

## FISCAL TASK FORCE MEETING OF 07/17/2025

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Cote(RC), Member, James Medeiros(JM), Member, Nancy Thompson(NT), Member, Kate Simons(KS), Clerk, Chris Sullivan(CS), Chair

TOPIC		ACTION
	Meeting Called to Order at 5:30PM in the Moitoza Pettey Hearing Room	
	<p>The inaugural meeting of the Fiscal Sustainability Task Force convened to address Berkeley's ongoing financial challenges, bringing together a diverse group of seven community members with backgrounds ranging from military service to education and business operations.</p> <p>The committee's primary objective is to evaluate and present up to three financially viable solutions for the town's structural budget issues. The meeting delved deep into the town's financial landscape, revealing a critical situation where roughly 95% of revenue comes from residential taxes and the community has been consistently struggling with tight budgets and heavy reliance on stabilization funds.</p> <p>Potential solutions discussed included general operating overrides, service reductions, regionalization of services, and exploring alternative revenue strategies such as carefully considered commercial development.</p> <p>A significant portion of the discussion centered on public engagement and education. The committee recognized the critical need to communicate complex financial information transparently and effectively. They explored multiple potential communication channels, including the town website, social media, potential mailings, information sessions, school email distributions, and even an information booth at the transfer station. The key challenge was to provide balanced, factual information without advocating for a specific solution, while ensuring residents understand the nuanced financial realities facing the town.</p> <p>Legal constraints and the importance of transparent communication were carefully considered. The committee aims to develop a comprehensive strategy that balances diverse community interests, providing clear options that residents can understand and evaluate.</p> <p>The Task Force committed to recurring bi-weekly meetings, with a focus on reviewing financial documents, identifying potential additional committee members, and preparing detailed options for town consideration. The overarching goal remains clear: to create a sustainable financial future for Berkeley by presenting viable options that responsibly address the town's economic challenges while maintaining essential services and community quality of life. The task force sees its role as not just solving immediate financial problems, but setting a foundation for long-term fiscal stability and community prosperity.</p> <p>The Task Force moved to organize with a motion and second for the election of Chris Sullivan to Chair the Task Force. Motion was approved.</p> <p>The Task Force further moved to appoint a secretary with a Kate Simons receiving a nomination. Motion to appoint and second followed with a unanimous approval.</p> <p>Late in the meeting the topic of future scheduling was explored further, with the Task Force discussing and tentatively agreeing upon proposed potential meeting dates, and the group collaboratively decided on meeting every two weeks on Thursdays at 5:30 PM, starting July 31st. However, this was not done through a formal motion but rather through an informal group agreement.</p> <p>Task Force moved to adjourn at 6:45p.m.</p>	<p>Motion to appoint; NT moved; JM seconded; motion approved</p> <p>Motion to appoint; JM moved; RC seconded</p>