

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

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

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

- 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%

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

- 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