



SELECT BOARD BUDGET MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
5:30 p.m. ~ Tuesday, January 16, 2024

BUDGET MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Ball called the meeting to order at 5:30p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** Chair Carolyn Ball, Vice Chair Natasha Johnson, James Vallette, Luke Damon, Chapin McFarland (By Zoom) Manager Marilyn Lowell, Finance Officer Becky Gatcomb, and Town Clerk Jennifer LaHaye.

A. Excused Absences *(if any) None*

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** Request of the Town Manager for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

Damon motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. Seconded by Johnson. Vote: 5-0-0.

4. **BUDGET REVIEW:**

Harbor House/MDI Campfire Coalition

Ingrid Kachmar, director of Harbor House Community Center, was present in person to discuss Harbor House and MDI Campfire Coalition funding requests. Kachmar advised that Harbor House is requesting a 10% increase, noting that they have not asked for an increase since 2016. Discussion related to Halloween, Christmas, and other community events took place to see what Harbor House's role would be. Kachmar explained it is hard to find volunteers, and there is a lot of work put into community events. She noted a decrease in attendance at past Halloween events.

Kachmar provided information about MDI Campfire Coalition. She advised they provided services to 108 households and that they saw an increase of 41 families. 38 of the families were from Southwest Harbor, while 31 families were from Tremont. All towns island-wide contribute to this fund.

Loaves & Fishes

Max from Loaves and Fishes presented their program to the select board. They are based out of Ellsworth and currently are servicing about 1502 families. They had an increase of 859 families from last year. They recently changed locations, which could contribute to the increase in services. Currently there is no state or federal funding to assist organizations such as theirs. He noted there are about 7 households from Southwest

Harbor served in 2023. Board members explored why families from Southwest Harbor would be receiving services. It was discussed that many of these services are meant to supplement, they may also be receiving other services elsewhere to meet their food insecurities.

Westside Food Pantry

Dean Henry presented on behalf of Westside Food Pantry. They have been in operation for 33 years now. They provide vouchers that are redeemable at local businesses within the area. They provided about 180,000 vouchers within the past year. About 51% goes to residents within Southwest Harbor, about 40% to Tremont residents, and 9% to Mount Desert. They limit service to those three towns. They have seen an increase of 40 households. He noted that about 82% of the utilization is elderly residents. Currently they are funded by donations and requests from the municipalities they service.

Bar Harbor Food Pantry

Tom presented on behalf of the Bar Harbor Food Pantry. He advised that in 2023 they had 6,843 visits. He advised individuals and households can come into their space and essentially shop for the foods they need. The number of people in a household will determine how much food could be allotted on that visit. They service about 25% of elderly/retired age group, about 25% children, and 50% of working age families.

Discussion: Select Board members note there is a need as these organizations are not a solve all but instead help to supplement food insecurities. Damon noted he wished they could just support one organization. Johnson noted there would need to be a coordinated effort with the organizations.

SWH Library

Erich was present in person at the meeting. The library is requesting an increase of \$5,000. Last year they had over 50,000 visits to the library. He noted the use and participation has increased by 5%. The library has not increased their request to the Town since 2018.

Mt. Heights Cemetery

Amy Young and Jim Snow were present by Zoom. Young noted they are working to increase the endowment fund and are requesting \$12,000 from the Town. Ball explores the strategic plan. Young provided the board with various projects such as drainage and looking to raise that area in the cemetery. Ball requested Amy to provide a clear strategy for next year.

Municipal Buildings & Contracted Services /Recap of budget

The select board reviewed the budget and discussed minor changes and or additions to the budget:

~Members discussed an increase in pay to \$20 per hour for the custodian who cleans the bathrooms.

~Members agreed to add another \$280 for two portable bathrooms due to the potential need for the MDI Marathon weekend.

~Norwood Cove tree trimming – Johnson questioned if an extra \$1,000 should be added to this line, while other members suggested \$500. Members agreed \$500 should be enough.

~Revenues – Vallette introduced the topic of the Coast Guard and its relation to generating solid waste within the town. Vallette asked how towns with Coast Guard housing can get reimbursed. No decision was made.

~Manager Lowell advised the board that Chalmers was going to be looking at the Manset dock and assess the damages. Expenses could be taken out of the CIP if needed to fix that dock. It will depend on damages.

1. NEXT MEETING DATE *Adoption of a motion to confirm the date of the next budget meeting for Wednesday, January 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Pemetec School Library.*

Johnson motioned to confirm the date of the next budget meeting for Wednesday, January 17th at 6:00p.m. at the Pemetec School Library. Seconded by Damon. Vote: 5-0-0.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:53p.m. Seconded by Damon. Vote: 5-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer E. LaHaye
Town Clerk

APPROVED

Carolyn Ball, Chair

Natasha Johnson, Vice Chair

James Vallette

Luke Damon

Chapin McFarland