



Select Board /Assessors Meeting Summary

Jan. 17, 2024

6 p.m.

Select Board members present: Wesley Daniel, Katherine Grinnell and Mitchell Garnett

Others present: Town Clerk Mary Anderson, CEO David Studer, and residents Sarah and Andrew Masters

Wes called the Select Board meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Approve Summaries of Jan. 3 and Jan. 10, 2024: Motion to approve summaries by Mitch, Kate seconded. Kate amended dates on Jan. 10 summary. All in favor, motion carries.

Sign Treasurer's Warrants dated Jan. 18, 2024:

P/R Warrant #5: \$10,167.06

A/P Warrant #6: \$185,542.70, which includes a payment to the school district

Motion to approve warrants by Mitch, Kate seconded; all in favor, motion carries.

Road Foreman Reports: Written by Frank Jones Jr. and read by Wes

1/1: New Year's holiday

1/2: Chipped brush on Mountain Road

1/3: Chipped brush on Mountain Road

1/4: Chipped brush on Mountain Road; put plows on trucks

1/7: Frank, Jonathan, Steven and Jason Chapman plowed with Danny Garnett riding along to learn a route; P500 broke down

1/8: Plowed and sanded; Travis Kibreth worked on P500

1/9: Worked on trucks and mixed sand; plowed

1/10: Plowed and moved downed trees

1/11: Worked on trucks, fixing lights; mixed up sand

1/12: Marked Vanner Road to fix ditch from washout

1/13: Called for downed tree; plowed

CEO Report: Dave continues to go through the CEO office, catching up on outstanding permits and other items. He has been reviewing town ordinances, taking calls and answering questions. Because he also designs septic systems, Dave reached out to Union's CEO/LPI Grant Watmough about working with Washington as its alternate Licensed Plumbing Inspector. He asked for clarification about the job description as it related to representing the town in court; Dave will be accompanied by/assist an attorney for any court actions.

Health Officer Report: Brian offered an update on an issue involving improper human waste disposal. There is no legal septic system on the property and no running water. Violation letters were sent by the health officer and CEO but no response has been received from the property owner indicating he intends to take any action. Tenants formerly living at the property have moved, according to a neighbor, but there are still people occupying the property. Select Board members agreed the matter should be turned over to town attorney Peter Drum, who already offered input on the letters that said immediate action is needed.

Town Clerk/Treasurer's Report: Mary will complete W2s and 1099s this weekend. The checking account balance is \$548,349. Counter traffic has been minimal but town office staff are working to collect items for the town report and town meeting.

Broadband update: None.

Other Agenda Items: Wes made a motion to appoint Lance Lailer to the Recreation Committee (indefinitely) and Grant Watmough as alternate LPI until May 1, 2024; Kate seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carries.

Other business: Select Board members signed the December 2023 bank statement.

Bids for culvert work on Sprague Road were opened last week but no discussion took place during the workshop. Two bids were received. Mitch asked if the Board could get Frank's opinion and Wes said Frank does have a preference based on past interactions, even if his preferred company bid higher. Mitch made a motion to accept the bid from Farley & Sons, Kate seconded; all in favor, motion carries. The work is expected to be reimbursed 75 percent by FEMA and 15 percent by the state, with the town making up any difference.

Questions/comments: Kate said the December 2022 FEMA storm paperwork all has been submitted and reimbursement is expected in the first half of 2024.

Kate made a motion to adjourn, Mitch seconded; meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Don Grinnell called the Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Budget Committee members present were: Don Grinnell, Kim Linscott (alternate), Wendy Carr, Kathy Ocean, Dave Williams and Jesse Casas. Also present: Select Board members Wes Daniel, Kate Grinnell and Mitch Garnett; Fire Chief Phil Meunier; Town Clerk Mary Anderson; and resident Sarah Masters.

Kate went over the updated budget spreadsheet columns and handed out replacement pages. The Budget Committee went through the budget line-by-line to make its recommendations.

For assessments, Budget Committee members received updated numbers. The Ambulance Advisory Board has made its recommendation, which is \$154,207.68 for Washington's portion. Tri-County Solid Waste Management Organization's Board of Directors are not anticipating an increase but had a final budget meeting on Thursday. Dave made a motion to open discussion, Jesse seconded. An amended total (using the updated numbers) of \$504,957 was unanimously recommended by the Budget Committee following a motion by Dave and second by Kathy.

Budget Committee members and Select Board members both recommend \$12,000 for legal fees. The motion was made by Jesse and seconded by Wendy and approved unanimously.

The Office Administration line at \$62,251 is recommended by both Select Board and Budget Committee as well. Kathy made the motion and was seconded by Jesse, approved unanimously after some discussion. Wendy asked about Compliancy Associates and Mary explained the company is helping town office and public works employees come into compliance with Board of Labor standards. Kate pointed out the company has been working with the fire department and the end goal is a reduction in insurance rates. Dave asked why there is an increase in the Select Board discretionary fund. Mitch said it will not only be used for pizza for election workers, as it has been for years, but also in the form of appreciation for Public Works crews during storms, allowing them to get coffee or pastries from local stores during long shifts.

Kathy made a motion to recommend \$39,189 for insurances, Jesse seconded; motion carries unanimously. The recommendation matches the Select Board's.

Phil fielded a few questions about how the fire department command structure works. He is chief, and the deputy chief has the same powers and serves more on the administrative side of the department. The assistant chief is operations manager on the fireground and the captain is in charge of maintaining equipment. The positions are filled by Dean Batlis, Jacolby Leavitt and Tom Johnston, respectively. Phil also requested an increase in firefighter stipends from \$500 per year to \$650 per year. For salaries and stipends for all town positions, \$188,364 was unanimously recommended following a motion by Kathy and second by Jesse.

Under payroll expenses (a total of \$94,656), Select Board members recommend that 100 percent of insurance for full-time employees is covered (a cost of \$56,331), an increase from the current 80 percent. Don said the benefit jump results in a double raise for those employees. Mitch said Select Board members are trying to keep the town competitive with nearby ones in the hope of retaining current employees as well as being able to attract new employees as needed. Kathy asked if the insurance increase would be separated on the warrant; Mitch said it is part of the budget. Kim noted in the private sector, 80 percent coverage is the norm. Jesse made a motion to recommend 90 percent insurance coverage (cost of \$50,698) for full-time employees, Kathy seconded. The amendment passed, with Kim opposed. As amended, the Budget Committee recommends a total of \$89,023, with Kim opposed.

Under road maintenance, \$438,336 was unanimously recommended by both the Select Board and Budget Committee. Dave asked why there was a large amount of unexpended labor costs and Wes said some money, about \$22,000, was taken from the Roads Reserve Account – that money is expected to be reimbursed by FEMA. Dave complimented the ditching work that's recently been done and said it has made a big difference during recent storms.

To open discussions, Dave made a motion and Jesse seconded for approval of \$10,000 toward the Comprehensive Plan update. Dave asked if all of that money will go to Midcoast Council of Governments for its contributions to the update. Wes said it may not cost that much. Kate read the specification of work and noted the total is expected to be between \$18,000 and \$20,000. The Comprehensive Plan Committee will have its first meeting on Feb. 12. It has been 20 years since the last update and Kate said expecting volunteers to write the new plan is asking too much. The Budget Committee unanimously recommends \$10,000, as do Select Board members.

A misunderstanding about the paving line increased the total by \$45,000. Don said if another \$100,000 is taken from LRAP for paving, it leaves little money left for paving preparation. Wes suggested money for paving could be taken from somewhere else, such as Roads Maintenance. Mitch said the hope is to pave two miles of road each year to keep on a more consistent schedule for the next 10 years. The adjusted total of \$200,000 was unanimously recommended by the Budget Committee following a motion by Jesse and second by Dave.

Select Board and Budget Committee members both unanimously recommend \$4,000 for general assistance.

Kathy made a motion, Jesse seconded, to open discussions on the \$89,656 public safety budget. Dave asked why, when there was money left over, a \$2,500 increase is requested in general support. Phil said the lines are spending suggestions and he moves money around as needed during the year. The increase is allotted for equipment. He also is keeping money in reserve for when all radios and pagers must be updated. Jesse suggested putting money in the correct lines for clarity. Kim made a motion to move \$2,500 from general support to equipment, Jesse seconded. The amendment passes. The public safety budget, as amended passes, with Dave opposed.

The \$69,800 utilities and maintenance line drew discussion following a motion by Kathy and second by Jesse. Don suggested the Select Board look into purchasing a pickup truck for plowing at the town office/library/fire station instead of contracting snow removal. The snow removal bid nearly doubled in the most current contract. Mitch said he

appreciated the suggestion and Select Board members would discuss it. Ultimately, the Budget Committee approved the \$69,800 unanimously, matching the Select Board recommendation.

There was little discussion about budgeting \$600 for Boards and Committees, which was unanimously recommended following a motion by Jesse and second by Kathy.

Several rollover account contributions were cut or reduced. The starting Select Board recommendation was \$78,119 before \$1,000 was removed from headstone restoration (a contractor can't be found at this time); the fire truck and plow truck replacement accounts were reduced by \$10,000 each; \$2,500 for EMS training was cut; and \$10,000 was cut from the revaluation fund.

Miscellaneous accounts totaling \$36,926 were recommended unanimously by the Budget Committee after a motion by Kathy and second by Jesse.

Kate will update the spreadsheet and Mary will email it to Budget Committee members. There will be a short meeting next Wednesday, Jan. 24, at 7 p.m. to go over the updated spreadsheet.

Dave made a motion to adjourn, Jesse seconded; meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Grinnell