

North Yarmouth Maine Budget Committee
Meeting of April 18, 2024
6:30 p.m.

Chair Andy Walsh called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were members Steve Palmer, Jeff Candura, Sandra Falsey, Jay Fulton, and Linc Merrill. Also present were Town Manager Diane Barnes, Wescustogo Hall & Community Center Director Jackie Hersey, Wescustogo Hall staff member Jackson Humphrey, and residents Bill Young, Rich Parenteau, Mike Sweatt, Dixie Hayes, Katie Murphy, and Laurie Gilman.

Select Board Liaison Andrea Berry arrived at 6:33 p.m.

Chair Walsh asked Barnes to present her budget proposal. Barnes began in Section 6 of the budget binder with Committees.

128-03 Parks Committee was presented. Account 5150 is \$1,000 for dues to belong to Royal River Conservation Trust. Account 5635 provides for Park Maintenance and is \$20,000. Account 5640 is \$1,200 and up from last year. These are small miscellaneous expenses and increasing this amount keeps the Town from withdrawing from the Investment account for small items.

128-06-5625 is a request from the North Yarmouth Historical Society that the Town pave the n parking lot next to the new location of the NYHS Old Town House building that is now on the Village Green. Barnes recommended that the amount of \$39,000 in the binder be reduced to \$22,500 and that the money be taken from the TIF account. Barnes suggested the balance of \$16,500 be deferred until next year.

Fulton asked whether we get income from the civic and religious records that the Historical Society stores. Katie Murphy responded that the Historical Society is a separate 501(c)3 and owns the Old Town House building. The Town leases the land the building is on to the Historical Society for \$1 for a 99-year term. There is no revenue.

Fulton asked what the Town does for the Historical Society. Murphy commented that the Town and the Church were the same in the distant past. Palmer commented that parking in the village is a concern. Fulton asked if the parking will be striped. Barnes replied that she was not sure.

Hamlin arrived at 6:38 p.m. during the paving discussion.

Hamlin stated that the road exit from Wescustogo Hall needs to be striped as it is difficult to see where the road is versus the grass at night. She asked if Public Works could do something about it.

Dixie Hayes spoke to the Committee about the parking issue in the village. She said that she can hear Nelson Smith's voice in her head every time parking is addressed because he had said there would not be enough. Hayes said she sees a lot of people parking in the Historical Society lot that are commercial businesses. During the recent power outage, repair crews also used it for parking. She believes moving the Old Town House did a lot for the center of Town. She said she does not like the Town to spend money, but they should on this paving.

Palmer said if we create a parking lot, and then add another, we need to be ready for that in terms of planning.

Merrill asked who is responsible for the parking lot under the terms of the lease to North Yarmouth Historical Society. Barnes said she did not know.

128-08 Waste Reduction Committee. This is an increase of \$100 for the community events they conduct.

128-09 Walnut Hill Parkway is \$1,200.

Hamlin asked where this was. She was advised by Walsh that it is the road beside the pit which the Town owns, and several businesses share the road with the Town in an Association. Palmer asked where this expense was before. Barnes said it was paid by the TIF.

The Committee next reviewed Section 5. This is 125-01, Wescustogo Hall & Community Center.

Barnes said there was an error in Account 5100 Full-Time Wages. It should be reduced by \$5,000. Walsh asked why it was wrong. The issue seems to be a full-time employee who was entered at 40 hours but actually works fewer hours. The Overtime pay line is up a lot.

Hersey addressed the wages. They were unable to fill the part-time position approved last year (Account 5110) so there was a lot of overtime (Account 5120) to cover the facility when it was open.

Account 5130 Allowances covers transportation between buildings for the custodian and a clothing allowance.

Account 5140 Training is requested to be the same amount as last year, but none was spent. Hersey said that Cumberland Recreation is a member of the Maine Parks & Recreation, and we use their access for our needs. This dropped our budget.

Account 5210 Postage did not exist previously as it was paid from a different area.

Account 5216 Software stayed the same as last year at \$500.

Account 5222 Special Events increased to have more funding as more events are being held. There is a need for more supplies we own and set up rather than having to rent them every time. This is things like bounce houses.

Account 5224 Office Supplies is down because we bought a new printer last year and don't need to budget that again.

Account 5226 Office Equipment is \$2,500 and includes a portable projection screen. They have been using the Fire Department's screen. They also shared a laminator with the Cumberland Congregational Church but coordinating with them to prepare the Story Walk has been difficult and requires the staff to travel to another location to do it. This would allow the purchase of a laminator.

Account 5240 Contracted Services is up substantially to \$24,000. The HVAC filters in the gym need to be cleaned every 3 months, there is a request for landscaping services twice a year, and a professional carpet cleaning once a year.

Account 5317 Licenses. \$1,700. This was budgeted Townwide last year.

Account 5412 Internet and Cable. \$2,736. This is a rate increase.

Account 5414 Electricity \$18,000. This could be flat with last year as this is an estimate based on our current costs.

Account 5415 Solar Panels. \$11,500. This is to pay for buying the solar panels. We can buy them in about 2 years and stop paying an annual cost. That purchase can cost \$100,000.

Palmer asked if the \$18,000 for electricity was necessary. From the discussion, it appears solar costs and electricity are something we do not have a good handle on.

Account 5420 Water. \$5,000.

Account 5410 Alarms \$1,425. This is the security system.

Account 5512 Pest Control. \$800. It was explained that we had some pest problems in Wescustogo Hall and had to pay more to take care of them.

Fulton asked if alarms are under 5240 and 5510 and why. He was advised that 5510 is the cost for monitoring only. 5240 is a service of the system that takes place once a year.

Merrill asked who does the pest control. Barnes provided the name of the vendor. Merrill asked about the water bill and why it is so high as the water usage in Wescustogo Hall must be low. Barnes responded that it had to do with the line to feed the sprinkler system. Walsh made comments on this as well. Walsh also said the Yarmouth Water District where he is Board Chair will raise rates 15% in each of the next two years. Barnes said she will check with Yarmouth Water District and see if they can reduce the cost in some way.

Palmer said Nelson Smith had asked about changing the line from 2 inches to 1 inch and that would save money. Walsh said he would look into the size of the line. Barnes said she may be able to reduce the water bill. Merrill suggested that the use of metered water be used carefully. He said that we should not use large amounts of water from the metered system when we pay a flat fee for a hydrant and could draw it there.

Walsh said the water cost is going up to pay for capital projects like the solar farms they are installing with the hope to reduce water bills in the future. The Yarmouth Water District pays \$60,000 a year for electricity.

Account 5514 Floor Mats. \$2,461. This was underbudgeted last year. We use a lot of mats in bad weather and heavy traffic events like during elections. They are changed by the vendor every two weeks.

Account 5516 Custodial Supplies. \$7,000. This was separated last year and with close tracking by departments, it showed Wescustogo Hall & Community Center used more than expected.

Account 5517 Building Repairs/ Maintenance \$26,200. A fire alarm panel needed to be replaced for \$4,000. Palmer asked if it was under warranty and Hersey said the warranty had expired. Hersey said the HVAC has a lot of issues and needs a lot of attention. The doorknobs aren't made any more, so it cost \$500 to have one custom made. The partition walls, which are movable, between the meeting rooms are broken and the door won't latch. The manufacturer is out of business.

Hersey said they recommend we close in the stage in the gym as it is not used because it is too small. They want to make it into a storage room instead.

Hersey and Barnes also explained that we have water that runs into the building because there are no building perimeter drains. The staff has to constantly mop the floors to make sure no one falls when they are on the concrete floors. Barnes said perimeter drains on the building plans, but they were deleted from the plans.

There was an extended conversation about clearing snow at Wescustogo Hall as this line item includes a snowblower and storage shed for it to be placed in. It was explained that the Wescustogo Hall staff clears the snow.

Hamlin said there needs to be a better solution than the staff clearing snow. Candura asked who clears Town Hall. Hersey said Mary, the custodian, does that. Barnes said Public Works helps. Hersey said Public Works comes when they can but they are plowing roads during storms. Barnes said that Wescustogo Hall closes during major storms, but the staff has to salt and shovel in smaller storms as the facility is open.

Candura asked where we store the snow removal equipment now. Hersey said it is kept in the gym storage area. A shed would be kept locked. The Town's snowblower has to be moved from site to site as needed.

Palmer asked how the proposed storage area would be accessed. It is not convenient to go around to get in. Hersey said the items they would store there are things only the employees would access. The rest would be kept in the gym storage room. Hersey said there is exercise equipment that they would like to move over to this building which is currently stored elsewhere.

Fulton asked where the storage shed would be located. Hersey said it would be behind the generator and hidden from the road. Fulton asked if there was camera coverage on the shed. Hersey said there is. Fulton asked if the shed would be kept locked. Hersey said yes.

Palmer asked why we don't chain a snowblower to a post in front of the door. We could consider a shed next year.

Hamlin asked if the generator would be electric. Barnes said we would have a dedicated snowblower for Wescustogo Hall and it would not have to be moved. The Town owns one now, but it is not kept at Wescustogo Hall.

Account 5522 Equipment Maintenance \$5,000. Fulton asked for examples of what is in here. Hersey said it is things like basketball hoops, security camera repair, and repairing doors.

Account 5526 Gas/Diesel \$1,060. No change.

Account 5710 Health Insurance \$37,947. This continues at the current rate for six months and then assumes an increase of 6%. **NOTE THIS DOES NOT MATCH THE BINDER OF 4.25% FOR THE FIRST 6 MONTHS SO THIS MANY BE WRONG**

Accounts 5715, 5720, 5730, 5735, and 5740 as printed in the binder. There were no questions.

Account 5745 \$482. This is the employers share of the Maine Family Medical Leave Act for half the 2025 Fiscal Year. It is ½% of employees' salaries.

Accounts 5740 and 5760 No discussion and as printed in the binder.

Account 5900 Capital Projects \$11,500. This is to acquire four wireless microphones and video equipment for another meeting room so two meetings can be conducted, recorded, and broadcast although they may not be broadcast at the same time due to capacity.

Candura asked how many wireless microphones we currently have. Humphrey stated we have ten stationary and two wireless.

Barnes said the price to do everything needed to do multiple meetings is the \$11,500 price but she has no breakdown showing the specific cost of various items.

Fulton asked if we could get more revenue if we had more microphones for the other room. Hersey said the equipment is a draw. Fulton asked if we would get the investment back. Hersey and Humphrey said it would take a long time.

Hersey said that she thinks people choose the Merrill Room during the day because it is available. They don't usually choose the other rooms and they can't use the rooms at night Monday through Thursday because they are booked throughout the school year.

Candura said there are a lot of one-time expenses. He asked if there were any that could be taken out. Can the microphones be taken out? He said to take them out as they are not needed.

Walsh asked the Committee if they all felt the same way as Candura. There were nodding heads in agreement. Hamlin asked if we tell prospective users of the space that we have this equipment available. Hersey said that most requests to use the space come through email. The official lease for the space comes later.

Fulton asked if we funded Account 5110 last year. Humphrey replied that we did fund it but did not fill it. Palmer asked where the money goes that was appropriated if it was not spent. Walsh and Barnes replied that it goes into the Undesignated Funds at the end of the fiscal year.

Barnes said Mary the custodian spends most of her time working at Wescustogo Hall. Hersey said Mary's time spent servicing the other town buildings is four to six hours a week. Barnes said Mary should be budgeted for thirty-five hours a week and not forty hours. Hersey said they are still looking for a part-time person.

Falsey asked about Account 5244 Supplies. Hersey said the kitchen supplies were supposed to be removed and they were not. She said the account should be dropped to \$3,250. They are moving in another direction with the kitchen.

Falsey asked about the solar panels. If we did not have the solar panels, what would our electric cost be? It appears that number may be unknown.

Candura asked that we take out a 4% increase in payroll for the part-time person that we have not been able to hire. Barnes agreed.

Palmer asked why it has been so hard to fill the part-time position. Hersey said it is because it is nights and weekends. Palmer asked how we encourage someone to take the job. He said we need to decide if we can be open seven days a week. Maybe we can't open on Sunday due to staffing.

Barnes said we are not open on Sundays any longer. That started in December. Barnes said she is working with Cumberland which may help solve the coverage problem.

Fulton asked if there was lost revenue if the facility was not open on Sundays. Hersey said no. Only pickleball had to be cancelled by closing Sundays.

Merrill asked if the bottom line was that it costs \$412,931 to operate Wescustogo Hall & Community Center per year without the debt service cost and asked what the revenue is. Barnes confirmed that this is the cost and the revenue for the current year is \$20,000 and it was \$25,000 in the last fiscal year.

Barnes also said we get \$55,000 credited to us from Cumberland Recreation, so we pay nothing to support the program because they use our facility. Barnes also said that over \$20,000 was credited to the bill we receive to support the Prince Memorial Library.

Merrill asked about the value of the use of the meeting spaces for Town meetings like this Budget Committee tonight. Values should be assigned to these times to see what the actual cost is to the Town.

Hamlin said we need to support the groups like the Scouts who use the meeting rooms.

Barnes said we can get a municipal budget that shows the use of the Town and other organizations that are not charged a fee. Hersey collects the hours of use and reports them to the Town Manager regularly.

Palmer asked Hersey what the Town's responsibility is to support Cumberland Recreation. He asked if we have to supervise their programs that run in our facility. Hersey said that the programs have a coach or leader. Her staff may just do some open and closing and crowd control.

Palmer said there has been a dramatic increase in supplies. Is that from use by the Recreation program? He said we need to make sure our costs are included in our agreement with them.

Walsh said we need to be careful about charging for the use of the facility or it may end up costing North Yarmouth more money.

Select Board Liaison Berry said that the Select Board is looking at the shared services between Cumberland and North Yarmouth and also the School District. She hopes by next year we will know the costs better.

Walsh said we do not pay for depreciation in Cumberland buildings that are used by Cumberland Recreation.

Candura spoke about the breadth of activities that his family has participated in at Wescustogo Hall & Community Center.

Palmer addressed Merrill's previous comments and said the cost of operating Wescustogo Hall & Community Center keeps going up. He said the Town did not anticipate the costs and we need to explain to residents how the building is being used and what the benefits are. Residents need to see what the cost is to the Town. He said we need to know how much we give at no charge to the Scouts and others.

125-02 Community Center. There are no Cumberland Recreation costs as was explained previously. Barnes said she applied to the additional credit to the library account.

Walsh stated that the library is not part of the Wescustogo Hall & Community Center budget. He reiterated that \$412,000 is our direct cost.

Barnes said the Prince Memorial Library runs programs in this facility. Walsh asks where the attendees for these programs come from. Hersey said that they come from Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Gray, and Yarmouth. Hersey said Book Club and Bingo attendees are mostly from North Yarmouth and Cumberland.

Palmer stated to Hersey that her staff spent seventy-two hours getting the grounds ready for a wedding. He said he designed the landscaping to be simple and easy to maintain yet the gardens have expanded. He said that in the future if gardens are to be expanded, there needs to be an approval process because there is an ongoing cost to maintain them.

Hersey said we added a walkway, but we did not pay for it. Palmer said there are tulips, a garden at the flagpole, and another garden. Hersey said these were all here when she was hired, and she is just trying to keep them up.

Palmer asked if the floor can be treated in any way, so it is safer but still easy to clean. Walsh said it can be treated with a material to put grit in it. Hamlin said it would pay for itself. Candura said it should be looked into. He said we still probably need the mats, but it would improve safety.

Fulton asked if there is a landscape cost breakdown. Hersey said there is a Spring and a Fall cleanup planned. The vendor can do it cheaper than our staff can because they have the tools. They added mulch around the trees.

Walsh asked if the Walnut Hill Garden Club could help with the maintenance. Hersey said it is \$1,200 a year for the vendor to do the two cleanups.

Fulton said the Town Office landscaping looks bad. Candura suggested the Town have a beautification day for residents to help do various tasks.

Palmer asked about Account 5517. He specifically asked about the drainage. Barnes said Barrett Made, the contractor, recommended the drainage but it was rejected because it was a "change order." It was suggested Clark Baston, the Public Works Supervisor, should be asked about how we might improve it.

Walsh asked the committee members to look at the minutes of the last meeting.

Walsh asked the public if they had comments. Michael Sweatt spoke about the facility and wondered how Hersey can spend time building programs and increasing revenue with everything she has to do to keep the programs going. He said his wife ran the programs for the City of Portland and that there are a lot of opportunities to increase revenue. A lot of money can be made in after school care and school vacation time.

Sweatt said the facility rate is good and Hersey should not have to do all this work.

Palmer made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Falsey. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lincoln J. Merrill, Jr.
Secretary

