

Budget Committee Minutes

4:30pm Wednesday, March 14th, 2018, Vinalhaven Town Office

Present- Andy Dorr, Jocelyn McLean, Marc Candage, Pat Lundholm, Bill Alcorn, Eric Davis, Gabe McPhail, Lucy McCarthy via teleconference. Holly arrived 5:15pm. Margaret Qualey and Janann Sherman were absent. It was communicated that Del Webster has submitted his resignation from the committee.

Minutes – Motion by Gabe to accept the minutes from the March 7th meeting. **Second** by Eric. **Vote:** All in favor; **Motion carried.**

Section Review & Discussion

Donations- Andy proposed only funding surplus food, and also mentioned the potential of grouping GA & Donations into a Community Support/Services line in the future.

Suggestions were made for the town to have a structured donation policy going forward; such as having a pool of money for donations in general, and those groups requesting funds would receive some of those funds based on how they contribute to the Town, or other set criteria; it was noted that there needs to be a more consistent method for choosing who to donate to and how much.

There was discussion about how different groups request donations, and the level of involvement by the groups when they present their requests.

Gabe suggested donating \$300 for Surplus Food, \$1,000 for Life Flight, and \$500 for New Hope for Women. There was explanation about what New Hope for Women does- which includes things like a 24 hour hotline, support groups, housing transition, & community education.

There was discussion about funding groups that benefit many people on the island. Lifeflight was discussed, and the services they provide for Vinalhaven. Pat explained more about Life Flight, how they do not bill the town (only the patient) for their services, and using their services when unable to obtain the ferry. Relative to what the island receives in benefits, the donation amount they request is considered low.

It was noted that if the town is funding based on the benefits residents receive, there should be a policy in place stating this for deciding which programs get funded.

The committee agreed to make a **recommendation to the Selectmen** to consider creating a donation policy with set criteria for determining which groups that request donations will be funded.

Motion by Gabe to recommend funding \$473 for Penquis, \$300 for Surplus Food, \$1000 for Life Flight, and \$660 for New Hope for Women for a total of \$2,433. **Second** by Lucy. **Vote:** all in favor. **Motion carried.**

Ambulance- \$17,000 increase from last year. There are anticipated increases in transportation costs including an additional fee charged by Northeast for patients that go over by plane and get picked up by ambulance.

Wages were discussed – if Pat retires from being director next year, the position will need to be managed by someone with the qualifications to do the job; may consider advertising off-island. The department will also be looking for a fill-in in June. There is \$2,000 in the budget for contingency during this transition period.

Equipment- Rescue 2 needs some vehicle repairs. The department would like to stay on top of repairs and maintenance while the vehicle is still somewhat new. There are various issues with the vehicle that need to be addressed that may require going to the mainland.

With ferry rates going up, emergency night run fees may also go up. There has been a significant number of night runs causing disruption of the morning ferry service, potentially creating more issues with customer service as well as lost revenue for MSFS.

There was discussion about mutual aid fees. Rockland ambulance started charging Vinalhaven a fee for mutual aid; usually mutual aid goes both ways, but being an island creates a unique situation where it can't. An example was given where Rockland may have to call in extra back up if they receive a call while they are already assisting us.

Northeast, which is a for-profit ambulance, is based in Rockport and did not previously charge mutual aid. Northeast rates are going up for all the towns they service, and they have communicated that this may include Vinalhaven.

Using the South Thomaston ambulance was discussed; they do not currently charge mutual aid fees. Most towns are starting to charge for mutual aid now. It was explained that these are additional fees to the Town on top of what they already charge the patient.

Motion by Gabe to recommend budgeting \$197,000 for this department. **Second** by Holly. **Vote:** all in favor. **Motion carried.**

Public Safety Building- Manager proposed increase of \$1,200. Department proposed decrease of \$400. The manager proposed increase is under service fees; due to computer maintenance. Other than that, department remains the same as FY18.

Motion by Gabe to recommend the manager proposed amount of \$21,800. **Second** by Lucy.
Vote: all in favor. **Motion carried.**

Fire Department- Increase of approximately \$10,000. Marc explained the pay structure, which has focused on encouraging employees to attend training classes; Employees get paid a higher base rate depending on the amount of training and certifications they have. Hourly rate for calls is highly variable; divided amongst all employees equally. FY18 employees made roughly \$5.90/hr. FY19 would be roughly \$10.20/hr. In the Fire Department, the hourly wage is dependent on what is left in the pool of money; as opposed to EMS where they get a set hourly rate.

There was a question about morale, and if the low hourly wage could be affecting this. There was subsequent discussion about programs and incentives that could potentially help boost morale.

The pay structure was further discussed, and it was explained that methods range widely between different towns. With this current method, the firefighters always receive all the money that is designated for them.

The other increase is related to respiratory equipment. There was explanation about the age of this equipment, and the need to start the transition of replacing the old bottles and packs in phases. Only converting one this year. There are safety regulations that require the timely replacement of this equipment. The department is trying to stagger the replacements so the cost is spread out, and not incurred all at once.

Motion by Gabe to recommend the Manager proposed amount of \$133,546. **Second** by Eric.
Vote: All in favor. **Motion carried.**

Agenda for next meeting

Next meeting will be held Wednesday, March 21st at 5:00pm. Topics to be discussed will include Public Works, Cemeteries, and Library.

Adjourn

Motion by Gabe to adjourn the meeting at 6:00pm. **Second** by Lucy. **Vote:** All in favor. **Motion carried.**