

BUDGET COMMITTEES: BROADER INPUT TO YOUR TOWN BUDGET

Any town or district in the State of New Hampshire, under RSA 32, can vote for and create a budget committee. The Budget Committee becomes the source of the budget proposal for the town or district. Members may be elected or appointed. The budget committee is less likely to be pressured in a public setting like the selectmen often are at the town meeting. Your town's budget committee can be immune to the depredations of the political forces leaning on the local school board and board of selectmen.

The budget committee creates an open window on the process for the taxpayer, they serve in a system of checks and balances for town spending.

As a practical matter RSA 32 prevents the annual meeting from exceeding the budget committee recommendation by more than 10%. Budget Committees have the power to demand public documents and answers from public employees. The elected or appointed budget committee places the final warrant numbers on a Municipal Service form that becomes a historic and legal record safe from alteration. This is transparency desirable at all levels of government.

The annual meeting will almost always support and adopt the budget committee's proposed budget. The town meeting may also propose other warrant articles for spending. You and your community would be well served by enacting a Budget Committee for your town or district. If you have a Bud Com in your town investigate serving to share the workload and protect your property interests.

Remember that you're entitled to have your voice heard. A few persons at a town meeting can have a large effect on the outcome of the process.

Protect your property, defend what you have earned from the malicious or misinformed efforts of those who are supposed to be representing you.

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