

Summary of Recreational Pier Expansion

Project Background:

- Wiscasset was awarded a Shore and Harbor Grant from the Maine Coastal Program in 2020 to engineer an expansion of the recreational pier facility. Gartley & Dorsky, Engineers and Surveyors, were engaged by the Town to design proposed improvements to the recreational pier and the Harbormaster building, including:
 - Extending the floating dock by installing five (5) new 8 ft. x 20 ft. floats and thirteen (13) new timber piles;
 - Installing water and electrical lines from the Harbormaster building, including four (4) utility pedestals for water and electric; and,
 - Renovating the Harbormaster building to include a shower in each bathroom and a laundry room.
 - No dredging is proposed as part of this project.
- The preliminary engineering plans are available for viewing at the Town Office.
- The goal of the project is to increase recreational water access opportunities along the Sheepscot River.

Potential Operating Revenue & Expenses:

- The Waterfront Committee prepared a proposal for the Select Board and Budget Committee for preliminary decision-making purposes that discusses the proposed project, grant opportunities, and an initial assessment of estimated revenue and expenses to operate and maintain the pier expansion. The proposal is available at the Town Office and on the Town's website.
- To prepare this proposal, the Waterfront Committee performed diligent research (including interviewing over 30 public and private marinas in the region); conducted interviews with the Harbormaster, Town Public Works Department, and Parks and Recreation Department; and reviewed current revenue and expenses provided by the Town Office.
- The proposed rates used for preliminary estimating purposes were based upon the average seasonal and nightly rates for piers offering rustic amenities similar to those that would be available in Wiscasset; the distance to open water from the Wiscasset recreational pier; and the State's directive that fees be 'reasonable' per the 2020 Shore and Harbor Grant.
- Two potential revenue estimates are included in the proposal, depending on the ratio of seasonal and transient slips, using an average boat length of 25 ft. Yearly revenue under the two estimates ranges from ± \$30,753.60 to ± 33,507.20.
- The WFC also obtained current expenses for the maintenance and operation of the waterfront as a whole, as well as a preliminary estimate to operate and maintain the pier's expansion. This includes information from the Harbormaster as well as Parks and Recreation and Public Works Directors on facility maintenance; launching, retrieving, and repair of the floats each season; and fee collection.
- A preliminary estimate of long-term operation and maintenance costs is approximately \$10,000 per year. This includes funding for an additional part-time staff person for Public Works for the added maintenance associated with the pier. Based on the \$10,000 per year increase in maintenance costs, adjusted revenue is between \$20,753.60 and \$23,507.20 (depending on the ratio of seasonal and transient slips).
- It is estimated the project will pay back the SHIP grant match requirement in under nine (9) years.
- The proposed revenues are purposely conservative and will likely change once the pier expansion is constructed and operational decisions (i.e., fee rates and ratio of transient vs. seasonal slips

decisions are finalized). The Waterfront Committee does not want to overpromise how much revenue Wiscasset will receive in the first few years of operation, so it is expected the revenue could exceed what is estimated in the WFC's proposal.

Grant Proposal:

- The Waterfront Committee is seeking Town approval to submit an application to Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) for their Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP).
- This rolling-deadline grant funds up to \$250,000 for projects that improve access to the water for the public.
- The project and proposed local match must have local elected official approval before being considered eligible for inclusion in future MDOT budgets.
- A 50% match from the Town is required, estimated to be \$174,250, which the Waterfront Committee is **seeking approval from town residents as Question #45 on the June 14, 2022 Wiscasset Town Warrant.**

Economic Development Opportunity:

- Having a facility that brings more recreational boaters to Wiscasset will have economic benefits to the town, especially as boaters become familiar with the amenities offered at the pier and activities available in the downtown.
- As a new recreational asset, Wiscasset will be attractive to boaters and the Town will want to implement a marketing plan, which the WFC believes will prove beneficial. Collaborating with local and regional chambers of commerce, the Maine Office of Tourism, and others would prove useful in marketing Wiscasset.

Additional Thoughts:

- The Waterfront Committee believes this project is good for Wiscasset, will bring more visitors to Town, and increase recreational waterfront opportunities for the public. The Committee strongly urges voters to approve the requested match of \$174,250 for the MDOT SHIP grant as Question #45 on the June 14, 2022 Wiscasset Town Warrant.
- The Pier Expansion Report proposes adding a modest amenity to the Town; a small step to developing the Waterfront. Waterfront Committee strongly supports this responsible step forward. Next steps to be: installation, operation, and growth.