budget working group will need make their own comparisons and pick peers based on their subject area.

Mike Cohen and the budget team on multiyear projections and financial policies have been working on a fund balance policy that will be presented at the March 28 Town Board meeting. The group is also working on a multiyear projection methodology that will be used to project the 2013 budget situation by the end of April.

Work group liaisons reported out on the status of their subject area groups. All groups feel they can meet their due dates. The goal is to explore options early on, target the creative middle ground, and advise the Town Board. The next meeting of the full committee will likely be in early May.