

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

Monday February 10, 2025

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Town Office conference room and via Zoom

Chair Anne Trotter called the meeting to order at 6:10, following a brief technical issue with Zoom.

Attending: Mark Amstutz; Priscilla Ksionzyk (via Zoom); Lydia Goetze, Don Lodge; Ellen Pope (via Zoom); Alan Rosenquist (via Zoom); Anne Trotter; Carl Wrubel; Town Manager, Karen Reddersen; and Finance Manager, Becky Gatcomb.

Agenda: Lydia Goetze moved that the agenda be approved as presented, seconded by Don Lodge, and approved unanimously.

The committee continued review of the town's revenue projections, where discussion included:

- ◆ Corrected calculations have been made
- ◆ Clarification regarding federal and state revenue
- ◆ Noting that recreational and commercial harbor revenues are about even
- ◆ A beautification plan for the town could potentially raise private and business support
- ◆ Clear messages should be developed about water and sewer work: Why it is important and the history of spreading costs among all residents, users or not.
- ◆ The select board should improve communications with the town and residents.
- ◆ Karen is doing outreach at the SWH Public Library re. municipal affairs.
- ◆ Kiosks may be a source of revenue, once a plan is developed; revenue and expense are currently even in the budget.
- ◆ Grants are shown in the reserves.
- ◆ Mooring revenue could change in future.

## Debt Service

A change order was issued for additional work at the Main Street project, which is an overlay for connections to driveways. This work was approved for \$158,000 and will be sourced from highway reserves and will not increase debt service.

(2.)

It was noted that the net addition to debt service over all is about \$600,000, based on the retirement of the sidewalk project debt and potential addition of \$800,000 for a public works facility (municipal garage).

## Community Service Organizations

Karen introduced this topic and provided background on the SWH/Tremont Nursing Association request (ambulance/emergency services), including a newly formed task force. Other items discussed included:

- ◆ The town's obligation to help care for the Mt. Height Cemetery;
- ◆ Whether the process could be improved, such as having criteria for proposal evaluation;
- ◆ How these investments fit with property tax increases and the increasingly uncertain prospects for the economy;
- ◆ Whether to hold funding for NGOs at FY25 levels, noting their ability to raise funds from other constituencies;
- ◆ Members spoke about the benefits of the services these organizations provide and expressed appreciation.

Don moved that funding for community service organization requests is recommended to remain at FY25 levels, with the exceptions of the SWH/Tremont Nursing Association (ambulance/emergency services), those 'zeroed' out, and the addition of a new grant to the Common Good Soup Kitchen, seconded by Mark and passed five (5) in favor; two (2) opposed; and one (1) abstention.

## Administration

Karen noted that salaries for union employees are required to be raised 5 %. While 3.5% is a municipal norm, to show parity, town salaries also include 5% increments. Further, after comparisons to Maine Municipal Association data (cost-of-living and salary surveys), Karen recognized that some town positions need adjustments to reflect the level

of work, retain employees, and remain competitive. Town administrative staff has been down one full-time equivalent (FTE) for some time, and that position is not included.

The new cost of the family medical leave payments, required by legislation, is proposed to be borne by the town. Some towns require co-pays or full payment by employees (1%). Don moved to approve FML as presented, seconded by Mark, and approved unanimously.

The committee then agreed to vote each warrant as a package at the end of the process, unless a motion is outside the purview of the warrant vote.

Insurance did not generate discussion. It was noted that the projection is an average of (3.)

two previous years.

Karen mentioned that she is pursuing an update to the town's policies for remote attendance, noting that currently policies vary and should be uniform.

### Municipal Buildings

Karen noted the salary line represents a part-time employee who maintains the public restrooms.

There is a new cost for internet service, as the University of Maine is no longer providing free use of its internet.

Are there other cost-saving options for internet?

### Code Enforcement

Tremont has moved to its own full-time code enforcement officer (CEO) and is no longer sharing a CEO with SWH.

The budget reflects an increase from part-time to full-time, with benefits.

A goal could be to have this position "pay for itself" with fees generated.

Oversight includes new buildings, changes, planning board permitting, select ordinance enforcement.

Karen will report back with more information from the MMA about fees related to code enforcement.

### Next agenda

The committee agreed that personnel would be called in on a selective basis, if members

agree more clarification or depth is required.

The agenda for 2/13/25 is:

- ◆ Police
- ◆ Dispatch
- ◆ Fire
- ◆ Highway
- ◆ Contracted services
- ◆ Boards and committees

At 8 p.m. Ellen moved the committee adjourn, seconded by Alan, and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Pope, Secretary