

TOWN OF WISCASSET
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
December 4, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM at the Wiscasset Municipal Building.

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

Judith Colby moved to approve the minutes of the September 8, 2008 meeting. Motion was seconded by Richard Hanson. There were a few corrections discussed. The minutes were approved 6-0-2.

Judith Colby moved to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2008 meeting. Motion was seconded by Judy Flanagan. There were a few corrections discussed. The minutes were approved 7-0-1.

Greg Shea moved to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2008 meeting. Motion was seconded by George Greene. There were a few corrections discussed. The minutes were approved 7-0-1.

Chair Steve Mehrl notified committee members that the town officials would like to have a photograph of the committee to upload to the new town website. It was agreed that the next Budget Committee meeting on January 8, 2009 would be a good time to arrange to take some pictures from which to make a selection.

George Greene notified the committee that Superintendent Jay McIntire would be holding an informational meeting on January 8, 2009. He will be updating the public on the new Regional School Union (RSU) developments. There is a narrow window of time to take out papers to go on the RSU board. It is thought that 3 people have taken out papers and only 1 has returned them so far. The Reorganizational Planning Committee (RPC) will continue to function slightly until the RSU board is formed. The local school board is retained until June 30, 2009. At that point, the board will be dissolved. The state mandates that no local boards will exist for the first 3 years of the new RSU.

There was a brief discussion about the possibility of the school department buying a couple of modulars to use as classrooms. There is a feasibility study going on to see if this solution will work well and to find out what the expense would be.

There was a brief discussion about the current economic climate and the likelihood of being about to get a bond to rebuild the schools. Interest on bonds would probably be very high at this point in time.

The beta version new town website is at www.wiscasset.staging.fireflydigital.net for preview. Discussion continued about the new Town of Wiscasset website being

developed by Firefly. There were questions as to how the developer was hired and if the town had opened the project to bids. Another question was as to whether there is a contract in place that outlines a timeline for the completion of the site and a payment schedule.

There was a discussion during which each board member stated their positions on what they believed the Budget Committee's responsibilities included and where those responsibilities ended. It was agreed that the committee should stay up to date on the town issues in case an article should arise on the town warrant that would require the committee to make a recommendation. It was also agreed that managing the money is clearly the responsibility of the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen and not that of the Budget Committee.

Chair Steve Mehrl informed members that he had emailed a list of the town property to each member. This list included the purchase date and expected life span of the equipment. This will help members keep track of information on these items as replacement requests are made for them. He has also emailed a list of the businesses in town and what each is assessed at and what they pay for taxes. This information is important in these economic times. If a business fails to meet their tax payments or goes out of business and is no longer paying taxes to the town, it may greatly impact all of the other tax payers in town.

The town's fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30. Budget Committee usually meet with the Selectmen in April to begin the next round of budget issues. There was a discussion about the timeline of the process on voting warrant articles.

There was a brief discussion about probably major revenue shortfalls at both the state and federal levels. It will be very hard to pass a successful budget if and/or when this appropriated money is not passed on to the town.

The question was asked, "How can we be of more help to the Selectmen and School Board?" There was discussion about Budget Committee members contacting individual members of the other boards to keep communication open and talk about our hopes that we continue to find ways to all work together in a respectful manner and avoid confrontational approaches to problems. There was also a discussion about the Budget Committee hosting an informal meeting of the boards to enhance communication between the boards. It was agreed that there has been great strides in communication and partnership between these boards.

There was some discussion about the spending freeze at the schools. There were some books bought this year and it was explained that these books were purchased with Title 1 money.

Greg Shea moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Richard Hanson. Having no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Having no further business, meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM

Respectfully submitted by Pamela Dunning, Clerk