



**Town of Southwest Harbor
Warrant Committee Meeting Minutes**

Monday February 3, 2025

6:00 -7:30 p.m.

Town Office conference room and via Zoom

Approved by the SWH Warrant Committee 2/20/25

I. Chair *pro tem*, Ellen Pope, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and took roll call: Mark Amstutz; Priscilla Ksionzyk (via Zoom); Don Lodge; Ellen Pope; Alan Rosenquist (via Zoom); Anne Trotter; Carl Wrubel; Town Manager, Karen Reddersen; and Finance Manager, Becky Gatcomb (via Zoom).

II. Don Lodge moved to approve the agenda, with an amendment to begin the review with revenue instead of community requests, seconded by Mark Amshutz and approved unanimously

III. Members took a few minutes to introduce themselves and comment on why they serve on the Warrant Committee.

IV. Ellen spoke about the committee's tasks, including reviewing municipal and school budget requests for FY 26; voting to recommend or not recommend budgets; submitting comments and concerns to the select board by March 5, 2025.

V. The floor opened for nominations for this year's officers. Hearing none, Ellen proposed Anne Trotter as chair, Lydia Goetze as vice chair, and herself in the role of secretary. Priscilla moved to approve this slate, seconded by Mark and approved unanimously.

VI. Karen Reddersen provided an overview of the budget's development, starting with department leaders and other town staff and moving through the Select Board's review over several meetings. Highlights of her remarks included:

1. The schedule works back from the Town Meeting date and state and municipal regulations.
2. She believes the process can be smoother next year, with more spacing between SB meetings.
3. Original budget showed a 30% increase in expenses; a revised budget was pared to 16%.
- 4.

5. CIP (capital improvement) budgets needed corrections to reconcile with actual account balances.
6. Some budget items are “non-negotiable,” meaning they are required by law or other obligation.
7. The audit is not in-hand for FY25, eight (8) months into the fiscal year; delays are attributed to the school’s slow accounting submissions, which is a handicap in municipal budgeting.
8. The cost of float adjustments and work to the pier are included.
9. Debt service is significant.
10. Large federal grants—including FEMA grants for storm damage and the public works facility—require town match monies, but not all information is available.
11. The public works facility will require voters to approve a bond of \$800k+, and the Woods Road engineering needs may be an upcoming bond.

VII. Code of Conduct policy and Freedom of Access Law

Karen distributed copies of the policy and the Freedom of Access law , requesting that both be signed returned to the town office by Friday 2/7/25. She noted that the FOI Act requires a two-hour training, which is available online.

VIII. Warrant Committee Schedule

The committee agreed to meet every Monday and Thursday, with the exception of Presidents’ Day, as follows:

Thursday February 6 fire station – all meetings will be 6 – 8 p.m., unless otherwise agreed upon

Monday February 10, town office

Thursday February 13, “

Tuesday February 18, “

Thursday February 20, “

Monday February 24, “

Thursday February 27, “

VIII. Budget Review

The committee began its work with a review of revenues. Noteworthy items included the increase in tax commitments; the potential installation of kiosks for parking revenue; and the town’s agreement to provide police services to Tremont.

Becky clarified that ‘revenue sharing’ funds from the State of Maine sometimes exceed budgeted amounts but projections are conservative.

Suggested topics for the next meeting included: continue revenue review; community organization requests; debt service; administration; and insurance.

IX. Chair Anne Trotter adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m., following a vote to do so by Lydia, seconded by Carl.

Respectfully submitted, Ellen Pope, Secretary