

Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2023

Present: Donna Keltz (Chair), Alison Barkley, Joe Babbitt, Sally Farrand, Kim Larsen
The meeting was called to order at 12:30 pm.

❖ Open Items to Address:

Dry Hydrant Update: Donna confirmed with her home insurance agent that the key factor in determining/revising home insurance rates is the distance from the home to the fire department. The distance from the home to a dry hydrant must be 1000 feet or less to obtain a lower home insurance premium rate, which would be irrelevant to Beaver Cove homeowners. Bill Manahan contacted John Guerin and determined that the possible location for the dry hydrant on Lake Lane off Village Circle near the Beaver Cove Association beach is not feasible due to all the existing underground lines. The Marina location is too shallow. The North Ridge Association (NRA) location is less optimal but may be our only choice. A very rough cost estimate obtained from LoConte in 2022 (he helped with the Harford Point dry hydrant) was \$29,000. Possible funding sources would be the Greenville Firemen's Association, and/or a Community Resilience Partnership grant – deadline for application o/a February 15.

Next steps: Goal: Have a working dry hydrant by November of 2024
Projected timeline:

Next few days: Get written permission from North Ridge Association (NRA) for a site visit to the NRA Beach to determine feasibility. (Select Board member Bill Manahan sent a letter to NRA Chair Maria Mann a couple of weeks ago but has not heard back. Alison is nudging Maria for a response.)

Last week November/first week December: site visit by Bill Manahan, Mr. LoConte, and Rod Falla to NRA Beach to determine feasibility and permitting requirements.

If site determined feasible, next benchmarks for the timeline would be:

By first week of December: get firm cost estimate.

Second week of December: work on CRP grant and funding from Greenville Fire Department

March/April: Get information out to the voters about the project so they can decide on funding.

May: Obtain approval for the budget item at the 2024 Annual Meeting

May: Get on schedule for installation

OWL System Update: Aaron will procure and install as well as provide Kim a labor cost estimate. Funds already budgeted for the project should be sufficient.

Next steps: Kim will report to the Committee at our next meeting.

Push-to-talk Phones Update: The Emergency Management Director will pull this together early in the new year and will let the Budget Committee know about any costs not already budgeted.

Emergency Management Director: Piscataquis County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director Jaeme Duggan is working with Alison to fill this position at no cost additional to the \$750 stipend already budgeted. Alison is hopeful that the new Beaver Cove Emergency Management Director (EMD) will be on board before the New Year.

Next steps: Alison will seek to ensure that the new EMD attends Budget Committee meetings.

Land Acquisition for Helicopter Pad: In a review of the history of this project, the Committee decided that using the land for parking in addition to an Emergency Landing Zone (ELZ) would compromise the primary purpose. The Committee will now focus on determining the necessity/desirability of an ELZ adjacent to the Town Office.

Next steps: Joe will talk to his contacts at Life Flight, and to Earl Mann, to determine if and where ELZs exist north of the Town Office, and if an ELZ adjacent to the Town Office makes sense, before the Committee budgets additional funds for land acquisition.

Investment Strategy Update: The bulk of the Town's General Fund is in an account getting 4. % interest. All the Town's CDs mature at the same time. \$520,000 is in a SWEEP checking account earning 4.5% interest. As the SWEEP account is insured with no limit (farmed out to different banks to distribute the funds in different accounts and stay under the insurance limit), the Committee will consider putting more funds into that account.

Next steps: Committee will continue to consider how best to earn interest and retain flexibility for the Town's funds.

❖ New Items:

Budget Preparation Meeting Date: January 25, 2024, at noon

General Fund Policy: The Committee determined that it is in the Town's interest to have a General Fund Policy. Donna had researched and distributed information ahead of time on Maine towns similar in size to Beaver Cove, and their General Fund Policies.

Next steps: Joe will contact the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) for guidance on drafting and enacting a General Fund Policy.

The meeting adjourned at 3:11 pm.