

WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING WITH BUDGET COMMITTEE
JULY 1, 2008

(Tape recorded meeting)

Present: Selectmen Bill Curtis, Phil DiVece, Bob Fairfield, Chairman David Nichols, and Vice Chairman Nicole Viele, Budget Committee members Steve Mehrl and Sherri Dunbar, and Town Manager Arthur Faucher

1. Call to Order

The chairman called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

3. Lt. John Allen, Officer Kathy Williams and Officer Willy Simmons: Discussion on replacing two police cars for a new cruiser in the Wiscasset Police Department

Lt. Allen said he understood the taxpayers' voting down the Police Department's request for a new cruiser as a money issue; however, he thought that the voters did not understand that the Police Department was trading in two cruisers for the new cruiser and that the department had turned back \$30,000 in unused funds from the 2007-2008 budget. The cost of the new cruiser with the two trade-ins is \$18,804. The 2001 cruiser has 172,500 miles and the trade-in value is \$700; the 2004 cruiser has 142,000 miles and the trade-in value is \$2300. If the decision to buy a new cruiser is delayed for a year, the department will experience additional costs for maintenance, insurance and fuel for the older cruisers (which was not budgeted in anticipation of their being traded in), their trade-in value next year will be less and the cost of a new cruiser in 2009 is estimated to increase 6% plus the cost of new equipment will it will require.

Officer Williams described the maintenance problems the department was experiencing with the vehicles.

Bill Curtis recommended that if the article to purchase a new cruiser was put on the ballot, there should be an explanation that two cruisers were being traded in for the new cruiser and that funds did not have to be raised, only appropriated as the department had turned back \$30,000 in surplus funds. He asked that Lt. Allen try to find out how much the necessary equipment would cost for a 2009 cruiser if the decision were delayed a year.

David Nichols said that it was hard to go against the voters; however, Lt. Allen had presented a good argument for placing the article on the warrant and if an explanation were added, he had no problem with it.

Nicole Viele moved, Phil DiVece seconded, that we bring this before the voters on a warrant article stating that we are asking to appropriate \$18,804 from the 2007-2008 undesignated funds/surplus (for a new police cruiser) with an explanatory note on the amount that was carried over from the 2007-2008 Police budget if that is possible. Vote 5-0.

4. Airport Manager Erv Deck: Discussion on replacing windows on the airport terminal and roof repairs to the aircraft maintenance building

The warrant articles for \$19,000 for roof repair and \$8000 for window replacement were not approved by the voters. Erv Deck said that the roof repairs could be taken off the warrant as that work could be done inhouse. However, he felt the voters were not aware of the condition of the original windows, which are single-pane, cracked and have broken seals. Replacement with double-paned windows is not only cosmetic but will be more energy efficient. The lease for the terminal calls for town maintenance and since the tenant is paying the heating bill, which is estimated to be double next year, the town should replace the windows. He asked that the request for \$8,000 for windows be put on the warrant.

In response to Bill Curtis' question whether the \$8,000 could be taken from the enterprise funds, the Town Manager said he would have to check the balance, as he thought there were insufficient funds and would have to wait for the audit. He said he would check with the Treasurer to see if there were grant reimbursement funds that could be used, but the safest way would be to raise and appropriate the funds.

David Nichols said he did not like to go against the voters, but it was a matter of saving oil money. He said if money were available, he would rather not go to the voters, but if not, the Board could decide on the warrant article at the next meeting.

Bill Curtis moved, David Nichols seconded, to defer action on the request until Tuesday (July 8). Vote 5-0.

5. Director Todd Souza: Proposed budget cuts to the Parks and Recreation Department 2008/2009 budget

Todd Souza explained the operations of the department and the areas where cuts had been made. The department consists of the recreation programs, parks and facilities maintenance, operations related to the community center, operational costs and maintenance of the senior center, aid in town facilities and grounds maintenance and community events support. Revenue is raised from program fees, facility rentals, membership fees, day passes, concession, donations and fund-raising plus the town appropriation. He explained the Parks and Recreation Department also performs various services for the town such as waterfront maintenance, planting flowers, mowing at the airport (including safety training), assistance with maintenance at the art gallery, and plowing the community center and playground parking lots. He cited the increase in oil and electricity costs, which he estimates will increase to \$65,000, although operating expenses budgeted are increased only 1%.

The department's revised budget shows cuts in part-time staff hours, removal of the WHS porta-potty, reduction in resale items, elimination of 4th tent and DJ, miscellaneous equipment and a Red Sox trip, and postponement of refinishing the gym floor. These cuts represent a reduction of \$23,715.12, or approximately 10% of the budget.

Souza said an energy audit had been made and he explained the savings the department had made. The amount of oil used was reduced 2700 gallons by lowering the temperature in the building and pool. Motion detectors to control lighting had been installed in the family bathrooms. Alternate energy sources were being researched.

In response to Dick Grondin's questions about the five-year plan, Souza said the goal was to require no more than \$50,000 from the taxpayers by the year 2012. He listed the goals that included obtaining a non-profit status; development of a website for marketing; an analysis of the profitability of programs and cancellation of those which did not break even; a capital campaign, endowment fund, pursuit of grant funding, a survey, competitive fees, exploration of lease opportunities, sports camps and relocation of some activities to the high school, all of which are being worked on or will be when possible. He said the department's goal was to reduce the budget so that the least tax burden to the town will occur in 2011.

Dick Grondin commented that a proposal, which was not on the warrant, to give free memberships to residents for a town appropriation of \$100,000 was probably partly to blame for the failure of the department's budget to pass. Prior Morrell suggested an energy savings could be obtained by lowering the heat of the pool at night and using a solar blanket to retain the heat. In response to Joe Carter's question regarding replacement of the lockers, Todd Souza said that moisture had gotten into the pressed wood, a material that should not have been used in the locker room.

David Nichols recommended delaying a vote until the Budget Committee has had a chance to review the revised budget. Todd Souza said he had drafted a warrant article with explanations.

Arthur Faucher will work on draft warrant articles for the Police Department and for the airport, if necessary, and will send them to the Budget Committee members and the Selectmen.

A motion to accept the revised Parks and Recreation budget was defeated. The chairman said the budget would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Nicole Viele moved, Bill Curtis seconded, to schedule a meeting on Thursday, July 3, at 10:30 a.m. to sign the warrant for the School Department open town meeting. Vote 5-0.

6. Adjourn

At 8 p.m. **Nicole Viele moved, David Nichols seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Vote 5-0.**