

TOWN OF WISCASSET
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
September 16, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM at the Wiscasset Municipal Building.

Budget committee members in attendance: Judith Colby, Pamela Dunning, Sherri Dunbar, Judy Flanagan, George Greene and Richard Hanson. Members absent were, Tony True, and Chairman Steve Mehrl.

In the absence of the Chair, Clerk Pamela Dunning assumed Chair and officiated the meeting.

Pamela Dunning asked if there was any old business pending. Finding none the subject was closed.

Richard Hanson moved that the committee consider Article 2 of the Town Warrant. Motion was seconded by Pamela Dunning. The committee proceeded to discuss the merits of authorizing the Selectmen to transfer \$600,000 from surplus funds for the purpose of reducing the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Property Tax Commitment. Committee members discussed that it would have been appropriate for the committee to be given copies of the articles 3 days in advance of the meeting in order to better consider the matter. George Greene moved to accept the article as written. Motion was seconded by Sherri Dunbar. Article passed 6-0. The Budget Committee does recommend.

Judith Colby moved to consider Article 3. Motion was seconded by Richard Hansen. Committee members discussed the purpose of the article. It was decided that the wording left the amount open for citizens at the open town meeting to set. Members proceeded to discuss the consequences of continuing to take money in excess of earnings from the reserve account. Members also spoke to the purpose of the town building the reserve account. Some of the purposes of the reserve account were to keep Maine Yankee taxes where they were at the time and not use all of the money, to offset town expenses in case Maine Yankee closed and those tax dollars were no longer incoming. Judith Colby moved to not recommend Article 3. Motion was seconded by Richard Hansen. Motion passed 5-1. The Budget Committee does not recommend.

George Greene moved to consider the proposed warrant article for project bonds not to exceed \$14,000,000 to construct and renovate the primary and high schools. The motion was seconded by Sherri Dunbar. The Wiscasset School Committee had previously voted to recommend this article in a 5-0 vote. The Board of Selectmen had not yet voted. Discussion included talk about the lack of contract from Westport Island and Alna to continue to send their students to the Wiscasset school system. Wiscasset would be building classes to accommodate students who may not continue to attend the schools. There was some discussion that it would be better to consider this proposal after a decision is made as to the new RSU. If the RSU should not form, Wiscasset residents would be responsible for the full \$14 million. If Wiscasset should pass this article, it is

possible that the towns considering the RSU would pull out as a result of not wanting to take on the debt incurred. It was pointed out that the cost of the debt would actually become less expensive than keeping a third school open and might be considered a positive thing to other towns.

Judy Flanagan moved to recess so Budget Committee members could attend the Selectmen meeting where the Selectmen were beginning to work on this question. Motion was seconded by Judith Colby. Meeting recessed at 7:45 PM.

With no discussion, the Selectmen voted to not recommend the article in a 1-3-1 vote.

Budget Committee meeting reconvened at 7:48 PM.

George Greene moved to recommend the article. Motion was seconded by Judy Flanagan. Motion failed 3-3.

There was discussion about how to best proceed with the voting and how the results could legally be listed on the article. Town Clerk Sandra Johnson stated that she would have to check with an attorney to see what wording options might be available.

Judith Flanagan moved no recommendation. Motion was seconded by Sherri Dunbar. Motion failed 3-3.

Judy Flanagan moved to not recommend. Motion was seconded by George Greene. Motion failed 3-3.

The budget committee left the results of the votes on this article in the hands of Town Clerk Sandra Johnson. Sandra will talk to the attorney and see what wording is available. It is the desire of the Budget Committee members to neither sound negative nor positive about the article in this tied vote and that the numbers of the vote appear on the article.

Having no further business, Judy Flanagan moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM

Respectfully submitted by Pamela Dunning, Clerk