

Town of West Bath
Budget Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 17, 2022

Budget Advisory Committee:

David Hennessey, Chair

Darlene Estabrook, Vice Chair - absent

Jeff Emerson - absent

Justin Hennessey

Donna Merry

Marc Travis - absent

Merrilee Wilson

Town Staff: Kristine Poland, Town Administrator

Select board: Madelyn Hennessey

Patten Free Library: Lesley Dolinger

Roberta Jordan

- I. Call to Order **at 7:00 pm.**
- II. Attendance and Establishment of a Quorum **a quorum was determined.**
- III. Pledge of allegiance **recited.**
- IV. Approval of Minutes **none.**
- V. Business Items
 1. **Comments from the Chair**

D. Hennessey noted that Bath Area Food Bank served 242 clients last year. People who reside at Green Acres have not been included in the total in the past but will be going forward. He also noted that West Bath's portion of the Sagadahoc County budget will have an approximate \$40,000 increase. Some cuts and changes have been made to the county's initial budget request.
 2. **Patten Free Library**

Lesley Dolinger and Roberta Jordan introduced themselves as Director and Assistant Director of Patten Free Library. The Budget Advisory Committee previously received the library's annual request in the amount of \$36,846, which is \$1,427 more than last year's request of \$35,419. The library has returned to full hours and has resumed in-person programming and a robust after-school program in addition to homebound delivery service for member towns. A new full-time Programming & Outreach position has been created. However, the total number of paid positions remains the same due to restructuring. The strategic planning process is underway. Fundraising is expected to reach this year's goal.

General expenses that support day-to-day operations are increasing. The library entered a joint purchase program with the City of Bath to reduce utility costs. A compensation study was conducted, and the library's compensation philosophy was reviewed. Other routine expenses have been reviewed as well.

The Board of Trustees is mandated to spend no more than 5% of the endowment annually. It has been projected that there is as much as \$600,000 in future capital needs. This includes a new handicap accessible entrance.

There was discussion about how to make library services known to people who are not receiving announcements from the Town Clerk and do not have internet access. An informed citizen is more likely to take advantage of the services that the library provides.

3. Other agency requests

Other community agencies will not be asked to attend a budget meeting this year.

4. FY 2022-2023 budget, second draft

The Town Administrator carried out a line-item review of the budget and answered questions about various budgetary requests.

Payroll will increase 5.9% for all positions to align with the cost-of-living adjustment for 2022.

Poland noted that the Fire Chief may request a different amount for firefighters when he presents his budget at the next meeting.

There are no other significant changes to the budget with exception of requests for items that would be paid for by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds received from the federal government. Projects include the installation of heat pumps at the Town Office and installation of an LED digital sign at the fire station. Other items may be added to the request such as a rolling counter door to reduce noise during meetings at the fire hall. The idea of a public works garage was also discussed. More discussion is anticipated at the March 31st committee meeting when the Road Commissioner is in attendance.

5. Next meeting date

The next meeting will be Thursday March 24th at 7:00 pm.

VI. Committee Comment

None.

VII. Adjournment at 8:30 pm.