

**MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY BUDGET
COMMITTEE BUDGET WORKSHOP**

December 9, 2022

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Board & Committee members present: Chairman Bugbee, Chairwoman Stacey Waitz, Thomas Murdoch, Pat Barbour, Bambi Miller and Cord Blomquist.

Not present: Thomas Murdoch

1. Chairwoman Waitz calls the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

2. Chairwoman Waitz has organized and edited the FY24 budget proposal for the Select Board and has it up on the screen for everyone to review. Chairman Bugbee asks Chairwoman Waitz to forward this to Joanne so that she can upload it into the Tyler software. She received more information with regards to insurance costs from TA Roberson. His total is \$529k which includes the upgraded full-time library position. Chairman Bugbee thinks that the police officer place holder should remain in there because at some point the chief will be hiring a new person. The group agrees to reduce the insurance expense to \$516k. The ABC proposes to increase the police chief to \$95k instead of his requested \$105k. The group starts to discuss a COLA. Right now it is almost 8%. The plug in 3% to see how much that would be overall. It comes out to \$81k. Cord says that the CPI in the northeast region is 7%. The group agrees to increase Patriotic Purposes to \$750. Pat Barbour states that Scott Bugbee had a petition with him at the last meeting relative to the Parish House. She asks what the current execution date is for the Parish House if it is not extended. He says 7/1/2023. She asks if they should be budgeting something to pay for tearing it down. Chairman Bugbee says if the Select Board decides to tear it down then there will be expenses associated with that. Cord asks if the warrant article that passed by the voters said that the Parish House “shall” be torn down. Chairman Bugbee says maybe. Bambi says that it did say, “shall”. Cord says that the Select Board will have to tear it down and adds if the stay of execution expires, then the Select Board is compelled to tear it down. Chairman Bugbee says not necessarily; he says that the Select Board could choose to ignore it. There might be grants available to fund the demolition. The ABC discusses where the money would possibly come from and not come from. Right now no one can go inside the building according to the Department of Labor because it is not safe. Chairman Bugbee says that the Select Board does not have to act on the Parish House. The current budget is a 6 ½ % increase in the operating budget from last year. There is a discussion about how much there is budgeted for paying people who leave the Town of Lee’s employment. The group agrees to increase the amount to \$30k from \$15k. Stacey wonders if it is the ABC place or the Select Board’s place to discuss with the department heads other alternatives to purchasing new equipment or vehicles as opposed to used equipment or vehicles. The group discusses the future of the Town Offices and Pat Barbour wants to make sure that the Select Board has an answer ready for the tax payers at the Deliberative Session should someone ask what the \$162k is going towards. Chairman Bugbee says he will say that the Board is in the process of developing a plan to present to the voters in January 2024 to address the issue with the new town office building. In preparation, they are trying to set aside sufficient money so that when they bring that proposal forward there will be money already in hand to move forward and then they will ask for a bond to make up the difference. The group changes the amount to \$160k. The group zeros out the Library and the Rec Warrant Articles carried over from last year. They anticipate that the Library will be presenting a new article soon.

The group discusses what Stacey should highlight in her ABC Budget presentation to the Select Board. Stacey will explain what is going to happen within the Finance Department following

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Liz's move over to the Town Clerk's position. Stacey asks questions about the format and how the process goes and Chairman Bugbee explains it to her. Stacey plans on beginning the presentation by talking about how they are trying to maintain current services but are also trying to acknowledge the current inflation that is happening right now. Then she wants to discuss the cost of materials, cost of labor and increased maintenance and repair. Cord says he would love to meet with the CIP Committee and show them how to build a database of costs. Pat says that Mr. Tappan has accumulated a lot of information in the Financial Planning Tool that she thinks he wanted to link to the CIP. She adds that the links in the FPT that they got are still nonfunctional. They cannot see the supporting documentation. Stacey says that they need to move away from whoever is handling the FPT now because it is very frustrating that they only just got it yesterday. Chairman Bugbee says that they are going to discuss making the FPT public at the next meeting. Chairperson Waitz moves to recommend to the Select Board a FY24 total operating budget of \$5,200,336, which represents a 6½ % increase from last year's operating budget and warrant articles totaling \$679,000, which represents a 19½ % increase that was proposed last fiscal year. This totals \$5,948,995 and represents an increase of 9.14%. Bambi Miller, seconds. All in favor. **Motion Carries.**

3. Chairwoman Waitz moves to adjourn at [11:28 am](#).

[Minutes transcribed by Denise Duval, Assistant Town Administrator](#)