



SELECT BOARD BUDGET MEETING
Town of Southwest Harbor
Town Office & Via Zoom*
5:30 p.m. ~ Wednesday, January 18, 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:

Bookkeeper Becky Gatcomb presented the overtime spread sheet she completed for the Select Board members. The spreadsheet outlines each department and provides a breakdown for each employee.

Harbor House/MDI Campfire Coalition:

Ingrid was present in person. The board decided to discuss the Harbor House roof later in the reserve portion of the budget meeting. Ingrid provided a basic overview of the program and was able to answer questions. Ingrid noted the afterschool program is for Tremont and SHW kids. Currently they are averaging 18-19 students a day. Tremont pays less than SWH. Vallette would like to see a bit more detail in the numbers of students served by this program and by each town. Ingrid advised she could email further information to Manager Lowell. Harbor House is asking for \$59,640.

SWH Library:

Erich Reed Director of the library was present in person, along with Chair Linda Hayward. Reed provided a basic overview of the library and services they offer. Reed shared about 4,200 people come to visit the library. He said they appreciate the support from the town. SWH Library is asking for \$60,000.

Mt. Heights Cemetery:

Jim Snow was present in person, and Amy Young via Zoom. The cemetery has a continued demand for lot sales. Maintenance cost continues to rise, they are attempting to mitigate that with the trust funds given. Ball explored what their plan is. Snow reports currently there are \$27,000 in annual expenditures. Future needs are mapping, surveying, roads, repaving, they are in the process of replacing the shed. The primary plan is paving, to fund over time. They currently do not do fundraising. Amy reports they need more board members to help. The plot sales are the only source of revenue, they have a new extension of 120 rows, currently they are only on row 7. Mt. Heights Cemetery asking for \$12,500.

American Legion:

Robert Cramp from the American Legion Hall was present in person. He advised they are in an odd position currently. The hall has fallen behind as many did when Covid happened. They want to be able to support the community. Currently their air quality is a concern, has been a hinderance in the most recent blood drive. They are requesting a one-time assistance. They are looking to purchase a heat pump downstairs. They have a humidity problem, and the heat pump may help with the humidity. Johnson noted that a de-humidifier may be more appropriate for their needs and noted a Climate to Thrive could be a support to them. Damon also added some suggestions as well and advised he could follow up with him further outside of the meeting. Vallette asked if grants have been explored. Cramp advised they had not yet. Jellison made a short reference to an unwritten policy of not taking on new community service if they had not applied for the recent years before. He expressed the residents of the town should not be paying for things like this. Discussion related to other towns having policies to not take on new funding requests. American Legion is asking for a one-time amount of \$5,000.

SWH-Tremont Chamber of Commerce:

Heather Lewis, Bonnie Lewis, and Holly Masterson were present in person. Heather Lewis explained they are requesting support this year. They have asked for support in the past but have not been consistently asking as the years have gone by. Bonnie Lewis noted the most recent community event the Chamber participated in was the Chili cook off at the Legion Hall. Last year the select board paid their dues. Ball expressed concern for supporting as they are not a 501-C3. Heather Lewis believed they were a C6. Damon noted there was an unwritten policy that members have followed in the past to not take on any new funding requests. Johnson noted this policy has not been written. SWH-Tremont Chamber of Commerce is asking for \$2,500.

Common Good Soup Kitchen:

Laurie Ward was present in person. Laurie provided an overview of the services provided to residents. They have been operating since 2019 and were originally a delivery program. Currently they serve onsite meals and deliver, as well as run a food pantry on Sundays. Questions were asked about other existing food pantries. Ward noted that the Westside Food pantry gives them any food that is collected, they operate on a voucher system. They provide

two vastly different services to the community. They deliver to about 120 individuals island wide. Most of the pantry is on the SWH side. They do receive funding from the Town of Northeast Harbor. Their big summer fundraiser will provide about 80% of the revenue. Damon noted there were some blanks left in the application. Ward apologized for this and advised that they are currently in between accountants, and she did the best she could with the application. Common Good Soup Kitchen is asking for \$2,500.

Administration Revenues:

Manager Lowell provided highlights as she reviewed the revenues.

*\$91,816 estimated for homestead.

* Jellison explored additional line for reimbursement for 65 and older tax freeze.

*Excise tax – vehicles increased to \$471,420.

*Miscellaneous line – Becky advised an example is when a check has bounced by a customer, the office collects a fee for that check. The bank often doesn't have the town pay for a returned check.

*PERC Rebate – should be changed to MRC Rebate.

*American Rescue Plan – received all money within 2022. \$0 for next year.

*Dispatch services went up 7%.

*Fire Department Miscellaneous- Manager Lowell will discuss with the auditors to find a way for any donations to go back to them. Currently they are a revenue, and then carry over to the general fund, the Fire Department is unable to expand them.

CIP/Reserves:

Harbor House – Ingrid presented a future project of cleaning up the flowerbed and widen the walkway between Harbor House and McEachern's. The tree may need to be removed due to the roots. Ingrid will consult with the Conservation Commission on this to have the tree warden look at it. Harbor House is paying for this project.

Board members discussed adding a line item. The lease agreement states the town is not responsible for structural maintenance. It was the consensus of the board a line item needs to be added but a process needs to happen. Ingrid added the lease should be clear for future board members and future Harbor House directors, so they don't have to debate every time. Members agreed this would be beneficial. Members would further discuss adding a line in the recap of the budget. Harbor House is requesting the town pay \$26,640 for the roof repair, they believe it structural. This is the additional cost of the plywood.

Reserves:

Wage and Benefit Reserve – This has been changed for an employee that will be retiring shortly. The amount has been reduced to \$7,000.

Professional Development – Police department needs \$2,100 per person to complete the proper training. Currently the Police Department has expended \$9,000. Manager Lowell believed Chief Hall had asked for \$10,000 to be built into the budget last year but was not. She believed this was missed in error.

Townwide Planning – Appropriation FY24 has been decreased to \$0.

Historic Cemetery Reserve - There will be work completed for \$16,135.

Health Retirement - Should be changed to Health Reimbursement.

Sidewalk Reserve – Decreased to \$0.

Trail Gant – Manager Lowell continues to explore what this grant is from.

Wellness Grant – This is to be used to reimburse the next gym membership to dispatch/patrol officer.

Conservation Commission – Manager Lowell and Bookkeeper Gatcomb have been added to the bank accounts. This was the recommendation of the auditors. Both continue to work with the Conservation Commission.

Property and Casualty- Decreased. Vallette noted the Town was insuring the tent for the Swap Shop. Members noted it was for \$10.00 Questions were raised as to why the Town would be paying for this. Manager Lowell will further investigate.

Recap of Budget:

Tabled for Monday January 23, 2023 at 5:30pm.

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 motioned to confirm the date of the next regular meeting for Monday, January 23rd at 5:30p.m. at the Town Office meeting room. Seconded by Damon. Vote 5-0.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

Damon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:20p.m. Seconded by Johnson. 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