

TOWN OF WISCASSET
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 31, 2008

The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Mehrl at 6:45 PM at the Wiscasset Public Library.

Budget committee Members in attendance: Chairman Steve Mehrl, Judith Colby, Sherri Dunbar, and Pamela Dunning. Town Manager, Arthur Faucher and new committee member Richard Hanson were also present. Members absent were George Green, Robert Fairfield Sr., Karl Tarbox and Tony True.

Budget Committee members recognized that since Richard Hanson had not yet been sworn in and was not yet a voting member of the committee a quorum was not present. The meeting was purely instructional with no items being voted. The meeting continued.

Acceptance of the agenda for the meeting was moved by Judith Colby, seconded by Sherri Dunbar. Motion passed 4-0.

Chair Steve Mehrl explained the need for the meeting at the Library and expressed his opinion that an understanding of each cost center was important when considering the budget for that area. Steve spoke about moving the meeting to the Municipal Building when the Library visit was concluded. The meeting at the town office would cover the town's audit report and include information on how to read the report.

A brief discussion about the current auditors followed. Town Manager Arthur Faucher talked about how this firm was chosen. There was some discussion on how often auditors should be changed.

Town Manager Arthur Faucher passed out copies of the Waterfront and Harbors budget that included information on revenues. This information had been requested at a prior meeting.

Library Director Pamela Dunning took the committee on a tour of the Wiscasset Public Library. Pamela stopped at the adult circulation area to give committee members some statistics on library usage over the last year.

Library statistics of interest to the Budget Committee follows:

Number of items in the collection = 35,141

Number of items circulated in 2007 = 64,304

Number of registered used = 4922

Number of Wiscasset users = 2916 or about 81% of the total population of Wiscasset

New patron registration in 2007 = 317

As the tour continued, Pamela talked about the processes of weeding the collection and collection development. Pamela further spoke about the money raised in grants and how that money was used for repairs and upgrades to the building.

Grants in 2007 included:

\$50,000 from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation to renovate the exterior of the building,

\$9,100 from the Maine Community Foundation to install air conditioning, and

\$750 from the Libri Foundation to purchase Children's Books.

Pamela further explained that grants for endowments, general operation funds and capital improvements have been impossible to find.

Committee members retired to the reference area and were joined by the President of the Board of Trustees of Wiscasset Public Library, Susan Blagden. Susan handed out copies of the budget. Susan briefly explained the amounts given to the library by the supporting towns of Alna, Edgecomb, Westport Island and Wiscasset. She further discussed fundraising, donations and endowment revenues.

Susan gave an explanation of why the library trustees asked for \$88,000 last year. The town voted to give the library \$80,000. Pamela Dunning explained some of the consequences of not receiving the amount last year. When a staff member retired, her hours were not replaced. Pamela spoke about the lack of staffing and the difficulties that arise from that shortage. Pamela spoke further on the need for librarians to be trained and experienced and the difficulty in finding replacements when needed.

Chair Steve Mehrl talked about the need to have this information in an article for the newspapers so the public can be made aware of the library and how it works.

Town Manager Arthur Faucher asked how often the Wiscasset Public Library was audited. Susan Blagden explained that as a 501(c)3, the preparing of the tax forms by the accountant serves as and is accepted as an audit. Pamela explained that the tax forms were also accepted by grantors as audit information.

At this point, Chair Steve Mehrl pointed out that the meeting was running later than expected and that it was too late to return to the town office to look into other matters. The next meeting was set for Wednesday, February 6 at 6:30 PM at the Municipal Building. There was a brief reminder that the open town meeting about the office of assessors' agent was set for Thursday, February 7 Pm at the Wiscasset Middle School.

Having no further business, Sherri Dunbar made the motion to close the meeting. Motion was seconded by Steve Mehrl. Motion passed 4-0. Meeting closed at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Pamela Dunning.