

Readfield Budget Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, February 15, 2023 – *Approved*

Present: Andy Tolman (Chair), Chris Sammons, Ellen Schneider, Ed Sims, Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Teresa Shaw (Finance Officer), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary), Lee Mank, Pam Mitchell, Sonya Clark, Karen Peterson

Excused Absent: Marty Hanish

Call to Order

Communications - 10 min.

- Budget Committee Comments - none
- Town Staff Reporting - Report given by Eric
- Public Comment - none

Review of Prior Meeting Minutes - 5 min.

Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2023

- Chris **motioned** to approve the minutes as presented, Ellen **seconded**, **4-0 vote** in favor

Budget Review & Presentations - 45 min.

Departments III:

- **Community Services:**
 - **Readfield Library** budget which included explaining some of the increases in budget due to library services and programs that have started or been restarted after the Pandemic. Some increases expenses include printing expenses for things like fliers, Eric and the board discussed possibly purchasing a laser jet printer for the library to increase the amount of things that can be printed before needing more toner. Wage and benefit increases for personnel also raise the library budget. The board also discussed expenses and how they may be redefined through the audit accounting reorganization set to take place later in the year.
 - **ACO** - \$1200 for backup personnel, 10% increase for all stipend positions across the board. Working with Mount Vernon to pay half for the ACO cell phone as he is also the ACO for their town. KVHS fees are flat, gradually increase over the years.
 - **Kennebec Land Trust** – moved to Conservation Commission line because it is a donation not a membership, budget stayed the same.
 - **KVCOG** – flat for now, possible 5% increase, Eric will adjust as necessary
 - **Age Friendly** – Also flat budget, the committee is doing more community service, and is very good at getting donations. Budget may increase due to Readfield U classes restarting.
 - **Public Access TV** – increased wages, \$1000 to \$1650, stipend increase of 10%
 - **Street Lights** – reduced because everything has been converted for now
 - **Broadband** – The Select Board is looking at negotiating the contract with Spectrum to fill gaps, may cost some money for legal fees, Eric will discuss with Select Board, putting \$3K in that line to start the process.
 - **Maranacook Lake Dam** - 20% increase due to CMP costs

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- **Protection:**
 - **Fire Department** Operating budget relatively the same, with the increase due to stipend positions increase (10%). Eric will look into increasing the fuel line. May need to increase dispatch services and ambulance services. Lee discussed the health of the current fleet of fire trucks, including the 1996 freightliner with a crack in the double frame. The freightliner is repairable and will become a second line truck. The new fire truck, a capital expense, most recent cost estimate including discounts is around \$625K-\$630K. Due to the rise in interest rates, could consider extending the length of the bond term from 7 years to possibly 10 years, Eric will look into it.
- **Cemeteries:**
 - Fiscally conservative, funding out of restricted funds, asking taxpayers for less and not taking on any new projects unless something comes up. Chipper Shredder biggest expense, arborist services, and \$4K for grounds, a 50% increase for plants and supplies and potential stone wall repairs
- **Solid Waste:**
 - The transfer station budget lessened by \$250 for college courses due to not being used. Point of Sale credit card system new this year, efficient. Increase in insurance cost, personnel cost increase due to added part time seasonal position, heat and electricity increase due to inflation. Toilet was replaced to low flow toilet and should cut back on some costs. Increasing costs for single sort recycling, change in contract terms with EcoMaine not in our favor, paper, plastic and cardboard value plummeting, metals doing well, trash costs going up, Eric may adjust that line for inflation. Equipment maintenance costs increased, budgeted for flammables locker, may be able to cover with an MMA safety grant. Also looking at fixing an area that has recently had fill added, but may need geotextile and a sizeable amount of gravel, to expand the footprint in that area, could cost \$5K-\$10K. Decrease in building maintenance, completing lighting work, brush/compactor area and attendant booth. The compactor building needs shingles and siding. Increase in cost for fuel and oil for the backhoe due to inflation. Transfer station revenues doing well, metal revenue doing well, fees increasing, already increased in January with noticeable difference and Wayne and Fayette shares helpful.
- **Unclassified:**
 - Ralph discussed a yearly donation request from the town to support the **Maranacook Food Pantry** of \$1000 per year to offset costs and help support the volunteer organization. The pantry volunteers will also be asking other towns in the district for the same support. Ralph has already reached out for support from both Manchester and Wayne. The yearly contribution would help alleviate some of the financial burden of the \$24k a year associated costs, currently being funded by donations and grants. The Maranacook Food Pantry currently serves the entire district; about 18-20 food boxes distributed per week affording residents and those in need deliveries as well as pick up services. Ralph already got the required amount of signatures for his petition to put the request on the Town Meeting ballot. \$1000 will provide the pantry with 2-3 weeks of coverage. Ralph already has been to the Select Board and won their support, if the residents vote in favor of the donation, it will be billed/invoiced to the town yearly.
 - **Local tax relief** allocate \$10K, need to do more advertisement, few people take advantage
 - **Contingency** remains the same
 - **Enterprise Fund** \$10K, no loans given since 2021
 - **Revaluation** current budget a placeholder, may increase \$25K to do ¼ per year assessment and inventory over 4 year span, using reserves to offset total

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Other Business - 5 min.

- **Meeting adjourned by Andy at 8:30PM**

Adjourn

Minutes submitted by Anjelica Pittman, Board Secretary