

WISCASSET SELECT BOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
MARCH 26, 2020 (via teleconference)

Present: Chair Judy Colby, Kathy Martin-Savage, Vice Chair Ben Rines, Jr., Jeff Slack, Kim Andersson, Town Manager John O'Connell and Administrative Assistant Kathy Onorato

Media Representatives: Lincoln County News, Charlotte Boynton; Wiscasset Newspaper, Phil DiVece

1. Called to Order

Chair Judy Colby called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. via Cisco Webex remote conferencing.

2. Budget Discussion

Town Manager John O'Connell expressed to the Board that dealing with the COVID 19 situation has increased the challenge of presenting an annual budget to the voters of Wiscasset. He said we do not yet fully understanding the potential financial impact of the pandemic which leaves too many unanswered questions.

He presented the Board with the following options:

- Commit to maintain the same budget as last year. The Governor allows the legislative body to take that action and defer the usual Annual Town Meeting under LD 2167.
- Reduce the Budget below last year's which he said would be difficult to do in a short time frame with a 7.6% health insurance premium increase and union contracts to settle.
- Go with the reduced budget before the Board, which is a 2.8% increase over last year's budget. O'Connell indicated that the original budget showed a 5.7% increase. He said the reduction represented keeping staffing levels the same as the current year, with now new hires or increased hours.

Board members expressed the importance of allowing additional time to adopt a new budget to see what the financial impact of the pandemic will be. The consensus of the Board was to temporarily commit to the same budget as last year under the provisions of the emergency legislation LD 2167.

Board members raised questions regarding the ability to hold a town meeting at a later date when it was safe and how long the Board had to hold a Town Meeting and adopt a new budget.

Selectmen Rines raised questions regarding the election process, whereas papers have been already released, but gathering signatures has been difficult with the social distancing.

The Board directed O'Connell to seek advice from MMA regarding the Board's questions, which would be presented at the next meeting.

The Board will meet by teleconference on March 31, 2020 at 2 p.m.

At 5:42 a motion was made by Katharine Martin-Savage, seconded by Benjamin Rines, Jr. to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0.