

TOWN OF WISCASSET
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 22, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM at the Wiscasset Municipal Building

Budget committee members in attendance: Judith Colby, Sherri Dunbar, Judy Flanagan, Richard Hanson, Steve Mehrl and Greg Shea. Absent from the meeting were Pamela Dunning and George Greene. There is currently one vacant seat on the Committee. Edward Polewarczyk – Wiscasset citizen viewing the operation of the Budget Committee also joined us. Arthur Faucher was the guest speaker for the evening.

In the absence of our Clerk Pamela Dunning, Judy Flanagan volunteered to be Clerk for the meeting.

Chairman Steve Mehrl requested to adjust the agenda to allow Arthur Faucher (Town Manager) to address the committee on the upcoming budget cycle calendar dates, meeting arrangement and expectations.

The objective is to have joint meetings with the Cost Center Department Heads, Selectmen, Town Manager and Budget Committee so there can be dialog and understanding of like and differing opinions on areas of concern. The urgency is to have these meetings early enough to avoid the last minute activities and frustrations that happened last year.

Arthur joined the meeting and spoke of the Selectmen being in favor to having joint meetings. The calendar dates were discussed and Arthur advised that he was working with Sue Varney to establish the dates and present the dates to the Selectmen by January 24th. Arthur advised the Department Heads when he met with them on January 14 that he will be working with them throughout February. Instructions to the Department Heads are to project a budgets with reductions of 10% and 5%, advising that above a flat budget would not be considered realistic. Cost Center budgets and requests for capital project requests were to be completed and submitted by March 13.

Town employee contract negotiations/mediation currently in process will affect respective cost center budgets are:

- Highway
- Police
- Office Staff (mediation)

Conversations proceeded to the Dates on the Calendar, and defining the differences between the Public informational meetings and Public hearings. Arthur also mentioned the expectations of having all of the Department Heads present at both of these meetings to address questions. Efforts will have to be made to ensure that all stakeholders are made aware of budget decisions coming out of Augusta that may impact their revenues/budgets.

Arthur responded to a question concerning the dollar amount of tax liens currently being pursued at approximately \$187,000.

After the Audit Report Meeting Arthur had met with the Ambulance Director and discussed the uncollectible charges and the billing process currently in place. This was addressed at the Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday 20 January, 2009. Another area of uncollected/unbilled revenue is mooring fees which is also being addressed.

Arthur discussed the utilization of contingency accounts to be part of their budgets to meet emergencies. Concern was expressed and consideration of contingency accounts that oftentimes it is more prudent to manage one contingency fund total of which would be less than that of multiple department funds.

Arthur also addressed the desire of Lincoln County TV (LCTV) to receive 50% of the Time Warner franchise fee that is paid to the town which is approximately \$25,000. The wording coming from LCTV for this request is very strong. In making their request LCTV may not be remembering that Wiscasset negotiated separately with Time Warner and received a more favorable franchise fee from them by a considerable amount. Arthur has addressed LCTV to coordinate their efforts with WHS and entertain their educational desires in the TV programming area. Either way the Time Warner franchise fee is revenue to the town. Last year \$2000 was provided under Community Organizations (item 45-10 in expense account reports). Future arrangements are being made to have town representatives visit LCTV site and perhaps hear a business case that could justify any increase in the town's contribution.

Arthur having completed his presentation and having entertained questions from the committee departed to attend a Brunswick Naval Station Closing meeting at approximately 7:25 pm.

The addressing of agenda items 2, 3 and 4 continued with general discussion of the timing of the requisite dates to support the town meeting secret ballot voting date.

Arrangements are being made for Budget Committee members to spend a day (weekday) visiting some of the Cost Centers to become familiar with the features, supporting equipment, projected needs and capital projects funded last year. Discussions focused around a Thursday event to be determined after members checked their calendars and provided their availability to the Chairman. Minimum time will be required to post the intent of an informational gathering meeting that the public/press may desire to join in on.

Having completed the intended business of the meeting a motion was made and agreed to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:56 pm.

Meeting notes taken by Judy Flanagan and prepared here by Chair Steve Mehrl on 01/23/09