

**MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY BUDGET
COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP**

August 23, 2022

PAGE 1

Board & Committee members present: Chairman Bugbee, Chairwoman Stacey Waitz, Thomas Murdoch, Pat Barbour and Cord Blomquist.

Others present: Bambi Miller

1. Chairwoman Waitz calls the meeting to order at **6:00 pm**.

The Committee discusses the schedule and changing the meeting dates to Thursdays instead of Tuesdays. The new schedule will be 9/22, 9/29, 10/20, 10/27, 11/3 and 11/17.

There is a discussion about the new CIP Committee i.e. its duties and responsibilities.

There is a discussion about who has recently left the police department and who has decided to stay. Two individuals have decided to stay in Lee after they were offered more money.

They discuss the library using the old Town Hall during their renovations.

Scott Bugbee updates the group on the new Town building discussions that have been going on between the Select Board, the Town Administrator and John Tappan. The Heritage Commission is looking into what to do with the Parish House. As of next July, the Parish House could be torn down. There is a grant program available for the demolition of old buildings. There is lead paint and asbestos in the Town Hall. There are also hazardous materials located in the Parish House. There has been talk about making the Parish House into a community center.

The finance officer is retiring in December and the TA is looking to replace the financial software with a new municipal software. Scott Bugbee updates the ABC on the possible options. The TA is preparing an analysis of what all of this might cost. The Town Clerk is looking to retire in March and the current part-time accounting assistant will be running for that position. A part-time contracted finance officer might replace the current Finance Officer and a full-time bookkeeper might replace the part-time accounting assistant.

Scott Bugbee adds that the fire department is struggling personnel wise and apparently, people were leaving because the Town does not have a salary step program. The Select Board has implemented a step program for the fire department personnel and is looking at doing this for every department at some point.

Scott Bugbee reports that the Select Board is talking about giving the Public Works Director an office assistant. Scott Bugbee says that we way over work Mr. Bullek, that he may not happy with certain things but he does not think that he is leaving Lee. There is more discussion surrounding the new financial software and some of the tasks that will be taken off of Steve's plate once it is implemented.

Scott Bugbee talks about how the Cemetery Trustees might be asking for more money this year due to the increased cost for burials and the fact that the statutes do not allow for a revolving fund to be set up for cemetery purposes.

**MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY BUDGET
COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP**

August 23, 2022

PAGE 2

There is a solar energy discussion. Scott Bugbee says that the solar project at the public safety complex was not going to be cost effective so it was shot down. The new proposed solar project at the Transfer Station is still being worked on and looks like it might come together for the Select Board to review and approve soon.

Scott Bugbee reports that the Conservation Commission is working on their budget for next week. The Heritage Commission is most likely not asking for more money. He does not know about the Rec Commission, Sustainability Committee, Energy Commission, Ag Commission or the Town Clerk. Pat Barbour asks if Linda would consider working as the deputy until Liz can find a deputy. Scott Bugbee says he does not know.

Scott Bugbee says that the legal budget is down. He is waiting to receive the revenue numbers along with the budget numbers. He will forward these to the ABC when he gets them.

The thought process is that a bond for a new building will take the place of the two bonds that are coming to an end soon. One for the public safety complex and the other for the transfer station.

The new fire truck is still not in service. There is a supply chain issue. They are missing parts. They can't actually use it but they are getting driving time in with it.

The Police Chief is also having trouble hiring people. He is not looking to hire an eighth officer at this time. This is a full-time position worth of salary and benefits that the Chief will keep in his budget. There is a discussion about what kind of commitment the town gets from people that we put through the academy. Scott Bugbee says that they can ask the Chief when he comes in to do his budget. He believes that the officers who agreed to stay in exchange for more money have signed an agreement to stay with Lee for at least 2 years.

Scott Bugbee says that the step program can help keep people by giving them the stability that they need. There is a discussion surrounding what the Town is paying its employees compared to other jobs such as Walmart or Wendy's. What about a consolidated district?

Scott Bugbee tells Stacy that she will be contacted by the social service agencies to schedule a time for 10/27th. Tom Murdoch tells Stacy that Denise will most likely hear from people first if they can't make a particular time and she will pass that information on.

Cord Blomquist asks if the ABC can ask the Board for guidelines for this year's budget. Scott Bugbee will pass that question on to the Board next week.

Scott Bugbee reports that the unpaid property taxes in Lee have gone from \$600k to \$129k over the last 4-5 years. The office has done a great job sending out letters and getting people on payment plans to resolve these delinquent accounts.

2. Chairwoman Waitz moves to adjourn at 7:38 pm.