

# BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2018

**Presiding:** Ed Morgan

**Members Present:** William Jones, Steve McLean, Sue McIntyre, Ed Morgan, Justin Reinhartd

**Members Absent:** Howard Burnham, Paul Donnellan,

**Selectmen Present:** Joanne Andrews, Gil Harris, Dottie Richard, Wendy Thorne

**Guests:** Laura May, Town Treasurer; John McIntyre, resident; Amanda LePage, Dean LePage, resident; Lisa LePage, Parks & Recreation; Steve Malamute, resident; Rick Richardson, resident;

**1. Call to order – count for quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 7: 02 p.m.  
A quorum was established

**2. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes of October 18, 2018**

A motion was made by Bill Jones to accept the minutes of October 18, 2018, seconded by Justin Reinhartd.  
Motion passed with all in favor.

**3. Old Business**

**Solid Waste Budget Proposal Updates**

Joanne Andrews provided the Committee with an update on the Door-to-Door Household Waste Contract. A contract with Mellen & Son was received, accepted and signed.

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Joanne then proceeded to provide answers to follow-up questions pertaining to tonnage, hauling, the white goods pile, scrap iron pile, etc., as well as Household Waste. She referred to a summary sheet (distributed among Committee members) that reflected the total tonnage for each category that had been reported to the State of Maine going all the way back to 2003. These calculations are used as reference by Joanne to determine disposal fee rates for each category.

A question was asked if Joanne felt we were recouping our costs with the disposal fees that we are currently charging at the Transfer Station. As of now, she stated, the Transfer Station has taken in over \$34,000 in revenues, more than anticipated. However, she is reviewing if some disposal fees should be increased. One reason cited for increase is that this year the Transfer Station took in lots more metal. The metal revenue brought in about \$10,000. There is no cost for disposal or hauling of this pile. The same person that pushes down and compacts the Household Waste also pushes the pile of scrap iron. It only takes about 15 minutes. She added that the crew at the Transfer Station have been vigilant in making sure individuals who go down to that pile are not stacking huge piles of metal unto the back of their trucks or trailers and taking scrap metal somewhere else for money.

Would there be a potential to negotiate with the Town of Parsonsfield? This could allow the disposal of items at the Transfer Station by Parsonsfield residents for a negotiated fee which could bring in some extra revenue. However, Joanne felt this effort was not worth pursuing and would not benefit Limerick. She stated that it would only cover tipping fees and would not include overhead costs.

In answer to the question of hauling fees for household waste dropped off at the Transfer Station, she stated that the current Door-to-Door contract with Mellen and Son does include the pick-up/ hauling away of two (2) containers per week of household waste from the Transfer Station at no additional cost.

Joanne added that she was meeting with Mr. Mellen on Saturday to discuss Household Waste and to confirm with him that the garbage trucks should be picking up household waste from residents only. They should not be mixing in household waste from commercial businesses. Commercial business waste is supposed to be picked up on a separate day. According to the contract, tipping fees for business waste pick-ups are supposed to be paid by Mellen, and not by the taxpayers of Limerick. She felt this might be a reason that tonnage had increased dramatically this past year.

Another question came up as to who picks up the scrap iron pile. This is done by Grimm Industries.

It was noted that Business / Commercial waste is picked up on Thursdays by a different truck. Joanne commented that the increase in tonnage of household waste is a concern for her, and “driving her crazy”. She is trying to understand why this is happening and wants to resolve that issue.

A question about the Liability Insurance discrepancy with the Door-to-Door contract with Mellen and Son was brought up. This has been resolved, and the contract has been signed.

**A motion was made by Bill Jones to accept the Solid Waste Budget of \$319,855.25, seconded by Sue McIntyre. Motion passed with 5 Yes.**

#### **4. Review and Recommendation for Proposed Parks and Recreational Department Budget**

Lisa LePage, Director of Parks and Recreation Department came forward before the Committee with a proposed 2019 budget.

Before Lisa began, Dean LePage had some questions about the Budget Committee’s concerns pertaining to the word “stipend” and its definition. He provided a definition found in Webster’s Dictionary. However, it was noted that there are various definitions / legal opinions which range from those identified by the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as, definitions provided by Non-profit Organizations / Municipalities. The Town’s history / background pertaining to when a “stipend” was introduced by the Board of Selectmen was discussed. It would be helpful to the Budget Committee if this could be clarified by the Board of Selectmen. This would make it easier for the Budget Committee to be able to treat all who are provided a stipend for services in an equal fashion when reviewing the various Department Budgets. This precipitated into a long discussion.

For instance, we have “volunteers” in the Fire Department with stipends, as well as, other Department Heads that are provided “stipends”. Is there a difference in the “stipend” definition when one is a “volunteer” vs. someone who is “appointed”? It becomes an issue when “volunteers” or, “appointed” officials request an increase in their “stipend”. Were there written agreements? Were job descriptions provided? Was this position advertised? It was noted that some definitions define “stipend” as simply a compensation for incidentals, gas mileage, out-of-pocket expenses, etc. as a “thank you” to volunteers. What criteria, if any should be considered for an increase? There are no guidelines provided by the Board of Selectmen making this topic a “gray area”. It is a confusing matter. When, if at all, should a “volunteer” or “appointed official” eventually become a “part-time” position? It was noted that the Board of Selectmen essentially have oversight over Departments.

In summary, this is an issue that will need to be resolved and defined by the Board of Selectmen to allow for fair and equitable treatment as well as to provide guidance to the Budget Committee when they review the various Department Budgets when requests for increases in stipends are made.

Following this discussion, Lisa began her presentation providing information and updates on several items in her proposed budget request. The total Parks and Recreational Budget for 2019 comes to \$34,450.93. This is up from \$21,934 in 2018, and \$15,529.00 in 2017. Other detailed information pertained to wages, supplies, equipment, etc. A question was asked as to the reason for the difference between the \$21,934 that was requested last year, as compared to the \$34,450 requested for 2019.

Lisa replied that repairs and repair services were a factor. This includes repairs on the embankment of ballfield #2 (\$4500.), and, the clean-up of Boy Scout Island causeway (\$1500). Should these items be considered “long-term” projects? Items / improvements that are meant to last a few years? Lisa said “yes”. There was a question about “loam to be added, if needed, and seeded for lawn” at a cost of \$5,150. It was noted that the words “if needed” seemed like an open-ended statement. Lisa replied it that was an error on her part, and, that the field would need to be “seeded” and would need to be “re-loaded”.

Since these are “long-term” projects, they may need to be defined as “Capital Improvement Projects” and should not be part of the operational, daily repair budget. Lisa acknowledge that she had considered that those items might need to be listed that way but was not sure how to describe that in her budget.

A discussion followed about the “capital improvement” projects that were requested last year and whether these were made known and discussed with the Board of Selectmen. Lisa stated that all she knew was that her budget had been cut by 80% but it wasn’t explained to her that it was due to the removal of items that should be listed as “Capital Improvement Projects”. It seemed there was some miscommunication between the Parks and Recreational Department and the Board of Selectmen last year.

Subsequently, it was asked if the current \$14,650 could come out of Capital Improvement Projects vs. the Parks and Recreation Department’s budget. Discussion then focused again on funds that were removed last year from the Parks and Recreational Department budget due to items that the Budget Committee considered, at the time, to be defined as Capital Improvement Projects. Those projects essentially should not have been listed as part of an “operational budget” in that budget proposal. Wendy Thorne came forward providing the Budget Committee with a definition. A “capital improvement project” should last five (5) years or more.

Another discussion focused on the expansion of the soccer field. It was noted that last year the Selectmen did not feel that an expansion of that field was warranted or needed. They did not want this program expanded because it wasn’t clear to the Selectmen as to who would be benefitting by this program. Would it be Limerick residents/children or non-residents? Plus, the number of participants (14 at the time) did not seem to warrant that type of expense by the Town. The consensus was that there was some miscommunication about this somewhere. It was again stated that Selectmen had not agreed to expand that field and that Limerick did not need a “professional / regulation field” like high schools have.

Discussion then focused as to what is considered “recreation” (as a Parks and Recreational Department) vs. “professional”. What do we want to provide and pay for? There is a difference in associated costs in moving forward should the Town decide to invest in a “professional / regulation” soccer field for games and tournaments vs. just providing a “recreational and practice” field. The expansion proposed would be for a “high school level / regulation” field. Lisa spoke of an extra “30 feet”. Question is, “what is a high school level field”? It was noted that many of the programs provided by Parks and Recreation” are very good programs. It is not the programs themselves, but, what level of costs will taxpayers be willing to absorb?

Discussion then arose about the total budget requested last year of \$19,000+ which was later amended to include an additional request of about \$2800 more for a swim program. That total amount of \$21,934 was approved at the Town Meeting in March this past year. According to Lisa, it was not made clear to her as to how these funds should be spent.

Discussions then turned to an “increase in stipend”. Lisa thought she was given a stipend of \$4500 for this year, yet the Town Treasurer believed that the annual stipend was \$3,000. Lisa’s proposed budget states \$4500 for an annual stipend for 2019 as compared to \$3,000 previously. This again was followed by a discussion on the word “stipend”, its definition and what that all means when it comes to compensation. Again, this will need to be clarified by the Board of Selectmen.

It was noted that the Custom Budget Reports that were provided to the Budget Committee reflect \$3,000 for 2018. The Budget Committee is going by this information that they were provided by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussions then shifted to what was presented on the floor at the Annual Town Meeting last March. It was stated that the total of \$4,325 is noted on the same line with the word “payroll” (pay for instructors, etc., and the word “Director” referring to “stipend”. (Payroll/Director). The custom budget report provided to the Budget Committee also has the same total of \$4,325 for 2018 broken down as “Pay” (for instructors) at \$1,325.00 and the word “Stipend” (referring to the Director) at \$3,000. Wendy Thorne, Selectman came forth and stated and confirmed that the total of \$4,325 approved at the Town Meeting included both pay (for instructors) and, Director (stipend), which broken down in the Custom Budget Report given to the Budget Committee is detailed as \$1,325.00 for “pay” (instructors), and \$3,000 (for stipend / Director) for a total of \$4,325.00 as approved at the Annual Town Meeting last March.

Question then turned to the hand-written proposed total of \$6,450.00 for personnel services which includes both “pay” for instructors and “stipend” for Director. Lisa explained that the “pay” category also included a \$250 payment for a school custodian on Saturdays at the Line School when “Soccer or Basketball Skills and Drills are performed”. All towns in the school district need to pay for a “per diem” custodian on Saturdays. Discussion continued pertaining to the history of paid certified instructors vs. certified volunteer instructors. Lisa additionally stated that the funds/revenues from registration fees, etc. do not go back into the Parks and Recreational budget. It goes back into the “General Fund”.

A question was asked about the swim program, its popularity and whether \$25.00 per hour was an accepted average rate for a swim instructor. Lisa replied that she had contacted several places to get an idea of what the average hourly rate is for swim instructors, and this seems to be the going rate.

Another question pertained to the number of Limerick residents being served with the soccer program vs. non-Limerick residents. Lisa did not have the answer to that question. A breakdown of revenues was provided. Soccer registration revenues from last year totaled \$2,515; basketball revenues totaled \$1,215; Swim program revenues totaled \$900; and, other (volleyball and basketball) totaled \$551. Total revenue comes to \$5,181.

Discussion then moved on to the Parks and Recreation’s five (5) year plan and a proposed “cooking program”. During the discussion it was noted that vandalism had taken place at the Park and a \$1,000 deductible had to come from the Parks and Recreational Budget to pay for that unanticipated expense. Questions continued. One question pertained to a proposed purchase of a \$70,000 (plus or minus) playground equipment gym that had been stated earlier this summer at one of the Board of Selectmen meetings with the expectation of getting donations toward that purchase. Where did that fit in the five (5) year plan, and what is the timeframe for donations, etc.? Lisa stated that an “account was opened at her request”, but there seemed to be some confusion on this. Discussion then shifted to a “Merry-go-All” listed in the five (5) year plan. It was later stated that the account for donations toward a \$70,000 playground equipment set was part of the “Parks and Recreation Playground Equipment” account for all playground equipment, however, Lisa noted that she had decided to not pursue that \$70,000 playground gym set effort.

In summary, it was determined that approximately \$16 – 17,000 of the Parks and Recreation Department’s proposed budget for 2019 should be listed as “Capital Improvements” and should not be listed as part of the “Operational Budget”.

A follow-up meeting with Parks and Recreation will be held with either the Budget Committee or in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen. Parks and Recreation will be notified with a date and time.

## 5. **Review and Recommendation for Proposed Board of Selectmen Budget**

Wendy Thorne came forward to provide the proposed Board of Selectmen budget for 2019.

*(Wendy wanted to correct a prior statement she made pertaining to the proposed Parks and Recreational Budget for 2019. Capital Improvement projects are those that extend beyond one (1) year and not five (5) years as previously stated.)*

Wendy noted that the summary sheet that was distributed among Budget Committee members compared the Board of Selectmen figures for 2018 and a proposed budget for 2019. There actually were not too many.

Beginning questions pertained to monies for hiring a new Secretary for Selectmen and “website administration”. Some totals are listed in “red” on the summary sheet simply because quotes have not yet been provided to the Town yet as to the cost of some of those services / fees. Workmen’s Compensation insurance and state unemployment taxes are also “unknown”. So, these are estimated calculations based on past financial expenditures for those items.

A brief explanation was provided pertaining to an employer sponsored health insurance yearly reimbursement compensation of \$6,000 toward each employee’s chosen primary health insurance plan. This yearly compensation would be paid monthly. (This means about \$500 per month toward an employee’s chosen health care plan).

Another question was directed at how much revenue did the Brick Town Hall generate from rental use. The reply was approximately between \$500 and \$1,000 more or less. What other services / rental use could the Brick Town Hall offer for various activities? The group shared various ideas. The potential is there. It was also noted that residents are benefiting from it’s use in many other ways. A short discussion about whether the windows at the Brick Town Hall are insulated ensued which led to a discussion about what is allowed to be done or changed to “historic buildings”. It seems that only the “Upper Village District” is listed as part of a “National Historic District”, but, that the Brick Town Hall building itself, is not listed as a “National Historic Building”.

Other questions continued. One pertained to the cemeteries. A request for bid will be sent out for the mowing of both cemeteries. Another question came up pertaining to grants and how much money the Town has received in return for the cost of grant writing services. The Town has recouped a good sum of Money for the investment made. More discussion ensued about the Brick Town Hall and administrative costs. The total cost to re-point this building is expected to be \$70,000. A \$10,000 grant was received. A \$15,000 grant has been applied for and expected to be awarded in December. Another \$10,000 is to be applied for and hopefully will be awarded at the beginning of next year. These grants total \$35,000. Taxpayers will be asked at the next March Annual Town Meeting to transfer \$35,000 from the Capital Reserve Account for the rest of funds needed to complete this project. There will additionally be another request proposed at the Town meeting for \$5,750 for consulting, architectural, administrative services, etc. pertaining to the 2019 ADA improvements and the repointing of that building. Funds for these services had not been included in the \$25,000 that was transferred last March for the Brick Town Hall.

It was noted that \$100,000 was used last year to offset the taxes, is there a projection yet as to how much could potentially be used next year to offset taxes? Wendy replied that she and the Board could not project that yet. But they are planning on sharing that information with the Budget Committee once they receive additional precise information on revenues.

The question was asked if there are plans to repair the fire escape on the Brick Town Hall before all the re-pointing is done next year. Wendy replied that it will be taken into consideration.

And, lastly, it was pointed out that the Town's Code Enforcement Officer, had recently received his Certification as a Grant Writer. This is a plus for the Town, as this in-house service could lower costs paid to outside grant writers, as well as provide additional opportunities with the application of more grants.

The Board of Selectmen will return before the Budget Committee with additional budget proposal information once they have met with Department Heads.

Wendy noted that she is working on re-structuring the format for Warrant Articles for next year's Town Meeting to make it easier for taxpayers / voters to understand. The re-structuring would put all relevant articles together in each of their respective categories / sections rather than scattered. She would also prefer, in looking ahead, that all supplies be listed into one total category, rather than by each Department.

Ed Morgan offered to meet with Wendy Thorne or Laura May, or both, to work on simplifying the Fire Department's Personnel Budget to make it easier to understand in moving forward.

A discussion followed pertaining to the Fire Department, the challenges of staffing, compensation, and priorities. It was suggested that coverage / staffing should be addressed first, and, then once that is working correctly, the Town could then move forward on a new Fire Department building.

Steve McLean made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Bill Jones. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, November 1st, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Suzanne McIntyre  
Recording Secretary