

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019

**** For further / detailed information refer to entire video recording found on the SRC-TV website – Choose “[Click Here to activate the PEG Media player](#)” found [below PEG TV](#), (middle section), in SRC-TV Playlist Box.*

Presiding: Ed Morgan, Chairman

Members Present: Paul Donnellan, Steve McLean, Sue McIntyre, Ed Morgan

Members Absent: Howard Burnham, Justin Reinhartd

Selectmen Present: Joanne Andrews

Guests: Judy LePage, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Laura May, Town Treasurer; John McIntyre, resident; Cindy Smith, Librarian/Director

1. Call to order – count for quorum

The meeting was called to order at 7: 03 p.m.

A quorum was established

2. Presentation / Explanation of Potential Employee Health Care Plan

Ed Morgan stated that he recently had the opportunity to gather information that the Board had not received during the Budget Process in reference to potential Employee Health Care Plans. This has been an “on and off” topic of discussion and conversations for a few years. He then proceeded to provide a detailed presentation of the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust Plan PPO 2500. Plan benefits, deductibles, premium costs, as well as the Town’s share of costs were provided. He explained the comparison between this PPO plan to a previous HRA plan that had proved to be unhelpful to Town employees. He especially noted that he was not looking at the Budget Committee changing their vote on proposed Article 28. However, he added that he had discussed with Board members whether a phrase such as “to purchase healthcare” should be included in the language of Article 28. (*Proposed Article 28 currently reads as follows: “To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$6,000.00 for each of the 9 eligible employees including FICA Taxes in lieu of an Employer Sponsored Health Insurance with evidence of Primary Health Insurance to be paid monthly through payroll.”*)

Ed stated that he wanted to make it clear that the intent of his presentation was meant for informational purposes only for the employees, as well as the Board of Select, the Budget Committee and taxpayers.

He also noted that a Representative from Maine Municipal Association (MMA), (who is familiar with this plan), had offered to be available on Tuesday, February 21, 2019, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., in the Media Room at the Municipal Building, for all who are interested in learning more.

Questions and discussion followed the presentation. Joanne Andrews, gave a brief history on the Town’s attempt throughout the years to procure health insurance benefits for its employees. She noted how the HRA program’s process for re-imbursement proved challenging, difficult and essentially not very beneficial to most employees.

Whereas the current re-imbursement program, in lieu of the Employer Sponsored Health Insurance had received more positive feedback. In moving forward, Joanne stated that she hoped that the Town would procure a Health Insurance Program that would benefit all employees. It was noted that some companies and municipalities who do offer Health Insurance benefits may offer more than one plan to their employees, with some additionally offering an “opt out” clause, with varied benefit options. In summary, the consensus was that employees should have some input as to their own individual health needs, perhaps thru a survey, in order to move forward with a Health Insurance Benefit Plan that will work for everyone. It was agreed that some of the Town’s employees are at or near retirement, and, in order to attract future qualified and experienced employees, the Town will need to become more competitive by offering good benefits, most especially, a good Health Insurance Plan in order to attract those good, qualified candidates. There was total consensus among the group that we currently have very qualified and experienced Town employees, and for that, we are all very grateful.

3. Review minutes of prior meetings

Paul Donnellan motioned to accept the meeting minutes for both December 20, 2018 and January 17, 2019, seconded by Steve McLean. Vote taken. All in favor.

4. Final Review of Proposed Board of Selectmen Warrant Articles

The Budget Committee focused on proposed Selectmen articles that the Budget Committee had not voted on yet, and/or, articles that had discrepancies between the Selectmen’s final proposed articles vs. what the Budget Committee had voted on.

*(*The draft copy of proposed Articles reviewed herein was a draft proposal presented by the Board of Selectmen, dated January 30, 2019).*

Article 46 To see what sum the town will vote to raise and appropriate for the operations of the Limerick Municipal Volunteer Fire-Rescue Department, stipends, FICA Taxes, supplies, equipment, training, membership fees/dues, professional fees, health and wellness and technology.

Bill Jones motioned to accept the sum of \$129,966.00 for Article 47 as written seconded by Steve McLean. Vote taken. Motion passed with 5 Yes.

Article 47 To see what sum the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for three shifts of Blended Coverage of EMT and/or Firefighters to operate emergency apparatus, with guidelines set by Title 30-A Chapter 153 § 3154. Total amount: \$249,740.00

Steve McLean motioned to accept the total budget sum of \$379,406, (includes total of both Articles 46 and 47) seconded by Paul Donnellan. Vote taken. Motion passed with 4 Yes

Articles 58, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 64

A brief discussion began pertaining to articles Article 58, 59, 60, 61, 62 and 64. All of these had been approved by the Budget Committee at the January 17, 2019 meeting *with “the stipulation that the work goes out for bid”.*

The latest proposed Warrant does not reflect that the Budget Committee *had voted “yes with stipulations”*, and that the language or explanation of that stipulation “with the stipulation that the work goes out for bid”, is additionally not included in the Warrant. It was strongly felt that this recommendation “with language” should be noted in the Warrant for taxpayers.

The reason for the Budget Committee recommending this stipulation was to ensure that whenever work, repairs, etc., are needed for Town owned properties that in applicable cases, that this work goes out for bid so the Town is getting the best price. Due diligence is needed for procuring cost effective estimates.

Joanne Andrews, Select Board Member, was asked if the Select Board has a Policy to address this issue. Joanne replied that she had written such a Policy to address the procurement of cost estimates when it came to work, repairs, etc., but it had never been formally accepted by the Board. So, it is true, that the Town currently **does not** have a formal Policy in place.

Discussion followed pertaining to what could be printed on the Warrant.

It was again strongly felt that a “sentence” could and should be included in the Warrant reflecting the Budget Committee’s entire recommendation, as follows:

Budget Committee recommends “Yes” *with conditions – followed by sentence: “with the stipulation that all work goes out for bid”.

Article 75 Shall the Town of Limerick vote to approve a Community Development Block Grant project development application for the following program and dollar amounts:
Program: CDBG Public Infrastructure Amount \$190,000
and to submit same to the Department of Economic and Community Development and if said program is approved, to authorize the municipal officers to accept said grant funds, to make such assurances, assume such responsibilities, and exercise such authority as are necessary and reasonable to implement such programs. Furthermore, the Town of Limerick is cognizant of the requirement that should the intended National Objective of the CDBG program not be met all CDBG funds must be repaid to the State of Maine CDBG program.

Discussion began. Sue noted that the way this Article was written was somewhat confusing and asked for some clarification. Joanne replied that Mr. Cleveland had requested that the Town re-vote on this Article due to some discrepancy in the wording when it was first voted on at last year’s Town Meeting in March of 2018. Sue felt that the current wording made it sound like the Town was being requested to agree to an “application” for another CDBG grant.

Joanne stated that she was under the impression that the wording had to do with the acceptance of the CDBG grant of \$190,000 that the Town had been awarded. Sue asked then, why didn’t the wording simply request the taxpayers to “accept the \$190,000 CDBG grant award”, instead, as had been done with other grant awards?

Since there were no clear explanation provided, ***Sue McIntyre motioned instead to accept the \$190,000 CDBG grant award, seconded by Paul Donnellan. Vote taken. Motion passed with 4 in favor.***

Article 69 To see what sum the Town will vote to transfer from Capital Project Reserve Account to assist with the estimated cost of \$70,000.00 for repointing of the bricks at the Brick Town Hall.

There is a discrepancy in the Budget Committee's recommendation as printed on the draft Warrant. *The Budget Committee voted in favor of "up to \$35,000" *with conditions that a "needs assessment be done prior to" vs. in favor of "35,000" *with conditions, etc.*

Sue requested that she be allowed to clarify some discrepancies from "chatter" that had been "out there" pertaining to the HAC Committee Meeting held on January 15, 2019 as well as the comments made at the Board of Selectmen Meeting on January 22nd, 2019 that pertained to the "re-pointing of the Brick Town Hall" project and funding requests.

She noted that there are discrepancies pertaining to the mason that was asked to take a look at the Brick Town Hall to provide an assessment on the conditions of the brickwork (as mentioned at the January 15th, 2019 HAC Committee Meeting), in comparison to the "expert" who provided "a report" as mentioned at the Board of Select meeting on January 22nd, 2019.

Sue voiced her frustration that there was no clarification provided at the Board of Select Meeting as to "who" this expert is / was, (no names provided), "when", was this verbal (or written?) report done, (was it recently done, or a "few years ago") and, "what", exactly was done with, what, if any, written cost estimate was provided.

Her frustration stemmed from the fact that the only written report the Town seems to have goes back 12 years. Sue said she had read the 2007 report and noted that the report reflects the condition of the "entire building", focusing on items such as, the structural integrity, the interior, the roof, the foundation, the safety aspects, the need for handicap accessibility, etc., etc. She pointed out that in that entire 2007 report there are only three (3) paragraphs that pertain to the brickwork itself and which is very general in scope. She strongly felt that the Town should have a recent, updated, needs assessment report on the current status of the brickwork, with specific areas of deterioration noted, along with a more focused, cost estimate. Obviously, it is safe to say, that the brickwork has not gotten any better throughout the years. She agreed with other members of the Budget Committee that a more recent "needs assessment on the bricks" should be done, as well as, a current report on the structural integrity of the fire escape. All of this should be done prior to moving forward and prior to the sending out of any RFPs.

4. Adjourn

Steve McLean motioned to adjourn, seconded by Paul Donnellan. Vote taken. Motion passed with all in favor.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.
Next Meeting: TBA

Respectfully Submitted,
Suzanne McIntyre
Recording Secretary