

Readfield Joint Select Board & Budget Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes – January 31, 2024 – *Approved*

Select Board Members Present: Kathryn Woodsum (Chair), Sean Keegan, Dave Linton, Carol Doorenbos, Steve Deangelis

Budget Committee Members Present: Andy Tolman (Chair), Marty Hanish, Ed Sims, Chris Sammons, Ellen Schneider

Others Attending: Teresa Shaw (Finance Officer), Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Anjelica Pittman (Select Board & Budget Committee Secretary), Jaaron Shaw

Call to Order

Introductory Communications - 15 minutes

- Budget Committee Comments - None
- Town Staff Comments – Eric thanked Teresa for all of her hard work and explained that we are still in transition with the new accounting structure. Eric also thanked Boards, Committees, and Commissions for their work on their budgets. Eric summarized the Select Board Retreat goals for this year which were to complete projects that are already in work. Eric then went over the summary page including accounts, numbers, minimums and maximums (currently placeholders), and the short descriptions; he explained that this is a starting point. Marty noted that the descriptions are helpful but he would like to see formally approved BCC descriptions. Ellen asked where Eric got his estimated minimum and maximum numbers from, he estimated off of historical figures and his knowledge of project areas cost and level spending/savings for the future. Eric noted that the document is not static and the numbers will change over time, this is a guideline only. Reserve balances are currently unaudited and will change; he will put them in context with the summary page at year end. Marty liked the exhibit especially with the estimated balances at end of FY, year-end forecast. Eric mentioned that some numbers and balances may be more dialed in than others, i.e. roads capital is a placeholder whereas the Church Road Sidewalk Project numbers are more accurate. On the subject of roads, Kathryn also mentioned that FEMA announced towns who qualified for assistance due to the storms in late December and early January; Readfield did not qualify. In discussing some details of the new budget structure and presentation, board members and Eric noted that “expense” could be labeled differently as it does not necessarily mean that money is to be spent in the fiscal year.

- Public Comments - None

New Business – 95 minutes

- Capital Investments - 80 minutes
 - Town Buildings – Past savings etc. estimated at \$40k, Library (additional) heat pumps could be covered by grant money.
 - Rec, Parks & Activities – The Fairgrounds Project is estimated to cost \$1mil, however will not be taxpayer funded; no tax impact, and is dependent on voters’ approval. Sports equipment cost will be through Rec reserves, appropriation not through taxes. Ellen asked why there were not additional funds being raised for Open Space and Eric explained that we have over \$100k in reserve and did not want to distract from the Fairgrounds Project. He will include Open Space funding once the Open Space Plan is updated. Kathryn noted that the Fairground Working Group volunteers will likely be the same volunteers who update the Open Space Plan, will begin a new BCC once the Fairgrounds Working Group is finished (July 2025). Marty would like to see a more formal policy for better documentation, Carol would like to see Open Space clearly defined, and Sean and Kathryn responded that it will be addressed during the Open Space Plan update.

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➤ Roads & Infrastructure – Costs have significantly increased as well as storm damage costs; will be using \$250k from taxes and \$50k out of reserves. Eric reviewed the Road Work Schedule which he noted is in present dollars and could change but the document itself is a helpful tool for inventory. The Church Road Sidewalk Project is an 80/20 split with the DOT with the town responsible for 20% of the cost, considering possible use of ARPA funds to bridge the gap. Kathryn asked about the life expectancy and date for the Readfield Corer parking at the Masonic Hall and Eric replied that it has been discussed but not voted on, it may be more viable to complete with Church Road Sidewalk Project, he is waiting to see what happens with that as the DOT may help fund if eligible. Kathryn also asked about the \$50k removed for LED streetlights. Eric said the conversion to LED streetlights is complete, but the town will be responsible to replace when needed which would be decades away. Kathryn also asked if the sand and salt shed need to be left in the budget and Eric answered that it does, but we could either reduce the number or leave it as is until there is more information. Carol asked if 2026 is a realistic repair date for the Giles Road Bridge, but Eric responded that it needed more discussion.

➤ Transfer Station – Readfield being one of three towns, the Transfer Station numbers reflect that in the CIP packet attached to the agenda. Currently looking at options for the hopper to protect it from the elements, previously considering a canopy. Eric will remove the \$30k for the canopy.

➤ Fire Department – The department needs new SCBA equipment, will be using \$5k from reserves, \$25k from taxes. Eric will ask the Chief if the thermal camera needs replaced. Kathryn asked if radios, barricades and sand bags had been included from the EOM discussion with the Chief last month, and it was. Sean asked Eric about getting an FM Frequency for public service announcements if and when phone lines are down to get information out to the public and Eric responded that he will look into it.

➤ Maintenance – FY25 is the last year on the pickup lease. However the current F550 needs replacement and the Select Board, Matt Seems and Eric are still discussing. Should have more information at the next Select Board meeting February 12. The town will need a new sander and plow but we have already been saving for them.

Debt Service - 15 minutes

➤ Numbers in the packet for debt service are actual numbers and are projected out 10 years; if we had a need to borrow in the future we are in a healthy place to do so. We currently have 5 outstanding bonds. The 2016 Firetruck bond will be complete in 2025.

Closing Communications - 10 minutes

- Budget Committee Comments – Ellen stated that the town’s debt service picture is healthy and there is room to borrow if needed. Andy noted that the new format provides more opportunity and clarity and that it works well. Sean agreed and also asked about the RSU meeting, which Eric emailed information about the week prior.

- Town Staff Comments - Eric said there is more work to do for all but he appreciates everyone’s contributions to the discussion thus far.

- Public Comments - None

Kathryn adjourned the meeting at 8:29pm

Minutes submitted by Anjelica Pittman, Board Secretary