

**Town of West Bath**  
**Budget Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 23, 2023**

**Budget Advisory Committee:**

David Hennessey, Chair  
Darlene Estabrook - absent  
Jim Atherton  
Jeff Emerson  
Justin Hennessey - absent  
Donna Merry  
Marc Travis

**Town Staff:** Kristine Poland, Town Administrator

Jonathan Beane, Fire Chief  
Nick Randall, Deputy Fire Chief  
Steve Renaud, Road Commissioner

**Select Board:** Suzanne Andresen

- 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 **Approval of the minutes of March 9, 2023, was moved by Emerson, seconded by Merry, and carried unanimously.**

V. Business Items

**1. West Bath Fire Department budget:**

Beane and Randall reviewed the 2023-2024 fire department budget by line item.

Payroll is increasing by 8.7% for all positions to remain consistent with all Town staff.

Bath Water District services 22 hydrants in West Bath. Chief Beane anticipates that the budget will remain the same as last year.

The computer program "I Am Responding" is working well for the department. West Bath generally receives notification prior to the page from county communications.

Personal protective equipment is kept clean to prolong its use. Turnout gear remains at the fire station when not in use.

A new security program including significant upgrades to the system is being implemented at the fire station. The budget reflects an increase in the established annual cost of maintenance and support.

The department will no longer use tablets in vehicles. Service has been inconsistent or unavailable in areas of town.

Two natural gas heating units will be replaced on the fire station side of the building. Chief Beane is waiting for a quote but estimates the cost to be \$15,000. The figure will be added to the budget when it is received.

Fire departments located in Sagadahoc County share a FIT test machine. The unit is housed in West Bath.

The weekend per diem shifts have been successful. Chief Beane would like to add coverage for holidays and other days when he is out of town on other business and unavailable. This system

would provide coverage for 136 days per year. Per diem shifts improve daily operations, station and equipment maintenance, medical call response, and other operational tasks. A list of items to be addressed is always available and the members are continually making improvements. West Bath Fire Department has about 20-25 members and fourteen members are available to fill shifts. The pay rate is \$18 per hour and the budget includes an 8.7% increase. The department trains every Tuesday. There are currently 3 members attending Fire Fighter I & II courses.

The Road Commissioner suggested that the area in front of the fire station doors should be repaved. The trucks coming in and out next to the fire department are damaging the pavement and there are deep potholes. It was also suggested that installing a guardrail along the property line would help to divert traffic. Striping should be freshened up.

A flashing light should be installed toward PDQ when the department is called out and a pre-emptor installed at the traffic light on the corner of State Road, New Meadows Road, and Fosters Point Road. These public safety issues should be addressed by the State.

## **2. Road Commissioner's budget:**

The Road Commissioner reviewed the 2023-2024 budget request.

The budget for striping has increased due to the high cost and reduced availability of paint.

The only major project reflected in the budget will be reconstruction of a portion of the Birch Point Road. This will include engineering, ditching, rebuilding, and paving. The road was repaired in the early 2000's, but the project did not include structural work. Renaud suggested a budget of \$300,000 per year for 5 years to complete the project.

The unspent appropriation of \$250,000 to address the erosion project will be carried over from the 2022-2023 budget.

The Road Commissioner noted his concern that feedback from the Road Committee and the Select Board may interfere with his ability to complete road projects. Pine Tree Engineering has been working with the Road Commissioner to provide plans and support on projects but may be unwilling to continue due to the interference. The Town Administrator stated that the current Purchasing Policy is untenable for road work and hasn't been followed for several years.

The Road Commissioner received compliments on improvements to both sides of the Bull Rock Road and the Hill Road.

## **3. Meeting schedule and next steps**

The committee will meet at West Bath School on Wednesday March 29 at 6 pm to review the school budget.

The meeting scheduled for Thursday March 30 at 7 pm has been cancelled. The Town Office budget will be reviewed on Thursday April 6 at 7 pm and the committee will meet to vote on the budget Thursday April 13, if necessary.

## **VI. Public Comment**

None.

## **VII. Adjournment** at 8:17 pm.