



SELECT BOARD BUDGET MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
5:30 p.m. ~ Monday, January 23, 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:

Jellison expressed concern for the percentage of increase in the budget. Vallette noted a lot of the budget is out of their hands, and referred to the schools increase in budget. The cost to educate has gone up.

Manager Lowell supplied a review of some changes made. Admin/Salaries have been updated, the overtime and insurance have been updated. Subscriptions and Dues were addressed, Ball advised that the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter addressing the board. In that letter it noted the Town was not paying their dues. \$500.

Ball suggested that motions be made on several topics where they were not able to be agreed upon.

Code Enforcement/ LPI: - Part time Code Enforcement and LPI, what is listed in the budget contains the health insurance. This office would be working with Tremont and Southwest Harbor. This wouldn't be able to start until after July 1st 2024.

Motion by Johnson to hire new part time CEO/LPI for the FY 24. Seconded by Damon. Vote 4-1. Jellison nay.

Jellison states he can't justify this. He believes there should be a deadline set so the town is not having two employees working at the same time. Several members shared the benefits of having this shared position with Tremont, and a training program for a new CEO and LPI. The new employee would not be able to become a Licensed Plumbing Inspector for a period of time. There would be more training with a certification involved. John Larson would be able to continue to practice until the new employee is certified.

Conservation Committee:

Jellison stated they didn't want to have Chris' Pond Development Reserve last year, and he would like to see that taken out.

Jellison motioned to remove \$1,000 from the conservation commission budget. No second. No action taken.

Recycling/ Joining the ADD: Vallette reminded members they had discussed joining ADD.

Vallette motioned to increase Acadia Disposal District budget by \$3,000 from \$3,850 to \$6,850. No second. No action taken.

Jellison would like to see the figures if the town doesn't include recycling in the budget next year. There is a chance the town goes back to single sort if the Hampden Facility reopens. Members discussed the numbers of what it could be.

Jellison motioned to not fund recycling next year. Vallette seconded the motion with the caveat to request EMR engage with the task force to identify ways to lose waste, including diverting ways that are more economical than the current options.

Ball explained requesting EMR to engage with the task force is not something that should be addressed in a budget meeting. Vallette disagrees because it will reduce cost. Vallette withdrew his motion. Manager Lowell suggested discussing with Mr. Worcester and believes he would be willing to work with the Town.

No second to Jellison's original motion.

Highway Department: Members reviewed the earlier changes in past budget meetings. Cold Patch was tabled to come back from an earlier meeting. Manager Lowell said that she still does not have an answer.

Police Department: Income protection has been reduced due to correct number. There is still a possibility the phone line at dispatch can be disconnected. This will be adjusted before it goes to Town Meeting. Jellison expressed concern the budget has increased greatly since 2018. Ball reaffirmed the discussion of reducing the overnight shifts. Ball suggests looking at reconfiguring the Police Department in the future is something that should be discussed.

Fire Department: - There are incorrect calculations with workers comp. Raised to \$3,000 more, this includes the per diem. Manager noted that Chief Chisholm would possibly give up the per diem firefighter position in the budget this year if needed to achieve the fulltime firefighter. Chief Chisholm was present to answer various questions members still had. Chief Chisholm advised they would try to hire within the Department. Discussion with Chief Chisholm and members related to the schedule, hours, and work week. Chief Chisholm recommended having a 40-hour work week would be more enticing to someone applying.

Vallette motioned to accept request of full time EMT-Firefighter for \$101,559. Seconded by Johnson. Vote 4-1. Jellison No.

Vallette motioned to zero out the purposed per diem firefighter position. Seconded by Damon. Vote 5-0.

Health Insurance/Benefits: Manager Lowell reviewed the health benefits and insurance. No changes noted.

Capital Improvement Program – (CIP)

Members reviewed various parts of the CIPs with each department.

Highway- total is \$42,094 and was a total decreased of \$104,579.

Police total including Dispatch is \$71,416.

Fire Department – total \$37,572 and was a total decreased of \$3,301.

Harbor -total \$61,401 and was a total decreased of \$91,756.

Manager Lowell noted that the Harbor House municipal building was not added into this.

Harbor House:

Members reviewed the lease with Harbor House. Vallette noted that Harbor House is responsible for the structural maintenance of the building. Jellison expressed he did not believe there should be a line item with Harbor House. Jellison noted they had the work completed in the last fiscal year, now we are in the current fiscal year we would be funding something in the next fiscal year that was completed two years ago. He does not feel it is appropriate for the town to do that.

Johnson questioned if this should be its own separate warrant article. Ball noted the contract doesn't really specify that we as a town are responsible for structural issues, but we did say we would participate. Ball was referencing an earlier meeting discussion with Harbor House.

Damon expressed that he felt they were being taking advantage of. Damon states it is unfortunate no matter what. Members agreed they would have liked to hear from Harbor House prior to the work being completed. Vallette agrees with Johnson, this should be a warrant article. Jellison says he can't support this.

Members discussed the proposed project Harbor House presented to them in maintaining the walkway between LS Robinson and the Harbor House leading down to the post office. It is a public way, and the Town would maintain it, pave, it, and plow it.

Johnson motioned to create a separate warrant article to reimburse Harbor House for the cost of \$26,640 for roof repairs. Seconded by Vallette. Vote: 2-3 Ball, Jellison, Damon nay.

Reserves:

- Professional development will be increased due to the amount of each Police Officer needing about \$2,100 per year.
- Health/Reimbursement Account: Members discussed the cost of the deductible which the town is responsible for with each employee. The town pays two thirds of the deductible, 50% of the copay up to \$150. Manager Lowell explained the process of reimbursement to an employee. The goal balance could be reduced to \$68,000. If everyone uses it, it would be \$64,000. This doesn't normally occur.

- Municipal Building Insurance: Johnson explored where the money would come from if a claim were to be filed. Ball suggested the admin line.

Salaries: No changes noted.

Community Services:

Any new community services, need to send a request to receive the packet. MDI Nursing Association missed the deadline last year, which is why they did not receive appropriation.

American Legion Hall - Jellison states he doesn't believe the town should be funding American Legion. Jellison noted they have made mention that they have looked at selling the building in years past. He adds it is a good organization. Damon noted the request is not the solution. Johnson noted if the consensus of the board is to not take on new community organizations a policy should be put in place. Ball noted that could be put on the boards to-do list.

Common Good Soup Kitchen – They did not present a clear financial picture. Members were in support of the work they do.

Family First Community Center- relatively new, they missed the deadline last year. In past years, the town has funded them. Ball noted they wouldn't necessarily have an opening for a resident for someone in the Town of Southwest Harbor.

Harbor House – Vallette noted the town of SWH is paying more than three times the amount Tremont is for programing involving the after-school program. Damon does think it should be revisited later and suggested approaching Ingrid later to further discuss.

SWH Tremont Chamber of Commerce- Members discussed their location in the Harbor House building. Jellison noted that they have the right under the lease agreement to lease to nonprofit organizations. They are not able to sublet the whole building but could lease parts of it if they wish to.

Summary:

- American Legion Hall – No funds appropriated.
- Common Good Soup Kitchen- No funds appropriated.
- SWH Tremont Chamber of Commerce- No funds appropriated.

Outcome:

- Members would like to discuss investment policy in the future.
- More information about a Harbor Trust – CIP
- Community organization policy
- General information about the CIP Reserve and operating the budget

- 5. NEXT MEETING DATE:** *Adoption of a motion to confirm the date of the next regular meeting for Tuesday, January 24th at 6:00 p.m. at the Town Office meeting room.*

Johnson moved to confirm the next date of the of the regular meeting for January 24th at 6:00pm. Seconded by Damon. Vote: 5-0.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm. Seconded by Damon. 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