

BELGRADE BUDGET COMMITTEE

The Town of Belgrade Budget Committee is an advisory committee of volunteers that weight in and forward fiscal suggestions and guidance on budget priorities and relative monetary amounts for the town financial needs. Proposed budget items are reviewed line by line with the Belgrade Select Board, the Town Manager, the Town Treasurer and clerk staff during a monthly (and even bi-monthly) half day meetings starting in September and going thru January till town warrants are drafted and finalized for Spring Ballot. During this six-month budget process, the heads of the different town departments are invited to present their own departmental budget proposals and financial needs for consideration. Once the Spring Ballot is drafted, the Belgrade Budget committee forwards its final recommendations to the public (with a summary of the committee vote in favor or against the specific warrant article) to be considered at the time local taxpayers are casting their vote on the Warrant Articles (town expenditures). **Democracy does not get any better!**

This particular year posed significant and unexpected challenges. With the global economy surfing a harsh inflationary session alongside the Ukraine-Russian war, the turn down of the stock market, and the post Covid era of constant unsettled uncertainties, life is different. We all had been forced to adapt to different spending habits. Gas and food prices had jump drastically! Also, laboring wages have spiked at local outfits in a scramble to retain and attract employees. Those dynamics had impacted your town budget too. Our town could not delay any longer the need to appropriately update the town pay scales plus addressing needs in town building infrastructure. The town is also struggling with locating a reliable contractor to provide snow removal starting the winter of 2024-25 and for such paralleling staging a Plan B with the potential institution of Belgrade Public Works. All these financial upgrading has come up with a cost as our taxes will certainly go up this year with the present Belgrade mil rate estimated to go up at least by \$1. Please, note that is common to experience such mil rate increase when the above-described financial adjustments take place.

In a final note, there is an open invitation for residents to join the Budget Committee. Our meetings are open to the public. And presently, there is one vacancy in this committee with each member expected to serve for a 3-year term.

We will be sailing these difficult waters and moving ahead to better and bright 2023 year. Our town is lucky to have very fiscally conscientious leaders who put duty above personal interest. Our personal thank you goes to all the town staff and volunteers that labors and gift their time looking after our local citizens providing straightforward unbiased governance in the duly compliance of their duties according to their oath and the pledge to follow the laws and orders under the US Constitution.

2022-23 Budget Committee Members

Sara H. Languet, Chairperson

Bruce Galouch, Vice-Chairperson

John (Jack) Sutton

Scott Ferguson

Catharine Damren