

Minutes from the Budget Committee Meeting - 3/10/2022

The Budget Committee met at 6PM on March 10th, 2022, in the Merrill Room at Wescustogo Hall and Community Center (WHCC).

Members in attendance were Bill Young, Jim Knight, Sandra Falsey, Steve Palmer, Jay Fulton, Chair Andy Walsh. Secretary Linc Merrill had let us know in advance that he could not attend on this date. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Diane Barnes, Fire Chief Greg Payson, Lisa Thompson (our Community Center Director), and Town Clerk, Debbie Grover. Draven Walker, Assistant to the Town Manager, participated and also ran the sound and video equipment to record the meeting.

A new budget page, “Summary of Changes – Fiscal Year 2023 Budget” was given to the committee members, and then a subsequent update by email. The meeting got under way at 6:02 P. M.

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First to speak, Committee member Steven Palmer suggested that the committee delay action or discussion of the Remote Policy, which was an agenda item from the last full meeting minutes, due to the numerous activities and issues ongoing as we approach the vote for the [Referendum](#). Chair Walsh said he would allot a strict 5 minutes for the policy discussion at the next meeting and firmly control the time limits of the discussion.

Lisa Thompson talked about the increase for expense line item E 140-01-5222, a rise from 11,162 to 16,562. She expected additional attendance and additional revenue to result from this popular event. Lisa also provided a printed copy of the [WHCC's Calendar for March](#), in order to demonstrate how much the utilization of the facility has increased as the pandemic winds down.

Town Manager Diane Barnes explained how revenues from events are shown separately from the list of expenses for items being displayed in the updates.

Committee member Sandra Falsey asked why there's a need to hire an assistant for the facility, which adds expense to the budget. Lisa explained that the WHCC hours of business are too much for 1 person to handle. With the current pace of events being booked, the center could easily be open from 7 AM to 10 PM. Right now, she is solely responsible for opening and closing although there is some sporadic assistance when a committee member, or employee might close up for her, Pickleball was an example of that. Another reason to hire the assistant is to share the work of broadcasting the meetings held in WHCC, a service currently provided by Draven at overtime rates (OT), perhaps 15? additional hours weekly.

Committee member Jay Fulton how the savings from reduced OT might balance against the labor expense of the new employee? The new employee would be a full time schedule. Market conditions suggest getting a qualified, competent person to apply and accept the job require full-time and a reasonable rate. The new employee's schedule will extend the hours of operation in the evening especially for the Gym rentals.

Committee member Bill Young asked about Weekend coverage, and what's happening now? The new custodian, Mary, does do a little of the coverage, but that doesn't match her job description. Lisa currently works 50 to 60 hours per week, and that kind of effort is not sustainable for the long run, especially as demand for events and services rise now that the pandemic is subsiding.

Committee member Steve Palmer asked if we are sure that building's use is primarily for North Yarmouth residents? The use of the facility is primarily for North Yarmouth but there is participation from Cumberland also. An example mentioned was Coach from Cumberland with kids from both towns. (note: we share a school system & library with Cumberland)

Committee member Sandra Falsey ask for examples of current rates. Mentioned were the Gym for 50.00 per hour, but 25.00 for Non-Profit status. There is a review in progress for a proposed rate increase for the fees for time and events.

Committee Chair Andy Walsh asked if the WHCC as an entire building can pay for itself, meaning become completely self-sustaining ? Lisa tries to make sure that all events receive good revenue, but the building itself with its fixed expenses is not self-sufficient. Town Manager Diane Barnes supported that point, saying that in her experience with other towns, she's not seen a community center that was totally self-sufficient. She said that she would provide a breakout of expenses and revenue for the WHCC and give that to the committee.

Committee member Steve Palmer pointed out that self-sufficiency was not promised at the start of the project. Lisa said that was similar for her experience at South Portland (SoPo). SoPo's center also had the additional expense of a public swimming pool. They're expensive to maintain.

Committee Chair Andy Walsh asked what % of total expense will be covered by the revenue from events and hourly rentals? (the notes don't record an answer...) The pandemic reduced everything and now the business is on the upswing.

Committee member Sandra Falsey asked what is the projected revenue for the next period. Lisa thought that the increase may be 40,000.00 or more.

Committee member Jay Fulton commented that the position for an assistant could help to drive that revenue. WHCC has a level of fixed costs that won't decrease, but every extra hourly rental or event drives up revenue efficiency as compared to those fixed expenses.

Lisa mentioned that the Fund Town tickets will be sold and bring in extra revenue. There will be family discount tickets also. (I'm looking for more observations here... can anyone contribute?)

Committee member Bill Young asked if TIF revenue could possible offset WHCC expenses. Diane said no, the TIF structure did not allow that.

Committee member Steve Palmer asked if fees could be increased. A review of fee structure is underway with Ryan and Stacy. (Again can anybody expand this section with better info?) Andy recommended that a review be done.

Committee member Sandra Falsey asked who utilizes the facility. It is residents of our town and Cumberland

BUILDING & GROUNDS expenses were next

There were three changes in the B&G updates, and there was a discussion of the expenses for brown tail moths remediation

There is additional expense for fountains in the Veterans Park in the budget. The pipes were laid in the last budget. Next will be the fountains.

Committee member Steve Palmer pointed out that the Town doesn't own the Veteran's Park. Steve is not against the initiative. Committee member Sandra Falsey asked why are we paying for it? The response from the table was that the Select Board (SB) approved it in the fall. Steve said we should have a formal statement of policy for expenses committed to properties we don't own, in general.

Committee member Steve Palmer asked for details of the expense for the town offices and other outbuildings. Part of the expense was to fix up a heat pump that fell off the wall. Committee member Jay Fulton question what is the purpose for the scaffolding at the town offices currently? It's needed to remove the chimney, which is no longer needed and create a danger of leaking.

Committee member Sandra Falsey asked what is being considered for replacing the siding on those buildings? "Hardie Board" siding is fiber and cement, which is obviously heavier than wood. Someone responded that Ryan has a plan for strapping with that product.

Committee member Bill Young inquired about the condition of the door of the Salt Shed. Chief Greg and Steve Palmer explained the plan to fix the bottom parts of the door came from Clark at the last meeting.

There are additional expenses for window replacements needed for the old Sharpe home near then town offices. Chief Payson explained work that was needed on the building, such as 10 windows from the 1990s, a wall that needs to be rebuilt, and the chimney has no flue. Additionally, two large picture windows need to be replaced. ? Size 7' of glass.

Committee member Steve Palmer asked if the building was up to code. Greg said the smoke detectors were replaced in 2016.

Committee member Sandra Falsey asked if Metal Roofing could be used there because of its long life as compared to shingles. Ryan will consider the choices. No decision on that yet.

Committee member remarked that some tree cutting might help with the moisture problems at the house, by allowing more sunlight.

(I'm asking for additional info on this next point from the meeting)

Committee member Steve Palmer asked about the 2000.00 for the road near the pit. We apparently have a shared expense agreement there with the homeowners and the town. No way to avoid it. Draven Walker said that the town received that \$2000 bill with no warning, after some roadwork was required.

## SECTION 10 – SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

We corrected our Budget Books to replace an error in section 10. The planned increase is 3%, not the 10% typed on the last line of the page.

Town Manager Diane Barnes said that some recycling prices are improving, but we can't count on that due to price fluctuations.

Committee member Steve Palmer said that a review of YOY (Year Over Year) prices showed a notable increase recently. Why is that?

For example three recent years showed 644 tons to 696 tons to 789 tons in 2021

Town Manager Diane Barnes speculated that the increase was caused by the pandemic by the use of Takeout food and prepared meals. Also home deliveries caused an upswing in cardboard packaging.

Chief Payson said that he was surprised by the growing participation in the Garbage to Garden (GtoG) program. Bill Young commented that nearby Cumberland has home pickup for GtoG

Committee Chair Andy asked if we need to review the line entry for G to G? Jim Nichols said no gain happened.

Andy asked about the entry for Pay As You Go bags? Draven Walker said that we don't need to pay for them. Under our contract, the cost from the bags at the town office is deducted from revenues. Should the entry move to solid waste? No.

We agreed that next week's 6pm meeting will be moved to 5:30 PM.

Town Manager Diane Barnes ? Why a whole meeting for the ARP (American Rescue Plan) revenue is needed? For the Playground project, Committee member Bill Young question details on why move 25,000.00 from the TIF fund? Diane Barnes explained that when the town makes a commitment publicly to the project, that action will trigger donations from the Public. Past projects show that Town commitment to a project reassures public confidence. Lisa Thompson explained that the playground will be on the grounds of the WHCC. Chair Walsh ? If specialists will be involved in the construction of the playground? That is still to be determined. Other project ideas under consideration are an outdoor basketball court, landscaping surrounding, pickleball outdoors.

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The meeting ended upon a motion, a second, and a unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted for review and correction as needed,

Thanks

John K Fulton (Jay)