

TOWN OF WISCASSET
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
March 5, 2009

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

Budget Committee members in attendance: Judith Colby, Pamela Dunning, Judy Flanagan, George Greene, Richard Hanson, Steve Mehrl and Greg Shea. Member absent was Sherri Dunbar. There is currently one vacant seat on the Committee.

Judith Colby moved to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by Greg Shea. Agenda passed 6-0.

The budgets are due to the Town Manager from all department heads on March 6. Meetings between the Selectmen, Budget Committee and department heads should begin soon.

There were some questions about the raise in the request from the Wiscasset Public Library. Board members wanted to know the reason for the raise overall, what would happen if the library bought no books this year, why the investment fees were up if the endowment had gone down, and why was the line for Upkeep/Maintenance up from \$5000 to \$20,000. Library Director, Pamela Dunning tried to answer the questions. The raise in the request overall is due to inflation and the drop income from the endowment. If the library bought no books this year and depended solely on donations the newer popular and best seller item as well as the most current event non-fiction items would probably not be amongst the donations. Most donated books are older titles. There was no answer available for the question about the investment fees. That is not an area in which the library director has information. The Upkeep/Maintenance line increase may be due to some repairs that are needed for the roof on the addition. It may also be due to other repairs that the trustees have in mind. This is again an area in which the library director is not responsible. Full explanations for these questions will be available when the committees meet with a library trustee to formally present the budget.

There were some comments about the LCTV request. It was generally discussed that the quality of programming was poor and had little value to public.

Selectman Phil Di Vece was present at the meeting. Committee members took the opportunity of asking him some questions. He informed us that there are 3 union contracts under negotiation. The contract that covers the finance and assessing officers, the contract that covers the police department employees and the contract that covers the employees of the transfer station and recreation department are all open. Town Manager Arthur Faucher's contract ends on December 31, 2009. The Selectmen are currently evaluating his work.

There was a brief discussion about the power plants that have shown an interest in Wiscasset. Some board members stated that they like the business from Canada and encouraged others to go online at www.riverbank.com to take a look at their site.

Superintendent of Schools, Jay McIntire sent a request to the Budget Committee for a member to join the Transportation Committee. The Transportation Committee will be looking into the bus routes and needs of the children in town. Budget Committee member Judith Colby, who is a bus driver for the Wiscasset School Department, agreed to join the Transportation Committee. It was generally accepted that a person involved in bus driving would be the most knowledgeable and useful for the committee.

There was a question about how to get access to the Maine Municipal Association website. Elected officials need to apply online. The local Town Manager will then verify that the elected official is as they claim. The MMA will then allow the elected official access to the site.

There was a brief discussion and concerns voiced about the investments through Edward Jones. There seems to be no policy in place for investing. Perhaps the Selectmen should be asked if there should be decisions made and a policy written on how safely or aggressively the funds should be invested.

There were some concerns voiced about hiring the company who audits the accounts every year to come in and do other types of work with these accounts. There is a fine line that needs to not be crossed.

The cost center budgets are not yet available for discussion so that part of the agenda could not be discussed.

There was no new information available for the LD1 Property Tax Levy Limit. So that item on the agenda could not be discussed.

George Greene moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Greg Shea. Having no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM

Respectfully submitted by Pamela Dunning, Clerk