

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

December 6, 2022

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Board & Committee members present: Chairman Bugbee, Chairwoman Stacey Waitz, Pat Barbour, Bambi Miller, Cord Blomquist and Vice-Chair Kasper

Not present: Thomas Murdoch

1. Chairwoman Waitz calls the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

2. Chairman Bugbee reviews everything that the group did in the last meeting because Ms. Waitz was not in attendance. He also has the number for Lamprey closure costs, which is \$2891. Chief Nemet wants to do the 5-year plan for the dispatching contract. Chairwoman Waitz thinks that they need to look at cutting the higher line items if they want to make a difference in the tax rate. Pat Barbour wants to start with deciding on the new library full-time position. Chairwoman Waitz is not in favor of this. The group cannot find a list from the TA indicating what employees get for health insurance or what the amount of ancillary costs will belong to the library. Chairwoman Waitz says that there is a Lee resident who is circulating a petition requesting that the Select Board state the impact that each warrant article will have on the tax rate. Chairman Bugbee says that the Board has agreed to already put this information in the Voter's Guide. Chairman Bugbee says that he recently spoke to the Town Manager in Newmarket and they are struggling with the same budget issues as Lee is such as with increasing salaries. There is a discussion about putting off road maintenance this next year and concentrating on the building maintenance that the Town has neglected for many years. Cord Blomquist does not understand why we need spend so much money on fire equipment. He wants to look into combined services. He sees so much possibilities for savings in the fire budget. The group goes through the highest budget items to see if there is any room for cutting in these areas. Mr. Blomquist goes back to the fire truck discussion. He questions why it has to be custom built. He asks why we can't purchase a used truck. He understands that fire and police are always going to push for more and the best of everything. Chairwoman Waitz asks what the Select Board decided with regards to moving some items from the CIP to the operating budget. The Select Board has not made a decision on this yet but is leaning towards not moving anything at this time because this would negatively impact the operating budget by like \$125k. Chairman Bugbee says that if the budget doesn't pass then the Select Board will have to work with the default budget and that won't cover all the raises. He says they will have to drop salaries or drop services. Pat Barbour points out that the Police Chief has given himself a raise of about \$20k. The Select Board will be discussing this at the next meeting in non-public session. The ABC can make whatever recommendation that it wants to. Chairwoman Waitz does not want to make the part-time library employee full-time. The group agrees. Pat Barbour says that the library has never presented an offer to the ABC in exchange for assisting with moving someone to full-time. All they do is ask for more money. There is a discussion about reducing the paving. The group agrees to make building maintenance and repair to \$66k, which is double what was budgeted for FY23, but not what Public Works Director Bullek has requested. The group agrees to reduce the paving to \$275k. They added \$1500 for Ready Rides. Chairman Bugbee wants to zero out the Library Capital Reserve Fund. There is a discussion regarding the library projects and the fact that they have not submitted any warrant articles as of yet. The revaluation is going to cost upwards of \$60k in 2026. The group decides to make that deposit \$10k in the FY24 budget. The group is ok with zeroing out the recreation commission line. Chairman Bugbee reads off what the Financial Planning Tool is recommending for the following: The Transfer Station Equipment Fund is at \$92k. The Town

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Building and Equipment Maintenance Fund is at \$162k. The Fire Equipment is up to \$274k. The group agrees to reduce this to \$175k. There is still a question mark for Accrued Benefits. Chairman Bugbee says they usually get a spreadsheet with the liability number for the Town Administrator. Also, need to get Larry Reola's new full-time position in the budget. Chairperson Waitz will get this from the Town Administrator. The group circle back to the Recreation Commission request of \$10,700. Pat Barbour says that they did not request anything in the way of equipment or items that would come from the Capital Reserve Fund; therefore, she does not see a reason to put any more money into it. The group is ok with making it zero. The group reduces the Town Building and Equipment Maintenance Fund to \$160k.

Chairwoman Waitz would like to meet again before the Select Board meeting next Monday to fill in the information that they are missing. She will get this from TA Robertson by end of day on Wednesday. They agree to meet on Friday morning at 10am in the PSC.

3. Chairwoman Waitz moves to approve the minutes from 8-23-2022, 9/22/22, 9/29/22, 10/20/22, 10/27/22, 11/3/22, 11/17/22. Pat Barbour, seconds. All in favor except Chairman Bugbee abstains on the 11/17/22 vote. **Motion Carries.**
4. Chairwoman Waitz moves to adjourn at 7:43 pm.

Minutes transcribed by Denise Duval, Assistant Town Administrator