

From: James McNair <jmcnair3@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 11, 2021 6:47 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: cutting services

Rob,

Good day. I'm trying to confirm my memory. My recollections were you stated you preferred not to cut services until the voters decided. Is that accurate?

On a different thought, if recommended budgets cut services before an initial referendum, does the BOF have authority to add back spending to let voters decide?

thx for your time and be well,

James McNair

From: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 5:45 AM
To: James McNair <jmcnair3@comcast.net>
Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Re: cutting services

James,

Yes, I have stated that I do not like to make cuts in the budget before a first referendum that would result in a reduction in current services. That being said, if a case can be made that those services are no longer needed, personally I would be open to considering that input.

Any increases or decreases in the budget are at the department level, so reductions that BOF makes, or reductions the voters at the Town meeting make, all are at the department level (bottom line on the BOE) and may not lead to the specific reduction desired by either.

The Board of Finance can add back spending, but only at the department level. Although the BOF can state why we are increasing a department budget, we do not have line item authority, so an increase in spending may not lead to a restoration of that service. The voters at Town Meeting can only reduce the budget.

With the exception of the year of the State budget crisis, in my tenure on the Board, the First Selectmen in implementing the budget, have followed the intent of the BOF and/or voters and not purposely increased or changed line items in the published budget after it was approved by the voters. No one can tell how any year may play out, so there could be, and have been, situations that dictate changes that need to be made.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance

From: James McNair <jmcnair3@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 6:20 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Re: cutting services

thanks.

From: Jason L. <jaylach@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 11, 2021 6:12 PM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Cc: Bernard Dennler <bdennler@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: August 4th Meeting Minutes

Dear Mr. Tarlov -

I was looking over the minutes from the August 4th Board of Finance meeting and noticed that missing from them is the revelation that the raises for elected officials have already gone into effect and are already being paid out even though those funds have not been approved by the citizens yet. I have also noticed that Mary's statement on not accepting the raise, along with the paperwork she provided to the board, is also missing from the meeting minutes.

These issues are extremely important to the people of our town. We should make sure that they are correctly recorded in the minutes of that meetings so all citizens who didn't have a chance to attend the meeting can get a full picture of the landscape. I am sure this is just a simple oversight but I wanted to raise my concern before the minutes are approved at the next meeting.

I have copied Bernie and Andreas on this email so that if a motion needs to be made to have the minutes corrected, a bi-partisan set of people are aware who would hopefully be willing to make that motion.

Thank you!

- Jason LaChapelle

From: deee bouchard <deeedeee1963@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 10, 2021 7:27 AM
To: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: Transparency Software

Dear Rob,

Recently there has been debate, about why the transparency software, which was approved by the citizens at referendum, was not fully implemented and then ultimately removed from FS Bylone's budget.

Can you please provide some historical perspective and a timeline, (if possible) as to what exactly happened.

I know from my own experience when using the software, it often did not include the budget detail I was looking for, and the information always appeared to be a couple months behind.

Thank you
Deanna Bouchard

From: Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 11, 2021 6:15 AM
To: Dee <deeedeee1963@yahoo.com>
Subject: Fw: OpenGov

Dee,

On your request for history/timeline, I think the email and the attachments sent to Mary on 1/15/2020 to bring her up to speed on the history of Opengov does a pretty good job of providing that.

Let me know if you have any other questions.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance
860-608-4293

From: Robert Tarlov
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2020 6:27 AM
To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>
Subject: OpenGov

Hi Mary,

Took me some time to cull through the many emails to pull out the ones relevant to the research on the 3 companies we considered.

The history of this software began in the summer of 2016 when I discovered Opengov when doing research of other towns' budgets. Over the next 6 months we interviewed and got quotes from three different companies. Robert LePore, a CPA and head auditor for Pfizer reporting directly to that company's CFO, did the research, analysis and comparative presentation to the BOF. The Board Finance in February of 2017, unanimously approved a recommendation that the Board of Finance approve the software and that Art add the first year cost in the 2017/2018 budget. The

money was in the budget approved in May of 2017, but the BOS did not address this until over a year later, in the spring of 2018.

Munis/Tyler was never in the game. Had we been interested in only the transparency, Munis was the most expensive at 7,500, least flexible and least robust. Cleargov's price without the first year discount was still the cheapest at 5,250, but they were a new company with few customers and none in CT.

Opengov's transparency software was 6,000 and we felt the most robust, however, it was the second module (Productivity, Management and Reporting) that was the determining factor. We felt this module could provide the information important to making sound financial decisions and improve effectiveness and efficiency in Town Government. I think it was Tom Kane who said this isn't worth doing unless we buy the entire package.

So here we are 3 years after that meeting, and the most important part of Opengov in the BOF's recommendation has yet to be implemented, and the part of the package that has been poorly implemented and it provides neither timely nor detailed available data useful for the Board of Finance.

Maggie points out that I am the only one logging in. Although I am occasionally looking for data, I mostly log on just to see if data has been updated. Although I think the software, if fully functioning, would be accessed mostly during budget season or when faced with important financial decisions, such as the ALS Program, the available data at this point is of no value and taxpayer money is being wasted.

I logged on this morning and see Town data updated through November and school data through October. The data is uploaded daily yet currently we can only see data that is 6 (town) and 10 (BOE) weeks old. We are 6 1/2 months into the year and approved budget is yet to be posted (system limitation). Maggie makes the decision when the boards and public can see the data. The BOF was emailed data for November in December, and yesterday afternoon for December. I had always envisioned using opengov to review finances for our meetings.

The fact that the proposed budget cannot be integrated and the adopted budget cannot be posted until the audit is completed highly limits the functionality of the transparency module. Although there are workarounds, they will take some work. Opengov had offered to create the workarounds, but resistance did not allow them to proceed. I also understand there is a budget creation module, but extra dollars, not sure if cost would be justified. Maybe it could replace the transparency software.

Looking at the emails from a year ago, I believe that 15/16 results were previously on the site.

On a related topic, Maggie's reports used to be posted on the website as part of our agenda package on Fridays. Now I get an email that I need to forward to the board. This week I got them yesterday afternoon. Had I not been involved in work yesterday morning, I would not have logged in until this morning to forward them to the board. As a volunteer most of my free time to review things like these Munis reports is on weekends. Getting them the afternoon before the meeting

provides most members little time to review. Logging on to opengov on the weekends would be the most effective and efficient way for me to review for an upcoming meeting.

Over 10 years, I have recorded a ton of data in my records that I use in backing up my approval of spending decisions or supporting my negative decisions. I has been an arduous and time consuming process completed over many years. Few volunteers have the hours or time in service, the ability or desire to accumulate this data. Opengov does that.

Gathering this information has been made more difficult in that I need to ask for it at times no one is available to reach out to and in many instances the requests have been ignored.

The level of detail that the Board has access to is far less than the system's capability. Personally, all is public information and don't know why we hide it, even from the public, but the from the BOF? To me, when more information and data is available, questions and requests decrease, they don't increase as some believe.

As I stated above, the reporting software was the most important part of the product. Board of Finance has repeatedly been asked to make decisions based on spongy data. Department Presentations made over the years have inconsistent data for the same year. Data for the same years change as future presentations are made. Even the budget books from year to year show these inconsistencies.

The policy decision making and implementation of this product should not have taken three years, and still not be implemented. There is blame on both Opengov and the town, although based on my experience, the overwhelming majority of the delays and problems are on the Town.

Attached are:

- Email history between Roberta and I during the research phase
- Roberta's Power Point Presentation to BOF
- Roberta's spreadsheet comparing the products
- Screen shot of Opengov from this morning.

Clargov is now 3 1/2 years older than when we considered them last. Not sure how much they grown or if they have added the services that led us to choose Opengov. I am concerned about another integration if we were to make a change

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance
860-608-4293