

TOWN OF WISCASSET
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 19, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM at the Wiscasset Fire Station

Budget committee members in attendance: Chairman Steve Mehrl, Judith Colby, Sherri Dunbar, Pamela Dunning, George Greene and Richard Hanson and. Members absent were Robert Fairfield Sr., Karl Tarbox and Tony True. Also present was school superintendant Jay McIntire.

Chair Steve Mehrl turned the meeting over to Superintendent Jay McIntire.

Superintendent McIntire pointed out that there was an error on the warrant that had just been voted at the open town meeting. The article for Regular Education had a typo that listed the amount needed at \$40,000 more than was actually needed. Upon recommendation from Maine Municipal Association, nothing will be done to change the article. The article is incorrect, but the amount of the article that authorizes the entire school budget is correct. Since the total budget is correct and the only way to change the incorrect article would be to hold an open town meeting to amend the article, the article will be voted as is.

There was a discussion about posting the information voted at the open town meeting inside the polls. There was discussion about the possibility of posting the informational sheet in a large format so it would be easy to read.

Superintendent McIntire talked about grant money raised by the school department and how it is spent on designated items. The money does not show up in the regular school budget but it is carefully tracked. Budget Committee members pointed out that it was just this type of accounting that makes the school budget process so hard to grasp.

The Budget Committee asked that a revenue and expense report be made available on a monthly basis. Superintendent McIntire agreed that it would be easy to forward those reports to the committee. He also agreed that a monthly meeting to discuss school budget issues would be a good idea. The date for monthly meetings was tentatively set for the fourth Monday of each month. There was also a brief discussion that the entire budget process for the school systems will change again next year and the monthly meetings may facilitate the committees being able to understand the changes as they occur.

Superintendent McIntire was asked for a ballpark date for consolidation. He gave June 13 as the date that the consolidation plan was due to the state. The plan may be incomplete at the time but could still be submitted. If approved by the state, the plan would be voted in September. If the plan passes voter approval, the new regional school board would be formed in November.

Superintendent McIntire reminded the committee that the school will have to raise approximately \$800,000 for teachers' salaries for the months of August and September, after the new regional school union (RSU) is approved. There will be the need for a special town meeting to raise and appropriate the money.

There was some discussion about the architect's plans for rebuilding the schools to accommodate the students and allow Wiscasset to close a building. The architects are reconsidering their plans and looking for items that may be able to be completed more economically.

There is a meeting about the consolidation plans at the Whitefield Elementary School on Thursday May 22 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will focus on the cost sharing part of the plan. Some members intend to find the time to attend.

Discussion was made about the Wiscasset School Department becoming responsible for the Special Education students from the other towns that are talking about joining an RSU with us. Since Wiscasset has the only high school between all of the towns, all of the special education high school students could potentially come to Wiscasset. The other towns could still run their own special education programs by having offsite classes similar to Wiscasset's model. These special education programs are 100% reimbursed by the state.

Chair Steve Mehrl thanked Superintendent McIntire for attending the meeting and for all of the information he supplied. Superintendent McIntire said that any time the committee or any members wanted to visit the schools, they should just call a day in advance and they would be allowed to tour the schools to gain a greater understanding of how the schools operate.

There was a brief discussion about having an article in the from the budget committee about the Saturday open town meeting. It was decided that the committee would not send an article to the papers again since one had been posted the week before. Some members decided to write letters to the editor and articles of their own.

Having no further business, Chari Steve Mehrl moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Pamela Dunning. Motion passed 6-0. The meeting closed at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Pamela Dunning