



SELECT BOARD BUDGET MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
5:30 p.m. ~ Thursday, January 11, 2024

BUDGET MINUTES

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Ball called the meeting to order at 5:30p.m.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** All present. Chair Carolyn Ball, Vice Chair Natasha Johnson, Jim Vallette, Luke Damon, Chapin McFarland, Finance Becky Gatcomb, Manager Marilyn Lowell, and Town Clerk Jennifer LaHaye
- 3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** *Request of the Town Manager for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.*

Johnson motioned to amend the agenda and include CEO, Insurances and Boards & Committees that was not completed last night. Seconded by Damon. Vote: 5-0-0

4. BUDGET REVIEW:

Island Explorer

Paul with the Island Explorer presented on behalf of the organization. He shared that their operating costs have increased by about 35%, but they are asking for the \$10,000. This is the same as last year. Johnson explored if they would extend their service to the seawall Tremont area. Island Explorer advised that they did service Tremont. Currently there are limiting factors of drivers; the annual goal is to have 120 drivers, yet they currently hire about 80. Johnson explored if they would be included in providing service when the MDI marathon is happening. He advised they could not provide that service due to the federal money they received. They would not be allowed to do this. Paul advised the organization had demoed two electric buses this summer, and he noted they both had some range issues on the longer route. At one point they had to take it off the road $\frac{3}{4}$ of the day on the longer routes. The organization will apply for the RAISE grant – 21 buses will be coming due to be replaced in spring of 2026. They are submitting this grant in the hopes they can replace those buses with electric buses. It will be for around 25 million dollars. The National Park is helping write the application.

Police/Dispatch/CIP/Reserves

Chief Hall was present in person.

Department and Office – E ticket printer line item is for the cruiser. Chief Hall explained the state enacted a law where the departments are obligated to track and report both race and ethnicity around trafficking tickets. In March, the department will be provided with the computer program to go into the cruisers. He explains officers will swipe the license and it automatically pulls the demographics. The printer is needed to print the ticket, and the individual will receive the ticket. The Chief is requesting two printers.

Animal Control – The line item covers any billing from the animal shelter if an animal is taken to the shelter.

Parking Officer – Damon notes that this position is only bringing in about \$1,500 for tickets. He noted several parking issues within town, and at the Manset dock parking area. Chief Hall advised the parking officer plays a key role and contributes to the community policing of the town. He has provided a presence within town, is available to answer questions, and provides parking information.

~Town Clerk noted that parking violations surrounding the harbor areas will go into a different line.

~Currently the town is funding six fulltime officers (Chief, Lieutenant, and four police officers) When Chief Hall came on board, previous board members granted him another position and then they lost a patrol officer and have never been able to fill that newer position. They went to ‘on call’ last budget cycle. Damon discussed coverage; he does not want to overwork the officers. He notes a lot of smaller towns don’t have that full-time coverage. Johnson advised she does not agree and does not want to lose this position.

~McFarland asked about the fourth patrol officer. Chief Hall advised having this officer would allow for him to get back to the administrative tasks and get another officer back into the school and take the community policing to what it is supposed to be.

~Vallette wanted to explore background checks for new hires. Manager Lowell noted it was under the Police Equipment and Reserve. Vallette confirmed there were funds.

~Damon discussed Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs; he noted it looks like it was overspent a bit. Chief Hall spoke to this, as for the cruiser, which is now the primary vehicle. There are warranty items that are still covered. The next new cruiser will be minimal maintenance; Chief Hall advised it was purposely to reduce this line.

~Damon -Police Supplies – same as we have been funding, explored if it should be reduced. Chief Hall advised it to be reduced by \$5,000.

~Vallette explored if the Department needs tasers. Chief Hall explained the policy created before they used the taser they had to arch it. By arching it, this reduced the actual use of deploying the taser by 80%. Chief Hall advised he would rather arch a taser. This is invaluable equipment.

Johnson – asks about the cruiser 26 line. Chief Hall advised another car would take its place, and there is currently no money being put into it. The \$45,000 put into the expense line will pay for the Tahoe, which will be cruiser 64 because that will be taking the place of cruiser 61.

~Johnson- asks questions regarding the replacement years for pistols. Chief Hall advised that most of the departments are switching from 40 caliber back down to 9mm. The weapons and ammunition is less expensive. We have an opportunity to trade in the 40 Cal. which are no longer being produced or serviced. There is good money for trade ins. Johnson suggested the appropriation could be taken out. Members agreed for line 106 be zeroed out.

~Johnon -Rifle rated vest replacement yr. 2024. Manager Lowell advised it was similar to the other vests. Members discussed adding \$124 dollars to each vest. The 5 vests are \$425 apiece.

Reserves

Vallette- requested Chief Hall to discuss the administrative assistant position. Chief Hall advised that for the police department to be accredited, they have two years to complete it. The heaviest

lift in this process is producing the policies. Once that task of the polices has been completed it will be ongoing documenting of all the training, as well as plan and monitor the onsite planning program. This position will be maintaining the training records, managing all the files within house, complete investigations, and manage the medical and health records. This employee would need to have knowledge of law enforcement and dispatch. Part of the process of Administrative Assistance requires access that you don't want every employee to have access to, nor could they allow every employee to have access. This could not be a shared position between the dispatch employees.

~Manager Lowell discussed the Equature Recording System, of which the first bill is \$6,213. There was an extra \$2,000 for the one-time set-up of the system. That will come out of the expense line for 2024. She advised we won't need to appropriate the \$3,101 because we have enough in there for a balance of \$4,213.44. The \$3,101 can be removed.

Dispatch Equipment CIP – Dispatch console. \$68,700 is roughly the cost to have it replaced, one was recently replaced.

Police Department final total: \$58,573 (decrease of \$12,630)

Fire Dept./CIP/Reserves

Chief Chisholm attended in person. He provided a basic update of the Department. Chief Chisholm requested for a small stipend be available for firefighters who signed up to be on call. He noted almost half of the Department hold an EMT license. He noted that he is requesting Maine State Retirement for the current fulltime firefighter. They originally budgeted the 401K at 6% increase to offer the Maine PERS \$7,078. Chief Chisholm offered to remove his own salary increase to make this happen. Manager Lowell noted the Lieutenants 1 & 2 won't take an increase to allow for the increase to provide Maine PERS.

~Johnson – advised she doesn't agree with the decrease in Chief Chisholm's salary. Though she appreciates his gesture of reducing his own salary, feels it's important he see that increase. Board members agree this should not happen.

~Manager Lowell advised Chief Chisholm was willing to take a decrease to offset the cost of the Maine PERS. She advised a vote by warrant article would need to happen to include the fulltime firefighter in the Maine PERS.

~McFarland – asked Chief Chisholm if the department is getting any state money; Chisholm replied not at this time, however, has the application.

CIP

Municipal Building – the building is approaching the 20-year old mark; it's projected to last for 40 years before major maintenance would need to happen. Select Board members requested some quotes to be discussed next year.

Heat Pumps are brand ne; no need to fund now.

Truck 110 – little service rust, and in good condition. It is the primary truck used.

E113, L112, E103 zero out

LED Sign - Chisholm will look further into pricing a new LED sign. Currently the one the department is from COVID money obtained by a previous town manager. It is two LED signs put together.

Administration/CIP

Reserves

Members explored whether there was an overlap with Town Managers, with a transition for both. Johnson suggested adding \$5,000 to this.

Salaries – add \$6,000. making it \$110,738

Professional Services- Damon asked if the audit cost will increase. Manager Lowell advised that this is not anticipated.

Equipment – add money for microphones for Select Board meetings.

Mileage – has increased.

Computer Licenses: These have increased slightly; 8% was added to the current bill.

Zoom – brief discussion to explore Zoom costs. Members decided not to increase.

Municipal buildings – Town Garage – \$48,600: members suggested taking \$45,000 out. If something was to happen, insurance on the building would be taking care of that. Manager Lowell noted the new garage would be bonded.

Town Garage/Sand & Salt Shed - Manager Lowell suggested getting a quote to erect one wall. Members discussed placing \$5,000 as a place holder.

Boards & Committees

The only adjustment is the conservation committee that was discussed last night.

Zero out warrant committee request.

Historic Cemetery – Will do mailings at times.

Insurance

430: \$46,222 is with MMA, will need to remain in place.

425: Debt Service – all the bonds were reduced. The water tank is the same, with a standard payment every year. We will start making payments on the Main Street Project in 2025.

Wastewater Treatment Plant: we will not have another payment until the fall of 2026. They projected it out two years, so we won't have to make another payment for two years.

Code Enforcement

410: Regular salary went down a bit. This year we had 18 hours scheduled.

5. **NEXT MEETING DATE:** *Adoption of a motion to confirm the date of the next regular meeting for Tuesday, January 16th at 5:30 p.m. at the Town Office meeting room.*

Johnson motioned to confirm the next meeting. Seconded by Damon. Vote: 5-0-0.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30p.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