

Budget Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Members Present: Ron Schneider, Jr; Bill Wade; Bruce Bjork; Bob Subilia; Marisa Caputo; Brian Toomey, Russ Markgren, James Gaylord and Richard DeBold

Staff Present: Town Manger Jon Carter, Finance Director Jodie Sanborn, Accountant Casey Welch, Harbor Master Chris Mayo, Human Resource Director Stephanie Weaver, Town Clerk Jessica Keyes, Deputy Town Clerk Kerri Van Schaack, Assessor Keeley Lambert, Transportation Coordinator Brent Marriner and Chamber of Commerce CEO Eleanor Vadenais.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

**Budgets and CIP to Review**

**a) Harbor**

Bob explained that he had meet with Chris to discuss his operations budget. Bob asked Chris to explain the Public Hoist and Public Pump Out revenue line items. Chris explained that the revenue from Public Pump Out is very minimal. Mooring holders are not charged for the service and the revenue we do receive is from transient boaters that are not regular Wells Mooring Holders. Chris explained that State regulations only allow us to charge a minimal fee for the service. Chris explained that the hoist fee is \$50.00 for the season. In the operations budget Chris explained that the reductions in operating lines were to reflect his actual usage. *Motion by Bob, seconded by Russ, to approve the operating budget of \$33,798 as presented. Passed unanimously.*

**b) Harbor - Float Fund**

Chris explained the need for the request to the Committee. Chris told the Committee that the average lifespan of a float is 15-20 years. The purpose of the CIP request is to add funds to build up the reserve fund and to expose some funding to be used for float repair annually. Russ asked what the average cost was for a float. Chris replied that it could be anywhere from \$6,000 to \$6,500 for a pressure treated float. Russ asked what material was used. Chris explained that he uses the most cost effective building materials for floats. Chris spoke about how the floats wear out structurally and that pressure treated floats can be maintained or repaired without special parts or procedures, such as having to do aluminum welding if we had aluminum floats.

**c) Harbor - Pier Rehab**

Chris explained that the main pier was built in the 1950's and that the cross bracing and decking is now failing. Chris stated that the Town has received a grant for the project and the funds would be available in 2019. Richard asked Chris how much the grant was for. Chris explained that it is a 50/50 grant in which the Town would be responsible for 50% of the estimated \$150,000 total project cost. Bob asked if the grant was State or Federal. Chris said it was a State grant. Bill asked if the Town had considered the availability of Federal or State grant funds to

continue into the future. Bill elaborated by speaking about the potential eventual loss of grant funding. Jon and Chris both spoke about how the SHIP grant for this project is 100% State funded and is voted on by the legislators. Chris shared how the State looks at the total project cost and then pays the Town back 50% less any engineering fees. Chris explained that the amount of funding needed was the Town's portion of the grant plus the engineering fees. The amount requested to be added to the reserve would be used for future repair and/or maintenance to the main pier.

**d) Harbor - Future Dredge Funding**

Jon spoke about a maintenance dredge that would be taking place this May through the Fed's to clean out the Federal channel of 115,000 cubic yards to get a depth of 6 to 8 feet. Chris spoke about the May dredge being a free dredge for the Town of Wells. The dredge in 2013-2014 cost the Town money because that was for the area where the Town floats are. Jon shared that the Town is responsible to pay for the Town's portion. Chris explained the Town is responsible for the boat ramp area, mooring basin and the frontage on Eastern Shore. To save money the Town tries to piggyback with the Corp to save mobilization fees of the dredge equipment. Russ asked about the ability to fix the Jetty's so the sand would stop coming in. Chris explained how the permitting for that project would be a big task and the cost to fix the Jetty's would be somewhere between \$12,000,000 to \$18,000,000. Jim asked if removing the Jetty's would have a similar effect as removing dams from rivers. Chris explained that removing the Jetty's would create an undefined river mouth that couldn't be maintained. The river could potential shift to where home are on Drakes Island and Eastern Shore.

**e) Human Resources**

Bruce told the Committee about meeting with Stephanie and Jodie. Bruce spoke about the new line item Events Support. The Town is taking on the major role of organizing Harborfest from the Rotary as well as some other events. Bruce mentioned the Town was looking at doing a Brewfest and Taste of Maine event. Stephanie explained that the Rotary doesn't want to do all the work to organize Harborfest but they would still be doing the chicken barbeque. Richard asked why events were falling under HR instead of the Recreation. Stephanie explained that the Volunteer Coordinator and Events Planner is part of the HR budget, and that the addition of Events duties to the Volunteer Coordinator role had been approved by the Personnel Advisory Committee and then the Board of Selectmen as there was a natural synergy with volunteers manning events and the Volunteer Coordinator already working with outside volunteer groups such as Rotary. Bruce mentioned to the Committee that the Collective Bargaining line was down but will increase in two years and that wellness works was up for ergonomic items. Stephanie and Jon spoke about all four of the union contracts for the next three years have gone through negotiations and have been signed. Contract negotiations would begin again in about two years. Stephanie spoke about how addressing ergonomic issues and by introducing a planned Safety Program it should help to reduce claims and bring the MOD rate down. Russ asked why Jon reduced the Collective Bargaining line so much. Jon explained that the reduction was because all the contracts had been signed and a small amount was being budgeted for grievances or appeals. Jim asked what Personnel Training consisted of. Stephanie said the line item was used

for mandatory trainings needed for staff which includes Sexual Harassment training as well as ongoing trainings for HR. Stephanie spoke about also including money to attend the Annual Statewide Human Resource Conference at the Samoset Resort if possible. Brian asked about the increase in the Blood pathogen line. Stephanie explained that we have many employees that are at risk of being exposed to certain communicable diseases due to the nature of their work, for example in the Police, Fire, Recreation and Public Works Departments. The line pays for immunizations that are required by law to be offered by the employer if an employee is exposed to certain health risks. The Town had fallen behind in compliance and has had to increase its spending in order to meet the legal requirements. The line also pays for ongoing random drug testing, required by law for Public Works CDL drivers, and pre-employment physicals. ***Motion by Bruce, seconded by Bob to approve the operating budget of \$37,460 as presented. Passed unanimously.***

**f) Employee Benefits**

Bruce spoke about the biggest increase being in the Health Insurance line. Bruce talked about the addition of adding the Transfer Station employees, a new dispatcher approved in FY 18 and the volunteer coordinator for health insurance expenses. Richard asked how many employees were at the Transfer Station. Jon replied that there are three employees. ***Motion by Bruce, seconded by Russ to approve the operating budget of \$2,082,148 as presented. Passed unanimously.***

**g) Property and Liability**

Bruce spoke about the amount budgeted for insurance being impacted by the past events of the Transfer Station fire, Library roof collapse and 2 Police car claims were affecting the Town's experience rating. Jon also mentioned that a personnel claim was also part of the 5 year look back for the Town experience rating. ***Motion by Bruce seconded by Marisa to approve the operating budget of \$480,804 as presented. Passed unanimously.***

**h) Assessing**

Bill spoke about meeting with Keeley to discuss the Assessing budget. He told the Committee that Keeley was the new Assessor for Wells and that she had a big background in Assessing and the Town of Wells. Bill spoke about the decrease in salary in the Regular line due to the change in Assessors. Bill shared with the Committee the addition of the Agreements/Contracts line to have three seasonal contracted people to assist the department plot and check data points due to the growth of the community. Keeley was asked why postage was not reduced based on historical usage. Keeley explained that the request was reduced slightly from the current year but she wished to keep the \$1,000 to help cover the postage needed if entire neighborhoods have to be notified by mail of assessment changes. Bob asked about the decrease in Tax Map Updates. Jon explained that the Town had a new company designing the tax maps. Jodie spoke about the request being a the current year amount and that a carry forward had been done in FY 2018 to cover a expenses that had not been billed prior to the close of FY 2017. Keeley spoke about structures now showing on the tax maps. Richard asked about the contract employees working for six weeks. Keeley explained how the department goes out every year and looks at properties that had building permits issued since the previous April 1<sup>st</sup>. While they are looking at

those properties the office then looks at other properties in the neighborhood. Keeley also spoke about how the revaluation was not a measure and relist. The most recent revaluation focused on commercial properties and the valuation tables for commercial properties. Jim asked about the actual spent for postage and transportation compared to the higher budgeted amounts. Keeley explained that postage fluctuates. Every three years the department sends out a mass mailing regarding exemptions that taxpayers could potentially be eligible for. Additional mass mailings occur if the assessments in neighborhoods change. The transportation line is used heavily from March to June while the office is out doing assessment pick-up. The transportation line is also used to reimburse employees for mileage travel in their personal vehicles for trainings. Ron asked if the contract people would spend more time than the Assessor in the field. Keeley explained that she wants them to go through and gather the information at all the campgrounds in Wells. Bill asked if Wells would ever get to the point that the campground owners would provide the information needed to the office. Keeley explained that the campgrounds are not legally required to provide the information to the Town. Keeley talked about the breakdown in getting bill of sales when a unit is sold privately from one owner to another. Jon reminded the Committee that the onsite visits are to pick up decks, add a rooms, etc. that have been added or modified on the site. ***Motion by Bill, seconded by Russ to approve the operating budget of \$27,200 as presented. Passed unanimously.***

**i) Assessing - Version 8 Software Upgrade**

Bill explained to the Committee that the existing program version has expired and needs to be replaced. He told how the department had looked at other programs such as Patriot, but that program and others will not transfer data to finance like the current software program. Keeley shared how Vision is the assessing database. In the current version, Oracle is expiring and the current version will no longer be supported. By upgrading the software remains current and the department can receive program fixes as laws changes or issues develop. The department can continue to receive training for staff if upgrading. The department will still need to pay the yearly license fees for the upgraded software.

**j) Assessing - Revaluation**

Bill explained that the last revaluation was funded from 2011 to 2013 for a total of \$200,000. Jon agreed that for 2011 to 2013 the Town saved \$150,000 for the last revaluation. *As a follow-up Jodie was asked to verify the amount spent on the last revaluation which she found to be \$195,000. The Town saved \$50,000 in 2011, 2012 and 2013. In fiscal year 2014 the Town added the final \$45,000 to the fund and a total \$195,000 was spent on the revaluation project between the end of FY 2013 and the beginning of FY 2014.*

**k) Information Center**

Bob spoke about his meeting with Eleanor. Bob discussed the Chamber's entire budget projection for FY 2019 and spoke on the current agreement where the Chamber covers 60% of the expenses and the Town covers 40% of the expenses. Casey made copies of Eleanor's spreadsheet and distributed them to the rest of the Committee. Bob spoke about the Chamber FY 2019 budget being 2.9% over the FY 2018 Chamber submitted budget and 7.43% over FY 2018 actual funding which was reduced at the Town Manager, Budget Committee and Board of

Selectmen levels for the FY 2018 budget. The increases in the FY 2019 budget are in labor, postage and utilities. The labor increase is due to the minimum wage increase. Bruce asked if the Chamber's share of expenses could go to 75%. Committee members and staff all said the current agreement would need to be re-negotiated for that to happen. ***Motion by Bob, seconded by Russ to approve the operating budget of \$45,218 as presented. Passed unanimously.***

**l) Town Clerk**

Bob told the Committee about meeting with Jessica to review her budget. Bob asked Jessica to explain the Code Update line item. Jessica explained that the line item is used to pay for the printing and online updates of ordinance changes. Jessica explained how the number of changes differs from year to year and the actual number is always unknown. Jon further explained that the code company does all the changes for hard copies and the electronic version of the code. Bob spoke about the Election line being down due to it being a non-Presidential election. Committee members had questions regarding early voting and the impact on staff. Jessica talked about the extra work involved with absentee voting for staff. For absentee ballots computer work and paperwork is done at the time of issuance and return of the ballot. Multiple staff members have to verify daily batches of actual returned ballots to the information entered in the computer. The sealed ballots must be retained in a secure location until the actual day of voting. On voting day they are taken to the polls, opened, flattened, and cast by staff into the voting machines. Bill asked Jessica what the percent of absentee voters were at the last Presidential election. Jessica told the Committee that she would provide the percent to Jodie to share with the Committee. ***As a follow-up, Jessica shared with Jodie that for the November 2016 election the total eligible voters on file was 8,858. The Town cast 6,793 ballots on Election Day which was 76.7% of total eligible ballots that could have been cast. There were 3,232 absentee ballots in the total cast on Election Day which accounted for 47.6% of total ballots cast. Motion by Bob, seconded by Brian to approve the operating budget of \$35,550 as presented. Passed unanimously.***

**m) Transportation Center**

Brent passed out the Wells Regional Transportation Center Fiscal Year 2017 update to the Committee while Jon opened with talking about how the Center is a large part of tourism for the Town. Jon explained that we partner with the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA) for the parking lot and the park and ride area. The Town is then responsible for the curb out front of the Transportation Center to the train platform. Jon spoke about working under the direction of the Board of Selectmen and past Budget Committees to see what revenues could be generated at the Center. Jon spoke about how the Town had reached out to Northern New England Rail Authority and the MTA for subsidies but attempts had failed to generate revenue. Jon also talked about not being able to install parking meters due to a prior agreement when the Center was constructed. Jon did share that in the current year he and Brent have been able to organize an agreement with the MTA to help with maintenance needs at the Center. So far they have helped with a furnace replacement and water filtration system.

Brent spoke about the handout he had passed out. Key points mentioned were:

- FY 2017 ridership was 66,714 which are up significantly from 2001 ridership of 26,000. Some of increase is due to rail work in October and November of 2016 which had passengers North of Wells getting bussed to Wells to get on the train.
- Bus traffic in FY 2017 is up from previous years. Some of the increase is for the bus traffic during the rail work in October and November of 2016.
- Two part-time employees that work six mornings a week for seven hours (42 total hours).
- Multiple volunteers cover daily shifts from 12:30PM to 4:00PM and occasionally from 4PM to 9PM.
- Transportation Host Patsy Bragdon was recognized by the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority for the George Mitchell Award.

Brent talked about restroom cleaning and supplies being a large portion of the budget. He mentioned trying to get on the Town's printer agreement to help reduce the cost of color printing. Brent also spoke about the initial funding agreement for the Center came from Federal and MTA funding which made it so the Town could not charge users for parking. The decreased size of the actual building also took away potential rental spaces for vendors and an income stream for the Town. Brent spoke that the Town does get 25% of the vending machine revenue. Russ asked about using more land to expand parking and what the current percentage of use was. Brent explained that at times 75-80% of the lot is filled. Russ further asked who owned the land and who would pay for the expansion? Jon spoke about the MTA owning the land and that any expansion costs would have to be negotiated. Ron asked about the large increase in the Outside Services line. Jodie explained that the restroom cleaning was charged to the line item. The Committee felt that the salary should be moved to the Part-Time Salary line and that the true cost of outside vendors for service would then be seen. ***Motion by Ron, seconded by Brian to approve the operating budget of \$32,308 as amended by moving \$10,660 from Outside Services to Part-Time Salaries. Passed unanimously.***

#### **n) Beach Enterprise**

Jon opened the discussion informing the Committee that this was one of two successful enterprise funds in the Town. The enterprise functions off the revenue from seasonal passes and daily parking fees collected from Friday of Memorial Day Weekend through Columbus Day. The revenues pay for restroom cleaning and maintenance, CIP needs, beach cleaning, garbage collection, parking lot attendants, meter maintenance and upgrades, lifeguard salaries and lifeguard operations. Ron asked about the Town charging people to use the boat ramp for a short period last summer. Jon explained that was an error by the new state director of the grant program who had said the Town could charge a nominal fee and then after receiving a compliant revisited the request and found that the prior grant for the boat ramp does not allow the Town to charge someone to use the ramp. Jon shared with the Committee that the Town has meters currently in use at two Drakes Island lots, Eastern Shore, Mile Rd (Hourly Lot) and Crescent Beach (Hourly Lot). Casino square remains a free lot. Ron asked if the Town received complaints about Drakes Island not being an hourly lot. Staff shared that they had not heard any complaints on the issue. Jim asked if the Town saw any decrease in revenue once we went to the meters. Jon explained that we had seen increased revenue which was mostly due to price increases in the daily parking fees. ***Motion by Ron, seconded by Brian to approve the proposed***

**Beach Enterprise Revenue of \$559,146, Salaries of \$246,441 and Operations of \$276,013.  
Passed unanimously.**

**o) Harbor Shower**

Jon shared how the project would install a shower at the Harbor bath house and would be similar to the showers currently in operation at the Jetty and Eastern Shore. Jon shared how the funding was included in the Enterprise operation total of \$276,013.

**p) ROW Upgrade**

Jon explained how that over time the mats that are used in the Town's right of ways get destroyed. Occasionally the excessive tides contribute to the destruction. Brian asked how long the mats lasted and what the replacement cost was. Jon said that in operations that are year round (365 days) the mats are supposed to last 5-8 years. Since we are a seasonal operation the mats are expected to last with normal wear and tear longer than the 5-8 years. The request would replace about 400 feet. Ron asked about the mats being used for handicap access. Jon explained that they are not truly ADA compliant but they are better than just the sand or the wooden boardwalks. Jon spoke how this funding request was included in the Enterprise operation total of \$276,013.

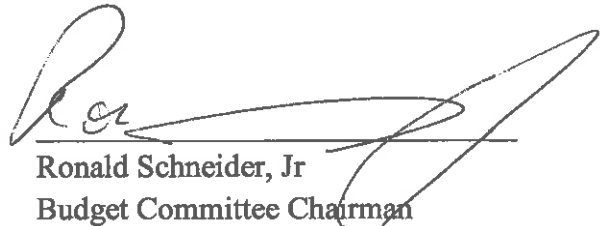
Meeting adjourned at 7:30PM. **Motion by Brian, seconded by Richard. Passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Approved by,



Jodie L. Sanborn  
Finance Director &  
Budget Committee Recording Secretary



Ronald Schneider, Jr  
Budget Committee Chairman