

Town of Cape Elizabeth
Taxpayer Bill of Rights Task Force
Minutes of July 26, 2006 Meeting

Present: David Backer, Chair, Town Council; Beth Currier, Co-Chair; Janet McLaughlin, Co-Chair; Kevin Sweeney; Ann Swift-Kayatta, Town Council; Carol Fritz, Town Council; Rebecca Millet, School Board; Alan Hawkins, School Superintendent; William DeSena; Matthew Sturgis, Town Assessor; Michael Duddy; William Gross; Christy Rabasca; James Hanson; Lynda Breary; Bob Goettel; Kyle Parrish; Kevin Stilphen. Several individuals were also present in the audience, but did not appear to request membership on the Task Force.

Mr. Backer opened the meeting by welcoming the participants, and then introducing the co-chairs for the task force.

Ms. Currier and Ms. McLaughlin made a joint presentation, during which they explained that the purpose of the Task Force is educational. The Task Force will discuss how the proposed Taxpayer Bill of Rights would effect the Town of Cape Elizabeth, and discuss how transition might be accomplished if the initiative passes. They also explained the ground rules for the Task Force. They explained that the Tax Force would use a consensus method. They then circulated a spreadsheet of task force members, and invited others present who wished to participate to add their names to the spreadsheet. They explained that membership on the Task Force would also be open to individuals who attended either of the first two meetings of the Task Force.

The co-chairs introduced Matthew Sturgis, Town Assessor, and indicated that Matt was the staff person assigned to the Task Force. They indicated that questions raised during the course of the Task Force would be forwarded to Mr. Sturgis for collection.

The co-chairs then introduced Mr. Becker, who is the President and CEO of the Maine Heritage Policy Center. The Maine Heritage Policy Center drafted the model legislation.

Mr. Becker presented a one-hour long power point presentation in favor of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights. Mr. Becker was presented with several questions during the presentation. After one hour, at the request of the co-chairs and participants of the Task Force, Mr. Becker continued with his presentation for another 20 minutes. Mr. Becker's complete power point presentation is currently shown online on the Town website.

Members of the Task Force asked several questions that appear to need further review and response. Questions included the following:

1. During the past several years, statewide student enrollment has decreased, but statewide educational employees have increased by over 5,000. What specific positions constitute the increase in employment, and to what extent are those positions paid for by federal funds?

2. The Town Manager had prepared a spreadsheet calculating the Taxpayer Bill of Rights growth limit for the past year as 1.4%. Mr. Becker responded that the growth allowance for the preceding year would have been 3.4%. A question was raised to clarify the appropriate growth target.

3. Mr. Sturgis asked the question about whether two votes or only one would be required to perform a re-valuation.

4. A member of the Task Force asked whether the Colorado Taxpayer Bill of Rights had been interpreted in such a manner as to require budget cuts from year to year.

The co-chairs thanked Mr. Becker for his presentation.

The co-chairs then explained that the Task Force would meet every other Wednesday until the general election. Accordingly, the meeting dates for the Task Force would be August 9, August 23, September 6, September 20, October 4, October 18 and November 1.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Duddy