

**Readfield Budget Committee**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, January 11, 2023 – *Approved***

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**Present:** Andy Tolman (Chair), Chris Sammons, Ellen Schneider, Ed Sims, Marty Hanish, Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary)

**Excused Absent:** Teresa Shaw (Finance Officer)

**Call to Order**

**Communications – 15 min.**

- The board discussed General Assistance and applications done recently, Eric informed that a small volume, three or four applications, were done in October and November, some were not completed by the applicants, some were denied. During that process however, Eric did establish assistance through Goodwill to make \$200 clothing vouchers available as an additional assistance to those in need. The biggest barrier Eric is running into is the State's maximum income threshold disqualifying applicants.
- Also discussed, outreach efforts that can be made such as with the school for free lunch and or assistance, or local churches who may know of residents in need.
- The heating fund is growing and the town can assist folks in need with purchasing firewood and having it delivered.

**Review of Prior Meeting Minutes – 5 min.**

- **Motion** made by Marty to approve the minutes, **seconded** by Ellen. Ed suggested the minutes explain in greater detail the change in account structure, that all balances will revert to the general account, and to add in the current year for projected and reserve designated funds. **Vote 5-0** in favor.

**Budget Review & Presentations – 1 hour 35 min.**

**Departments I:**

- **General Government**
  - Labor and Insurance costs are the biggest increases, with Code Enforcement and Town Manager positions the highest tiers by pay, with an 8% proposed increase for all other employees, an average of 7% for all parties collectively.
  - Registry of deeds has slowed down due to residents paying their taxes and less of a need for lien notices and documents
  - Training and conference expenses have increased due to demand
  - The Board of Appeals and Planning Board budgets have been absorbed into the Administration budget
  - Personnel: FICA, mileage, retirement, all increased. Retirement increase due to more employee participation, stipends increase 10% (including Select Board), merit bonuses based on wages

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- Clothing allowance remains the same, yet to be expended
- Utilities- remain about the same, with computer support reduced due to not transitioning to trio web because of server purchase
- Audit – RHR Smith, Eric will double check the price for the audit, but he is pleased with service thus far
- Household hazardous waste costs decrease due to partnering with other municipalities
- Equipment repair and maintenance has increased because of the need of replacements, considered changing IT company but the cost was too great
- **Insurance**- health insurance increasing, health reimbursement remains the same as well as property liability
- **Office Equipment**- computer hardware budget increase due to the need of at least two new computers at the Town office, Ellen suggested a particular vendor who accepts grants from non-profit organizations, suggested increase further to \$2000 after discussion
- **Assessing**- small increase in publications, hard copy maps and updates as well as switching to a new company to fully integrate GIS services.
- Money available for tax bill inserts to assist in educating residents
- **Code enforcement**- increase in membership fee, contract increase of \$2 per hour, revenue should offset increases, permits are up and revenue also comes in from Wayne
- Planning Board and Board of Appeals zeroed out since being moved into administrative budget
- **Grants and planning**- miscellaneous line is where grant writing comes from, the difference is due to Comprehensive Plan/KVCOG
- **Heat assistance**- stayed flat because it is not being used a lot, the committee discussed spending some of that money on outreach to ensure the public is informed about available resources
- **Attorney fees**- dropped due to a healthy reserve at about \$50k
- **Revenue**- many numbers here are tentative, rough sharing remains the same, motor vehicle may be high, forecasting a shift away from taxable goods, interlocal CEO shares about halfway to \$38K, Eric will look into this, but it could be due to prior year payments being late. Carry forwards and undesignated funds will be used to offset taxes, creating enough of a buffer to bolster interest. Trust fund and cemetery are healthy

➤ **General Maintenance**

- Wages, benefits, increased 7.5%

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- Part time seasonal wages increased
- Clothing allowance increase
- Stipends – safety officer 10% increase
- Merit bonus
- Utilities/phone cost increase
- Tools and PPE increase
- Replacement of weed whacker and attachment
- Building maintenance- Electricity increase 50%, due to cost of heat and heat pump addition
- Building O&M – large decrease, some items moved to other lines, ADA compliancy improvements completed, currently doing other building repairs
- Equipment Maintenance- substantial fuel increases, tractor repairs, individual pieces of equipment, 10% increase
- **Regional Assessments**
  - Cobbossee Watershed numbers are speculative, close, but will have a better number by March
  - First Park- seeing profits, broke even in 2022; offsetting revenues this year
- **Kennebec County Tax**
  - Speculative numbers for now
- **General Assistance**
  - Healthy, same concerns as previously mentioned, possibility of funding some public outreach about the program for those in need

**Other Business – 5 min.**

Next meeting to include and discuss Departments II January 25, 2023

- Recreation and Open Space
- Beach and Heritage Days
- Roads and Drainage
- Winter Maintenance
- Cemetery Roads
- Transfer Station

**Adjournment by Andy at 8:25**

*Minutes submitted by Anjelica Pittman, Board Secretary*

# Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes

## December 21, 2022

**Present:** Jeffrey Carlson, Chris Cheney, Jessica Cobb (KVCOG), Greg Durgin, Eric Dyer, Jessica Gorton, Elaine Katz, Greg Leimbach, Matt Nazar, Dennis Price

**Absent:** Paula Clark

Jessica G. called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. in person at the Town Office and via Zoom.

Greg D. offered some feedback from Henry Whittemore, who has expressed his concern that the new Comprehensive Plan, saying he hopes it will not be simply a rehash of the old one, but rather a more current update. He also thanked the volunteers for all their work on this project.

Eric said that the Select Board will be reviewing progress on the plan at their next meeting.

### MINUTES

Dennis moved to accept minutes from the November meeting. Matt seconded. Unanimously approved.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### **Existing Land Use**

Eric said he'd like to keep track of who the lead is on each chapter and provide them with additional help if needed so deadlines can be met. Matt said this chapter is mostly a research project of what the current status is so more help not required. Jessica C. went over the chapter, noting that she added a definition of subdivision and that Readfield doesn't really have a cluster subdivision, which is recommended by the state. Eric added a chart showing the ownership of conservation land. Eric talked about including goals and policies for each chapter and making them consistent across the plan.

Greg said he hasn't gotten all the chapters and asked about a particular subdivision. Eric said he would make sure that he gets all the chapters so he can catch up. Others said it would be helpful if all the chapters were emailed at the same time.

#### **Land Resources**

Eric noted that originally Land and Water resources were all one chapter, but they have separate policies, so were broken into two. Matt asked about the statement that there is a dwelling on an island in Torsey Pond, as he does not recall seeing one. Eric said he would look into it. (Via email, the committee was informed that there is one: Map 102, Lot 046.) Elaine asked about the number of coyotes and other wildlife. Readfield doesn't keep count, but the state does. (Again via email from Eric:

Coyote Populations – This data is not tracked locally, the State estimates 12,000 live in Maine: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/species-information/mammals/coyote.html#:~:text=Biologists%20estimate%20that%20at%20least%2012%2C000%20coyotes%20are%20living%20in%20Maine.>) This chapter also includes descriptions of endangered plants and animal habitats. The town has three remediation sites, but the second lacks an adequate address. Elaine asked if issues such as arsenic and radon are listed. Jessica C. said it's beyond the scope of the town to deal with; it's a state issue. Eric noted that many people asked about water quality issues on the survey. It was decided to add a paragraph outlining environmental issues. Elaine asked for a couple of examples of what might not be allowed in the Rural Residential zone. Jessica C. read some examples from the Land Use Ordinance. Dennis and Eric noted that since there are constant changes in use that this information it might quickly be outdated if it was included in the Comp Plan. Jessica C. said that this chapter is more about physical characteristics of the land as opposed to the rules governing them. The survey information will also be added to this chapter.

### **Water Resources**

Jessica C. noted that this chapter might be a more appropriate place for the contamination issues Elaine asked about. Much of what is in this chapter is required by the state and must be included. Elaine asked if invasive species are included, and they are mentioned re specific water bodies. Jessica C. said she would add a section on that topic and another about water threats such as arsenic.

### **Public Facilities and Services**

Eric said that the biggest change in this section is that the school became part of the RSU system rather than being under town ownership. School enrollment was down a bit last year but due mostly to the pandemic. Greg L. noted that Manchester dropped out of the formal mutual aid agreement. Elaine asked if more details about improvements to the library should be included and said she'd like to see more about EMS included, such as Delta needing more support. She also questioned the response time listed, saying that 15 minutes was probably not accurate. Eric noted that one big change was switching to single sort at the Transfer Station, which saved money and labor.

Via email Eric offered the following: 2022 School Enrollment #s for RSU #38 – 1,185 (per their 1/14/22 census). Also, this is an interesting projection sheet: [https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/1809832/NESCEC\\_Enrollment\\_Projection\\_Report.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1809832/NESCEC_Enrollment_Projection_Report.pdf). He also said he'd add a few statements about the major capital work that happened at both the Library and Fire Station.

### **Transportation**

Eric updated this chapter. One issue is the changing nature of traffic and the amount of traffic going through the center of town on Route 17 as a main corridor. Elaine asked about accidents and whether

they are listed. That is state data but could be added. One big change is the mile of sidewalk that has been added, with more to come on Church Road.

After the meeting Eric provided crash data via email: The Comp Plan is missing traffic count and crash data, but crash data is available publicly (thanks, Matt)

<https://mdotapps.maine.gov/MaineCrashPublic/PublicQueryMap>. Deer strikes account for 1/3 of traffic accidents from 2010-2019. DUI accidents are pretty consistent at 3-4 per year, and Rt. 17 (particularly Readfield corner) is a high accident area.

### **Recreation**

There have been a lot of improvements since the last plan, such as the Fairgrounds improvements and Trails. More is to come, such as an ADA-compliant trail to the beach being proposed in the 2023 town warrant. Adding indoor recreation was discussed. Elaine expressed concerns about public outreach, saying she is concerned that an informed 10% decides on things. She said she feels we should do more to reach people. Most of the committee said they thought the 10% response rate on the surveys was very positive. Eric said the surveys are a supplemental tool and were never intended to be statistically valid. Greg L. said he would take the updated section on Trails to that committee for review. The trail map will be added to the plan. Elaine said Age Friendly would like to see pickleball added. Suggestions to put Recreation, Conservation and Trails under one umbrella were not well-received, so instead the committees will just coordinate activities that affect town land resources. Wording on a vision for the proposed Fairgrounds project that failed to pass in the last election was discussed. Elaine questioned a statement referencing the creation of a senior center. It was decided to change that wording to community center.

### **Historic and Archeological Resources**

This chapter has been reviewed several times. Jessica C. removed some of the changes previously added, as they weren't relevant, and this chapter is complete.

### **Rural Resources**

This chapter has also been reviewed several times. Greg L. has been through it thoroughly. There was some discussion about agriculture in the different zones. This may fall to the Future Land Use chapter when Paula is available.

### **Demographics**

Nothing has changed since the last review. All of the data from the 2020 Census are still not available.

### **Housing**

Eric said Paula offered some suggestions about affordable housing and how it is calculated. It was noted that current housing costs make it nearly impossible for lower income families to buy a home.

## **Local Economy**

Greg D. questioned the wording comparing the percentage of women vs. men working. Jessica C. said she would address it. Greg L. asked if there is any breakdown of public vs. private sector workers. Chris brought up the possibility of including trans and nonbinary persons. Greg D. pointed out some incorrect wording.

## **Capital Investment**

No changes in this chapter.

## **Future Land Use**

Paula and Matt will be working on revising this chapter and presenting it to the Planning Board in January.

## **NEW BUSINESS/ NEXT MEETING**

### **Revised Plan Development and Presentation Schedules**

On January 18, 2023, the committee will review the collective goals and policies for all the chapters. These summaries are especially useful for readers.

Eric put up a proposed schedule for next year and asked committee members about their availability on January 28 and February 25, which are Saturdays, for public hearings.

The group discussed getting feedback and sharing information among each other via phone or possibly an ad hoc meeting.

It was moved the meeting be adjourned, Dennis seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

*Minutes prepared and submitted by Holly Rahmlow*