

**Warrant Committee Meeting  
General Government, Health & Welfare,  
& Cooperating Agencies**

**Monday, February 7, 2022**

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call:** 7:00pm by Chair Libby; 13 voting members present

**Present:** J. Berberian, B. Chaplin, C. Chappell, C. Cough, M. Kelly, S. Libby, L. Lopez, B. Reece, C. Ryan, A. Sasner, E. Sassaman, C. Smith, K. St. Germain; **Absent:** K. DesVeaux, J. Young

**II. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

**A. September 2, 2021**

Chair Libby made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 2, 2021 Warrant Committee meeting, with minor typographical corrections. This motion was seconded by Mr. Chaplin and was approved unanimously (*13 Yes, 0 No*).

**B. December 20, 2021 and January 24, 2022**

Chair Libby made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 20, 2021 and January 24, 2022 Warrant Committee meetings, with minor typographical corrections. This motion was seconded by Vice Chair Berberian and was approved unanimously (*13 Yes, 0 No*).

**III. Public Comment Period**

Chair Libby described how the Warrant Committee uses its public comment period. No members of the public were present. Chair Libby closed the public comment period.

**IV. Opening Remarks & Budget Process Updates**

Chair Libby reiterated the schedule for the Joint Budget meetings with the Town Council, and that there would be at least 2 additional Warrant Committee meetings on the following Mondays. He suggested that people take notes as we proceed this budget season so that at the end, we might revisit the Warrant Committee bylaws and determine if the process may be improved and/or clarified.

Vice Chair Berberian noted that the Protections subcommittee meeting would be held on February 11 at 6pm, and that she would send the Zoom link to the full Warrant Committee.

Chair Libby stated that the Town budget itself is a warrant. The number and scope of the subcommittees has changed since last year. If we adhere to the process from the prior years, we could have upwards of 30 motions for each meeting, and those need to be roll call votes due to the Zoom format. The subcommittees still have the opportunity to delve deeply into

their sections of the budget. Each motion tonight will cover all portions of its respective department: revenue, expenses, and CIP. There are still opportunities to recommend changes to the presented budgets. In that case, Chair Libby suggested using a motion to separate the combined motion into two parts, one of which would remain unchanged and the other would be amended. If the motion to amend the motion fails, then the vote proceeds on the original motion.

Mr. Chaplin made a motion to move the start times of the next two Warrant Committee meetings from 7pm to 6pm. This motion was seconded by Ms. Chappell and was approved unanimously (*13 Yes, 0 No*).

Chair Libby turned the meeting over to Ms. Chappell, Chair of the General Government, Health & Welfare, & Cooperating Agencies subcommittee

## **V. Subcommittee Findings and Recommendations**

### **A. Planning Department**

Chair Chappell moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the entire Planning Department budget for FY23 as presented and amended by the Town Council on February 3, 2022.

Mr. Cough noted that he would like to make a motion to reduce the 5.9% salary increase to 4% across the municipal budget. Ms. St. Germain suggested that this might require separating the expenses of the Planning Department from the rest of that Department's budget. Vice Chair Berberian stated that there was still a motion on the floor, which may be subject to amendment. Mr. Sutherland suggested that the amendment could be debated and then if voted for, it would become part of the original motion. If the amendment failed, the vote would return to the main motion. Mr. Cough made a motion to amend the main motion on the floor by modifying the Planning Department expenses by adjusting the salary increase from 5.9% to 4%. Without a second, this motion failed. The main motion remained on the floor.  
*The original motion passed (12 Yes, 1 No).*

### **B. Finance Department**

Chair Chappell moved and Ms. St. Germain seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the entire Finance Department budget for FY23 as presented and amended by the Town Council on February 3, 2022.

Chair Libby reviewed which sections of the municipal budget were included in this motion and where they were located in the budget book. Chair Chappell noted some items that came up during the subcommittee meeting:

- Operating transfers: If amendments are made to the cruise ship or parking fund amounts, these numbers may need to change. This could require an additional subcommittee meeting.
- Union negotiations: A motion may need to be made to specify the final number in the budget.
- More information was requested about what was paid for from the advertising budget line and about the expenses in the technology division.

Chair Chappell noted that these questions did not preclude the subcommittee from proceeding with its vote. Chair Libby stated that historically the Warrant Committee didn't begin meeting until mid-February and its budget process continued through the end of March. The budget at that point was more finalized, and there was time to review changes. To remain consistent with our duties, we may need to have the General Government subcommittee reconvene to review amended budget numbers and have those recommendations voted upon by the full Warrant Committee.

*The motion passed (12 Yes, 1 No).*

### **C. Town Clerk Department**

Chair Chappell moved and Ms. Reece seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the Town Clerk Department budget for FY23 as presented and amended by the Town Council on February 3, 2022.

Chair Chappell noted that no issues were raised other than the municipal salary increases. Chair Libby asked Mr. Cough if he would like to share his concerns about the salary amounts. Mr. Cough responded that he was trying to decrease the budget a bit and thought that a 4% salary increase was fair.

*The motion passed (12 Yes, 1 No).*

### **D. Town Manager Department**

Prior to a motion about the Town Manager Department from Chair Chappell, Mr. Cough stated that he may have a conflict of interest with this section of the budget as an immediate family member receives a Town Council stipend.

Chair Libby asked the Warrant Committee if Mr. Cough had a conflict of interest. He added that the money received by Town Council members is not a salary but a stipend. Ms. Reece noted that there was no change in that line item, and it is the same every year. Ms. St. Germain agreed. Chair Libby noted that the amount of the stipend is in the Town Charter and appreciated the discussion. It was determined that Mr. Cough did not have a conflict of interest (1 Yes, 11 No).

Chair Chappell moved and Ms. St. Germain seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the Town Manager Department budget for FY23 as presented and amended by the Town Council on February 3, 2022.

Mr. Cough stated that he would like to make a motion to separate the Town Manager expenses from the revenue and CIP to change the line items related to the Sustainability Coordinator and Communications Coordinator positions. His motion would reduce both salaries from \$65,000 to \$50,000 and move the \$15,000 subtracted from each to the contingency fund. If it proved difficult to fill either position in 3-6 months, the Town Council could increase the salaries of the position(s). Chair Libby stated that there was a motion to amend the main motion, and that the amendment applied to the expenses section of the Town Manager budget. The motion was to reduce the overall figure by \$30,000 for the two new positions and move that amount to the contingency fund. This amended motion was seconded by Mr. Sassaman. Mr. Cough stated that he saw this as an option to give the town 3-6 months to save up to \$30,000. Ms. Ryan stated that the salary range for these two positions was \$50,000 to \$70,000 and that to prove the value of these positions, she felt it was important to hire the best employees possible and start with an attractive salary. She noted that there had been a proposal to have one or both new positions part-time, but that could lead to asking the new hires for more effort than we were willing to financially support. She could not support the trial salary of \$50,000. Ms. Sasner stated her agreement and the urgent need to fill these positions. She added that Councilor Hochman had noted that the proposed salary was reasonable given the national median salary for these positions. Chair Libby stated that he appreciated the fiscal restraint in the amended motion, particularly given the feedback about the recent tax assessment increases. However, he said that the town is changing and with it the municipal professional needs. Mr. Cough appreciated those comments, and the need to look for the best candidate. He also had in mind the coming bond for a new school. Ms. Ryan stated that with respect to the tax revaluation, a Sustainability Coordinator could work with and alleviate some work from the Planning Department and give them more time to move forward with their work. Though there may be an initial cost, she felt that these new positions filled in gaps and would be beneficial going forward. Ms. Kelly noted that a Communications Coordinator could provide a better dialog about how the town spends its money, and more people could have a better understanding of how the budget works. The amended motion failed (1 Yes, 12 No).

Chair Chappell asked Mr. Sutherland to clarify the CIP revenue. Mr. Sutherland responded that it ties back to what is needed to offset expenditures and that the remainder is funded by property tax. The solar array purchase will be on the June ballot and would be included in non-tax revenues. The \$150,000 is from fund balance transfers in.  
*The original motion passed (12 Yes, 1 No).*

#### **E. Cooperating Agencies**

Chair Chappell moved and Ms. St. Germain seconded a motion to recommend to the voters of Bar Harbor the Cooperating Agency budget for FY23 as presented and amended by the Town Council on February 3, 2022.  
*The motion passed unanimously (13 Yes, 0 No).*

#### **VI. Adjournment**

Prior to adjournment, Chair Libby noted that the process used at this meeting was still subject to amendment as needed. While the process was efficient, we did not dig into the numbers as much as we had in years past. He affirmed his appreciation for everyone's efforts and was open to suggestions.

There being no further business, Chair Libby moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Smith  
Secretary, Warrant Committee