

**TOWN OF WOLFEBORO
BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED MINUTES
January 10, 2023**

I. Call To Order

Chairman MacDonald opened the meeting at 6:04 pm at the Wolfeboro Public Library.

Members Present: John MacDonald, Chairman, Bob Tougher, Vice-Chairman, John Burt, Bob Loughman, Brian Black, Tom Bell, Bob Moholland, Members, Brian Deshaies, BOS Representative, Linda Murray, BOS Alternate Representative.

Members Absent: Matt Plache, Steve Johnson, Members (excused).

Staff Present: Jim Pineo, Town Manager, Kathy Carpentier, Finance Director, Lee Ann Hendrickson, Administrative Assistant.

The Committee participated in the pledge of allegiance.

II. Revisit Items

Chamber of Commerce

Bob Tougher stated the Committee should not be chasing down the financial information requested.

Bob Loughman stated he has an issue with not receiving the entire financial package and information. He stated the agencies provide a full set of audit and financial information and doesn't understand why the Committee doesn't receive the information after requesting it for two years.

Mary DeVries apologized for the delay in submitting the information to the Committee in addition to the lack of information provided. She stated she would ensure the submittal of all requested information next year.

Tom Bell questioned the difficulty in providing/producing the financial information.

Mary DeVries stated she initially provided a balance sheet and thought that such was sufficient.

Bob Loughman asked that the documentation requirements and a copy of an agency submittal be provided to Ms. DeVries.

John MacDonald confirmed the Chamber of Commerce would submit the required information in a timely manner and noted that if the information is not submitted that funding may not be appropriated.

It was moved by John MacDonald and seconded by Brian Black to increase 01-46520-380 Outside Services from \$0 to \$6,000.

John MacDonald stated the Chamber of Commerce has been a big part of the community for a long time and provides activities for the community; noting those efforts should be supported.

Kathy Carpentier noted the financials for the agencies are available on the Town's website.

Roll call vote: Bob Tougher – yes, John Burt – no, John MacDonald – yes, Tom Bell – yes, Bob Moholland – yes, Brian Black – yes, Bob Loughman – yes. The motion passed (6-1-0).

III. Warrant Articles

Public Safety Building; \$12,500,000

Jim Pineo read the warrant article and reviewed a PowerPoint presentation for such.

Bob Loughman questioned the funds in the capital reserve fund for the dispatch console and confirmed that the console has not been purchased. He stated he doesn't believe the cost of the console should be included in the cost of the project.

Kathy Carpentier stated the language of the warrant article will be revised to reflect and include the cost of the dispatch console to be taken from the capital reserve fund.

Bob Loughman requested clarification in the language.

Jim Pineo stated the language can be removed and noted the cost for the dispatch console is a soft cost for the project.

Bob Loughman stated he doesn't agree that the console is a soft cost of the project.

John MacDonald requested clarification of soft costs.

Jim Pineo replied furnishings and internet technology and hardware associated with such.

John MacDonald asked if the latter would be within the individual budgets or in the Technology budget.

Jim Pineo stated such has not been determined.

Kathy Carpentier stated Block5 would have to determine what equipment could be used and/or upgraded.

Libby Museum; \$4,000,000

Kathy Carpentier distributed the Friends of the Libby Museum, Inc. presentation to the Committee, dated 1/10/2023.

Jim Pineo read the warrant article and reviewed a PowerPoint presentation for such. He stated an adjustment to the language of the warrant article will be made to allow for an additional \$70,000 from the Betty Jane Schroth Libby Museum Endowment which will reduce the burden to the taxpayers. He stated the issues with regard to the parking lot have not been resolved.

Bob Tougher requested the Town Manager to further elaborate on the parking lot issue.

Jim Pineo stated the Town received a cost estimate of \$22,000 for the parking lot and a couple of conceptual designs; noting plowing and boat launch trailer parking issues need to be resolved.

Bob Tougher questioned the amount of off-street parking that will be created; noting he is trying to determine whether the parking lot will be large enough for the facility. He stated there is a need for adequate off-street parking.

Jim Pineo stated the layout includes 20 parking spaces.

Bob Tougher asked what the building addition would be used for.

Lauren Hammond, Friends of Libby, replied an office, classroom storage, heating, and cooling elements (mechanical room).

Bob Tougher stated previously the financials indicated a 70/30 split; 70% from the Friends of the Libby and 30% from the Town. He stated based on the presentation it appears that now it is 56% from the Friends and 44% from the Town.

Jeff O'Connell, Friends of the Libby, stated the agreement was based on construction estimates at that time; noting the commitment at that time was made by the Friends of the Libby to raise \$2.2 million.

Bob Tougher asked if the Friends of Libby's donation would be withdrawn if the warrant article fails.

Jeff O'Connell replied yes and noted the fundraising has been contingent (contingent pledges) upon the Town's participation. He stated 500 donors have made commitments. He stated the Friends of the Libby would like a commitment from the Town that the funding for the project is not all private funding.

Bob Tougher stated it appears the BOS has lived up to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOW). He stated the voters may not support the project.

Jack O'Connell stated time is of the essence; noting the current condition of the building is a dump and there is no longer a deferred maintenance option. He questioned why the Friends of the Libby would commit to the project if it is not supported by the Town.

Bob Tougher questioned whether the size of the addition could be reduced to help lower the cost.

Jim Pineo stated one of the problems with the building is that there are no internal lateral walls and the building moves as a system. He stated the architects and engineers have recommended the addition to the back of the building to secure the structure and prevent the lateral movement as a system. He stated analysis was done for a smaller sized addition and noted it was a viable option however, it was not an option for the Friends of the Libby.

Brian Deshaies stated the BOS have not agreed to only \$2.2 million for a donation from the Friends of the Libby. He stated the BOS were hoping for a 70/30 split which is written in the MOU; noting the Friends did not produce the funding they had initially anticipated. He stated due to escalation the Town is now paying more and the Friends should also pay more, however, that is not what has happened. Therefore, the taxpayers are going to have to pay an additional 14%. He stated the BOS have not been notified that the funds will disappear and that the Friends have called the Attorney General's office and reported that the Town were neglecting the building as Trustees of the Trust and that the Trustees were stealing money from money that was being received for the use of the ramp. He stated money has never been taken for use of the ramp. He stated he took it personally that the BOS as Trustees were accused of misuse of funds and neglecting the building. He stated the BOS have opened the building every year and has honored the Trust every year.

Attorney Raymond objected to the characterization of the charitable trust. He stated their concerns were stated and discussed with the Director of Charitable Trusts about the obligations and fiduciary responsibilities of the Town as to the Libby Museum. He stated there were no accusations of stealing or anything of that nature made. He stated the Director of Charitable Trusts then decided to investigate the matter and made his own determination. He stated their information did not extend to those types of allegations.

Jeff O'Connell stated with regard to the obligations of the Trust, the responsibility is not just for the building but for the contents and collections as well.

Bob Loughman stated the language of the warrant article reflects acceptance by the BOS of \$2.2 million in donations from the Libby Museum and asked if such is conceivable.

Jeff O'Connell replied yes and noted they are within \$95,000 of the target.

Bob Loughman stated if the original MOU is maintained then \$2.2 million represents 70% of \$3.14 million. He stated the \$3.14 million is the number that should be looked at in total rather than the \$4 million. He stated the original MOU should be reinstated.

Jeff O'Connell stated he was not part of the original discussion however; it is his understanding that the MOU represented 70% of the Alba quote; noting the MOU was tied to that quote.

Linda Murray stated the Friends of Libby initially approached the BOS with a request for \$2.9 million of which the Friends would raise \$2 million. She stated she made the comment at that time that such was almost a 70/30 split and then asked the Friends of the Libby if they were willing to commit to a 70/30 funding split for the cost of the project rather than a 70/30 split of \$2.9 million.

Lauren Hammond stated she believes the MOU reflects a line item that changes that.

Attorney Raymond read a portion of the MOU relative to the cost of the project.

Jim Pineo stated the MOU was built under the Alba estimate (architect) based on the 2019 design. He stated the provision relative to cost escalation noted in the MOU could be applied to both parties. He stated the Friends of the Libby made a presentation to the BOS based on current cost estimates and the BOS accepted their presentation knowing the split was different than what was originally agreed upon because there was a large donor that would not support the project unless it was placed on the warrant.

Linda Murray stated the BOS and Friends of Libby have different interpretations of the MOU however, the project should be on the warrant for the voters to decide.

Bob Moholland stated he is weary of the \$2.2 million from donors knowing that some of the fundraising for Pop Whalen didn't come through and expressed concern for such.

Jim Pineo stated that prior to endorsement by the bond bank the Friends of the Libby Museum will have to provide surety that the funds are available. He stated the Friends of Pop Whalen had to provide a surety that those funds are available therefore, the Friends of Pop Whalen have to make that contribution by June 30, 2023; noting the Friends of Pop Whalen produced data on how they are going to do such based on their communication with bond counsel to get the bond approved.

Lauren Hammond stated the Friends of the Libby have a plan to take over the museum; noting a business plan has been developed and an endowment fund has been established to run the museum. She stated the Friends of Libby have been very active to get to this plan.

Bob Loughman stated the BOS entered into a MOU and feels the 70/30 should be honored. He stated he has a major problem with how the warrant article is written and has a problem with ignoring the MOU.

Lauren Hammond stated the MOU is not a legal document.

Tom Bell stated the Budget Committee has the right to vote on the article and the voters then have the right to vote whether or not they want the project.

Jeff O'Connell stated to go back to the original memorandum would require a redesign and starting over; noting such would be disruptive.

Attorney Raymond stated one of the benefits of some of the features they are adding are naming rights; noting that the facilities being named are lost then donors are lost.

Brian Deshaies stated the business plan and feasibility study that was done by the Friends of the Libby were only done because the BOS required it. He stated Alana Albee stated there is a plan for the Friends of the Libby to take over the museum however, it could be as long as fifteen years down the road. He

stated that according to the Friends of the Libby there needs to be \$1 million in the endowment fund in order for them to take it over and noted that currently the balance of the fund is \$35,000.

Jeff O'Connell stated the focus has been raising the \$2.2 million and the \$35,000 is seed money. He stated the business plan includes the Friends of the Libby to take over the operations of the museum including staffing and activities; noting the Town would be the landlord. He stated the business plan provides the Town with a path forward to get out of the museum business.

Linda Murray confirmed the Friends of the Libby did provide a business plan however, the BOS have not approved it. She stated it is a solution to get the Town out of the museum business, however, the plan is not yet in place.

Bob Loughman questioned the timeline of the succession plan if the article is approved.

Lauren Hammond stated discussions have included five years.

Brian Deshaies stated Alana Albee said it would be fifteen years.

Brian Black stated private-public partnerships have benefited the Town; noting that if the Town didn't have these special interest groups the Town wouldn't have the facilities that they currently do. He stated the museum is an asset of the Town.

John Burt expressed concern for backing out of the 70/30 agreement and asked the number of people per day that visit the museum. He questioned the average income for a day.

Kathy Carpentier stated through November 2022 the Town took in \$7,000.

John MacDonald stated the project should be supported.*

Water Main Replacement South Main Street at Center Street to Smith River Bridge; \$2,000,000

Jim Pineo read the warrant article and reviewed a PowerPoint presentation for such.

Sewer Line Extension – Forest and Varney Roads; \$1,000,000

Jim Pineo read the warrant article and reviewed a PowerPoint presentation for such.

John MacDonald questioned the number of new hookups.

Jim Pineo replied three connections on Varney Road and eighteen connections on Forest Road; noting the latter may be reduced.

Tom Bell asked why this article is a bond and why taxpayers are paying for this project.

Jim Pineo stated all capital sewer system projects are shared by the complete tax base due to the minimal number of users on the system. He stated that if the system was not supported by the tax base the system would not be operating, which would then be a bigger problem.

Bob Loughman questioned the Sewall Road extension and the number of houses connecting to that extension; noting he believes it would be twenty houses.

Jim Pineo stated there was a private extension of the sewer lines that the Town took over and this project would tie into that existing extended sewer line.

Linda Murray stated the Town has a big problem in Jockey cove with both E. Coli and cyanobacteria; noting such is part of the motivation of the extension.

Bob Tougher stated the permit for the Town from NHDES expired on December 27; noting that a permit extension is currently being worked on. Referencing said permit, he stated the permit is issued for the treatment of wastewater up to 340,000 gallons/day for a yearly average or, an average daily flow and discharge not to exceed 425,000. He stated 340,000 gallons/day comes to 124,100,000 gallons. He reviewed the following data; in 2019 the Wastewater Treatment Plant sent out 108 million gallons, in 2020 102.7 million gallons, in 2021 109 million gallons and in 2022 (through September) 114 million gallons. He stated the ceiling is 124 million gallons and noted the sewer district is not built out. He stated Taylor Homes has added assisted living units, Brewster Academy hasn't yet built a second dormitory and undeveloped lots still exist. He read a proposed zoning change could also impact the system. He referenced connecting to Franklin and the cost associated with such. He stated he feels the sewer system is maxed out now and it would be a mistake to continue extending the sewer line.

Bob Loughman asked the Town to communicate and notify the owners that would be required to connect (if the article passes) of the costs associated with connecting to the system.

Linda Murray stated NHDES reviewed the area and noted they are in favor of the sewer line extension.

School Resource Officer; \$72,000

Kathy Carpentier read the SAU 49 warrant article, Article 7, relative to such; noting it was voted to recommend 6-2-1.

Jim Pineo read the Town's warrant article for such and noted the BOS voted to recommend 4-0-1.

John MacDonald questioned the revenue from the current SRO and whether it is noted on the revenue sheet.

Kathy Carpentier replied about \$50,000 and noted such is part of the miscellaneous income from police; noting such is not broken out separately and is based on the number of days they actually go to school.

John MacDonald questioned the rate of pay per day.

Brodie Deshaies \$306 prorated for eight hours.

John MacDonald questioned the billing cycle.

Mark Livie replied quarterly.

Kathy Carpentier stated the Town is budgeting from August to September (half year); noting the Town's budget is based on a calendar year. She stated the SAU is budgeting a full year and raising and appropriating \$55,080 for July 1 – December 31.

Bob Tougher stated he reviewed the incidents reported on the State's website for the 2021-2022 year and noted there are no active investigations for Kingswood Middle School. He stated the following incidents were reported (the report indicates 354 students at the middle school); 3 incidents related to drug or alcohol use, 2 cases of disruption, 9 cases of defiance, 2 cases of inappropriate language, 10 in-school suspensions, and 10 out of school suspensions. He stated the school district does not have its own security. He stated he doesn't feel the proposal is a good deal for Wolfeboro taxpayers because they are paying 50% of the Town's police officer's salary and benefits and then the taxpayers are paying taxes on the school district's cost for the SRO. He stated the school district would be better served by their own security force for the purpose of providing daily monitoring in all school buildings, look out for suspicious behavior and secure the buildings rather than hiring an SRO.

Bob Loughman stated he wants to ensure the taxpayers know what the ancillary costs are.

Brian Black stated the justification for the SRO creates the impression that the campus has grown considerably since the conception of the program in 2000 however, he believes all four of the schools existed at the time.

Dean Rondeau stated considerable expansion of infrastructure on campus occurred in 2011. He stated there has been a decrease in population and believes such can be attributed to the COVID pandemic however, he believes the population numbers will increase. Referencing the data presented by Mr. Tougher, he stated he doesn't know where the numbers are coming from but the department has seen a tremendous increase over the last 22 years.

Bob Tougher stated the data reported on the State's website may be information provided by the school district.

Dean Rondeau stated the current SRO at the high school is running a caseload of 143 and averages a one new case/day and the SRO at the elementary schools has a caseload of 26.

John MacDonald requested a breakdown of the types of incidents of the current cases.

Brian Deshaies stated he also asked how the case counts and types of incidents compare to other schools.

Shawn Coope stated the Police Commission, working in conjunction with the Chief of Police, looked at the \$45,000 position and decided in the interest of public safety and fiscal sanity, to repurpose that position to a part time SRO to provide extra safety. He stated he feels it is a tremendous use of taxpayer money and noted that securing the schools was the highest priority for the Police Commission. He stated Londonderry has 4,000 students and four SROs, Laconia has 1,900 students and two SROs, and Amherst has 1,284 students and two SROs. He stated the number of students and the expansiveness of the facility should be considered.

Bob Tougher asked if the SAU has consulted with mental health experts as to how children that age would take to a steady patrol officer in the building.

Dean Rondeau stated SRO Devine spoke to her connections with students at the school board meeting last night; noting the children feel so comfortable with her that they disclose information to her. He stated the Budget Committee is focused on data and activity however, a second aspect to the issue is life safety and the Town needs to be prepared. He stated the Town is not immune to school shootings and the responsibility for public safety at this time falls to him as Chief of Police.

Brian Deshaies stated if there were two SROs the Town would be at the top of the State.

John MacDonald requested the data be provided to the Committee by tomorrow.

Dean Rondeau stated he is unable to get that data by tomorrow.

John MacDonald recommended everyone to look at the National Association of School Resource Officers website and asked if Mary Devine is approved through that association.

Dean Rondeau stated he doesn't know.

Mark Livie stated the Town's SROs receiving training through a state organized SRO program.

Tom Bell stated he attended the public hearing and stated there were compelling testimonials to having an SRO in both the Kingswood complex and elementary schools.

Brian Black asked if it is known whether the pay structure for the SRO is common amongst other school districts.

Brodie Deshaies stated every cooperative school district breaks down how tuition is paid and reviewed such.

Brian Black verified the SAU is paying based on an assessed valuation per student.

Brodie Deshaies stated it is based on total property valuation (75%) and the number of students in each school (25%); noting it is a complicated process.

Brian Black stated the warrant article is based on an officer's salary.

Brodie Deshaies stated it is based on if the officer was in our school doing SRO duties eight hours/day for 180 days/year. He stated the agreement states that we pay \$306/day and is prorated if the officer works less than 8 hours. He stated the agreement specifically states there is a log in the front office that the SRO signs in and signs out.

Brian Black asked how the \$306 was arrived at.

Brodie Deshaies stated he is unaware and recommended speaking to Jack Widmer.

Petition Warrant Articles

Jim Pineo stated the Town has received the following petition warrant articles; \$50,000 for a playground, \$81,000 for an ADA ramp at Cate Park and \$10,700 for external landscaping. He stated that Town Counsel has advised that the Budget Committee should vote on the petition warrant articles.

IV. Other Business

None.

V. Public Comment

None.

VI. Adjournment

It was moved by Tom Bell and seconded by Bob Moholland to adjourn the January 10, 2023 Wolfeboro Budget Committee meeting. All members voted in favor. The motion passed.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Hendrickson

Lee Ann Hendrickson