



SELECT BOARD BUDGET MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
5:30 p.m. ~ Tuesday, January 17, 2023

BUDGET MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Called at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Carolyn Ball.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** All present. Chair Carolyn Ball, Vice Chair Natasha Johnson, George Jellison Jr., Jim Vallette, Luke Damon, Bookkeeper Becky Gatcomb, Manager Marilyn Lowell, and Town Clerk Jennifer LaHaye.
- 3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**
Johnson motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. Seconded by Damon. Vote 5-0.
- 4. BUDGET REVIEW:**

Island Explorer:

Paul Murphy the executive director was present in person. He advised there were no changes to the route, things continue to work well with the current route. Board members were able to ask questions. Murphy noted that lack of housing has been a challenge for hiring bus drivers. Island Explorer Bus Service is requesting \$10,000.

Police/Dispatch/CIP:

Police Chief John Hall attending in person, provided information related to his budget. He explained they will be able to do in house web design for their new website. This will cut some cost. He discussed he still has one position that has not yet been hired. They are still down a patrol officer. Chief Hall noted they have adjusted the schedule to have himself and Lieutenant Miller be on call during 2am -6:30 am part of night shift. This reduces cost for overtime and allows for some coverage to residents. Jellison is concerned for budgeting for a position that has not yet been filled.

Ball requested for further conversation related to the Emergency Plan. Chief Hall discussed what he has been doing working towards the "Police side of that". He also referred to Fire Chief Tom Chisholm who was present at the meeting. Chief Chisholm provided an update related to Fire & EMS plan, he and Andrew Braley have collaborated and were going to present to the Select Board soon.

As Board members reviewed the budget, Manager Lowell noted she had met with Chief Hall and reduced parts of his budget. It was noted police supplies requested ~~\$8,000~~, decreased to \$6,000. Police Dispatch has increased due to salaries, health benefits, and uniforms. Moving forward dispatchers will be provided a uniform.

Fire Dept./CIP:

Chief Tom Chisholm attended in person, along with numerous members from the Fire Department. Chief Chisholm presented his budget and noted he is requesting a fulltime Firefighter. He reports call volume continues to increase, continued training for both fire and EMS to fulfill their first responder license. The department is seeing a wide variety of call types, along with increased stress within the membership. A fulltime firefighter would allow to provide emergency coverage during those times it can be a challenge to ask volunteers to leave work to respond to call. Chief Chisholm notes the cost of living has played a role in membership, he noted there are several members unable to locate housing within the town. This full-time position would allow for continued routine maintenance of the trucks, equipment, and building.

Jellison advised he cannot support it. Jellison expressed this should have been brought to the board earlier. Discussion around future island wide Fire Department took place. Bar Harbor and Mount Desert have collaborated and created what they have without reaching out to Southwest Harbor. Jellison advised the health reimbursement needs to be accounted for and more money would need to be put in the reserves. Ball advised this would be good to review further at the recap. Board members reviewed the CIP. Manger Lowell noted that when she and Chief Chisholm met, they have decreased from last year \$6,100. Currently the Fire Department owns everything and has paid recent SCBA equipment debt off. FD is asking for \$232,815.

SWH – Tremont Ambulance Nursing Service:

Andy Cline attended in person and presented on behalf of the SWH Tremont Ambulance. Cline stated he recognized a substantial increase they are requesting this year. They have been fundraising on their own and obtained over \$218,000. The increase in their budget is due to the 8.7% raise with anticipation insurance has gone up. Cline states they have looked hard to raise funds and balance their books. Cline stated their coverage of shifts and response time has increased. 96-97% of the shifts were covered this past year. Andrew Braley noted about a third of the calls are from Tremont. They have also requested a substantial increase for next year as well. Braley explained the new ambulance position they are looking to fill. This position would be a full-time person with a dedicated 36 hours a week in the office. They would be responding to calls for service emergent and non-emergent. SWH Tremont Ambulance Nursing Services is asking for \$90,000.

Administration Revenues/Reserves:

Tabled to 1.18.2023 budget meeting.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE:

Vallette motioned to confirm the next regular meeting for Thursday, January 18th at 5:30 at the Town Office. Seconded by Damon. Vote 5-0.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:08pm. Seconded by Jellison. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer E. LaHaye
Town Clerk

APPROVED

Carolyn Ball, Chair

Natasha Johnson, Vice Chair

George Jellison, Jr.

James Vallette

Luke Damon