

Warrant Committee 2021

Monday, March 1, 2021

I. Regular Business

- A. Call to Order/Roll Call:** 7:03 pm by Chair Libby; 21 voting members present (basic majority is 11 or more)

Present: J. Berberian, B. Chaplin, C. Chappell, J. Collier, C. Cough, S. Dyer, M. Good, E. Henry, D. Karlson, J. Kelly, M. Kelly, A. Kendall, J. Kitler, S. Libby, C. Reed, C. Ryan, A. Sasner, C. Smith, K. St. Germain, B. Stillman, L. Sweet; **Absent (excused):** S. Boucher

- B. Approval of Minutes – February 22, 2021:** Chair Libby stated that in this set of minutes, Secretary Smith was unable to verify that a motion had received a second. He suggested that the General Government Subcommittee could clarify or redo that one point, so that the record could be complete. There were no objections to this proposal. Chair Libby briefly turned the meeting over to Ms. Chappell, Chair of the General Government Subcommittee. Chair Chappell moved and Ms. Sasner seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of \$16,550 for Planning Department revenues. Ms. Chappell also noted that the amount listed in the minutes for the Municipal Building expenses needed to be corrected. Ms. Karlson also checked to see that a professional title was listed correctly. Mr. Good made a motion to accept the minutes from February 22, 2021 with the second included and the expense amount corrected, and this was seconded by Mr. Collier. *The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).*

- C. Introduction of Staff:** Chair Libby introduced Town staff present: Cornell Knight – Town Manager, Sharon Linscott – Town Clerk, Sarah Gilbert – Finance Director, and Bethany Leavitt – Director of Public Works.

- D. Announcements:** Mr. Good, the Chair of the Education subcommittee, informed Warrant Committee members that this subcommittee meeting would be held March 2 at 4pm via Zoom. He could provide Zoom meeting information with Warrant Committee members who wished to view the meeting.

- E. Public Comment** - Chair Libby clarified the purpose and scope of the Public Comment period.

Arthur Greif: Mr. Greif wanted to briefly comment on an agenda item that was part of the prior meeting as well as this evening's meeting. He expressed some

concern with non-union staff raises, stating his belief that small business owners know that when times get tight, they make sure their staff get paid and perhaps hold back on manager compensation. Mr. Greif suggested a tiered scale for non-union staff raises, such that they receive a 3% raise for the first \$50,000 wages, 2% for the next \$50,000, and 1% for anything beyond \$100,000. In this way, he said, managers could lead by example.

Chair Libby turned the meeting over to Health, Welfare & Recreation Subcommittee Chair Henry.

II. Budget Cost Center

- A. Cooperating Agencies** - Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$59,863** for Cooperating Agencies expenses.

Chair Henry noted that this year the Town Council had amended the Cooperating Agency application policy. One change is that if an agency wishes to increase its funding amount, it needs to make a formal request to the Town Council. These policies are listed in budget binder tab 9. All agencies receive a 2% COLA increase. Two agencies are not currently funded because they did not return their requests in time. The Bar Harbor Historical Society did make a presentation to the Town Council for an increase in funding. This would cover 50% of their projected costs for free public events in the future. The Town Hill Village Improvement Society did request \$10,000 this year, but they did not make a presentation and so are being funded at the same level. Town Council reduced funding for Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice based on the percentage of their budget that covered Bar Harbor residents, and brought the funding in line with what was seen as a closer representation of that coverage.

Ms. Karlson asked if there was any discussion during the subcommittee meeting about the cut to the Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice, as they assist not only the Town's elderly population but also anyone who needs services in their home. Chair Henry responded that the subcommittee did not have any additional discussion. Town Clerk Linscott stated that there was discussion at the Town Council's budget workshop. She shared that there was concern expressed there about the percentage of the budget attributed to Bar Harbor, and that they thought some services are being met by other organizations such as the Mount Desert Nursing Association. Some of the costs are also associated with travel from Bangor to Mount Desert Island. Ms. Ryan stated that she watched the Town Council budget workshop and was listening for an explanation of redundancy – who would be there if not Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice. She said that 36 people in Bar Harbor were assisted for their funding amount, but the American Red Cross of Northern and Eastern Maine assisted 2 people. She wished she had heard more about who else could assist the Town's

residents. Ms. Reed had some similar concerns as Ms. Ryan, and also questioned the necessity of some Cooperating Agency expenditures that do not directly assist people who need help. Chair Libby stated that Warrant Committee members were free to make motions to increase or decrease a line item, as that is part of the overall budget process. The Warrant Committee tries to reconcile any differences with the Town Council budget at a later meeting, and if that cannot happen then the differences are decided at the Town Meeting. Ms. Karlson said she was mindful of not increasing the budget year, but it that it was an unusual year centered around a health crisis. She suggested moving \$1,000 from the Bar Harbor Historical Society's funding amount to the Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice. Mr. Kelly said that this would have to be an amendment because there was a motion on the floor that has yet to be voted upon. Chair Libby suggested that the Warrant Committee could vote on the motion and then amend it. Ms. Karlson moved to amend the motion on the floor. Mr. Kelly responded that if Chair Henry and Ms. Kelly wished to accept the change, they could have the revised motion before the Warrant Committee. He also asked what the increase for the Bar Harbor Historical Society would do. Chair Henry responded that they would be able to increase the amount of free public events since their move to the La Rochelle location. This would include adding some online lectures, allowing local organizations to use the property, and fielding an increase in general information requests. They are projecting their changes in the coming fiscal year and are asking for 50% of that funding. Mr. Kelly asked if a Cooperating Agency is not funded in a given fiscal year, do they lose their ability to be funded at the level of the prior year. Ms. Linscott responded that if someone does not return their application in time, they can come to the Town Meeting for funding and then would qualify for the next year. They would have to do that to request the return of their funding. Ms. Ryan asked if it was necessary to stay in the overall amount budgeted for Cooperating Agencies. She would rather restore money to the Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice while maintaining the Bar Harbor Historical Society's request. She noted that the Bar Harbor Historical Society was concerned about the absence of cruise ships and that line of revenue for their organization. She added that they should be encouraged to open up to the community. Chair Libby stated that the motion could be amended by restating the motion and then the Warrant Committee could vote on that. Ms. Karlson appreciated Ms. Ryan's line of reasoning. She noted that on their funding application, the Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice had requested \$8,172 in total, though any changes made by the Warrant Committee did not have to be held to that number. Mr. Good stated that this would be a difference of \$3,172 above the Town Council budget. Ms. Karlson asked if this change would result in an overall tax increase. Chair Libby responded that if funds are restored without finding a place in the budget to cut funds, it will increase the tax figure. A simpler motion may be to amend the Cooperating Agency figure to include an additional \$3,172 reflecting the funds removed from Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice. Ms. St. Germain asked if

there was a narrative as to why the Town Council dropped the funding for Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice to \$5,000. Chair Libby responded that the general idea was that when they looked at their coverage for Mount Desert Island, the Town Council felt it was more proportional at the lower amount. Ms. Linscott said that this was one of the main reasons. The Town Council also compared the funding to what the Mount Desert Nursing Association receives and had concerns about travel costs. Ms. Karlson noted that from her experience as a social worker, having two visiting nurse agencies is beneficial to reduce wait times in receiving skilled care at home. She felt both organizations were valuable. Mr. Collier requested that the Warrant Committee move forward with a vote. Chair Henry stated that she would amend the original motion. She moved to increase the Cooperating Agency figure by \$3,172 for a total of **\$63,035**, which would increase line item 1068 5954 to the originally requested amount of \$8,172. This was seconded by Ms. Kelley. Chair Libby restated the motion, that the subcommittee recommends to the Warrant Committee that they recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of \$63,035 which includes an increase of \$3,172 for the Northern Light HomeCare & Hospice, restoring their funding to the original requested level of \$8,172. Ms. St. Germain asked if the Bar Harbor Historical Society Funding was staying the same, and Chair Libby responded that it was. Mr. Kelly stated that he was in favor of this motion. He was concerned that the same math and analysis was not performed for all Cooperating Agencies. As we do not provide housing for the nurses, we may therefore have to pay some travel fees. We may have to pay those costs until while the housing problem persists. Ms. St. Germain said that they do pay for nurse's lodging and travel, it's part of their income when they travel. Chair Libby appreciated the comments from Warrant Committee members and noted for new members that the Cooperating Agency funding is an important part of the budget. He stated that there was a reason for some caps on funding, as there had been no limits to these items in the past, and then at another point funding limits were frozen. If the Warrant Committee were meeting in person, it would be able to hear directly from representatives of these organizations and they could share more about what they do and who they serve. There is some narrative and context in their applications, which are in the budget binder. *The motion passed (17 in favor, 4 opposed, 0 abstain).*

- B. Non-Profit Agencies** – Chair Henry said that Non-Profit Agencies part of same cost center as the total Parks & Recreation Department, and asked if the Warrant Committee should subtract the Non-Profit Agencies total amount and vote on just that or postpone the vote on this until the Parks & Recreation total budget in item D in this meeting's agenda. Town Clerk Linscott stated that historically this was separated from the rest of the Parks & Recreation budget so that representatives of the Non-Profit Agencies could answer any questions and then leave the meeting early. Mr. Good stated that the separate amount for the Non-Profit Agencies would be \$295,956. Chair Henry stated that this was the

number she had. Chair Henry said she could address Non-Profit Agencies first and give that number.

Chair Henry said that this was a quiet year for this line item. There was an increase in funding for the Town Band, as there were no concerts this past year and so they were restoring the budget to the prior year. The Town Council also increased the budget for more holiday decorations to benefit year-round residents. Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the figure of **\$295,956** for Non-Profit Agencies. *The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).*

- C. General Assistance** - Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$2,670** for General Assistance expenses.

Chair Henry was informed by Town Clerk Linscott that there was not an increase in requests due to the pandemic, but there were more people requesting rent assistance.

The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).

D. Public Works Department (Partial)

a. Revenues

- i. Parks & Recreation** – Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$800** for Parks & Recreation revenues.

The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).

b. Expenses

- i. Parks & Recreation** – Chair Henry shared that there was not much of an increase over the prior year, other than minor operation cost increases. Those included additional cleaning of the Glen Mary pool, some more expenses related to water in fountains, and a rake for the ballfields. The remainder of the cost center amount, removing the Non-Profit Agency amount, is \$167,134. Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$167,134** for Parks & Recreation expenses, less the Non-Profit Agency expenses. Mr. Good confirmed the amount. He asked if the full amount (\$463,090) would need to be included in the motion. Chair Libby responded that this would be duplicative, as the amount for the Non-Profit Agencies was approved.

The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).

- ii. **Comfort Stations** – Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$104,273** for Comfort Stations expenses.

Ms. Ryan asked how these costs compare to a year with cruise ships. Director of Public Works Leavitt responded that the comfort stations had a lot of use last year, and they also required additional cleaning due to the pandemic. Some grant money was available to defray the additional cleaning costs. Town Manager Knight stated that typically about \$40,000 is transferred from the Cruise Ship Fund for comfort station expenses, but that amount would be reduced this year. This is an instance where Cruise Ship Fund revenue will be replaced this year by property tax.

The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).

- c. **Capital Improvement Program**

- i. **Expenses**

- 1. **Parks Section** – Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$54,216** for Parks Section CIP expenses.

Chair Henry noted that these expenses included benches and consistent tree planting, and that some items were covered with Parking Fund revenue. Some items in this section are typically funded with some Cruise Ship Funds, so with the decrease in that revenue, there would be less put aside this year in the CIP. Ms. Ryan asked about some of the expenses in light of not having Cruise Ship Funds, such as signage and the Museum in the Streets. Chair Libby explained that the CIP is a way to save money annually for future expenses, and the money would be spent in the future. Mr. Chaplin asked Director of Public Works Leavitt if there had been any discussions about a drinking fountain for the Village Green or improvements for the comfort station at the Village Green. Ms. Leavitt hadn't heard anything related to the drinking fountain, but said it could be considered in the future. Mr. Chaplin suggested that it could be included in the CIP. Ms. Kendall added that it would be helpful to take advantage of current, hands-free technology to install a foundation to refill water bottles, as are seen in airports. Ms. Leavitt

noted that there was one in operation at the Municipal Building. As for the comfort station improvements, Town Manager Knight noted that the next one slated for improvement was the comfort station at the ballfield, and this would be part of the next agenda item. Mr. Cough thought that there were drinking fountains right outside of some comfort stations. Ms. Leavitt responded that there is one at Newport Drive and an older one at the Town Pier. The one at the ballfield is in need of repair.

The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).

2. **Comfort Station** – Chair Henry moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the amount of **\$27,000** for Comfort Station CIP expenses.

Ms. Karlson noted that she agreed with Mr. Chaplin's comments. She also suggested that Mount Desert Spring Water could help with water refill systems, but it may make more sense to connect to the town water supply.

The motion passed unanimously (21 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstain).

III. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Libby moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm. The next meeting is March 8 at 7pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Smith
Secretary, Warrant Committee