

Town of Littleton Budget Committee Meeting
November 16, 2023 - Littleton Community Center
Draft Meeting Minutes

Littleton Budget Committee: Art Bisenti, Diane Cummings, Steve Kelly, Mary Menzies, John Piette, Dan Stearns

Town Officials: Lori Bolasevich (Finance Director), Roger Emerson (SB), Carrie Gendreau (SB), Jim Gleason (Town Manager), Linda MacNeil (SB)

Meagan Carr (Library Director), Sarah Cloutier (Library Trustee), Jani Fillion (Chair of the Library Trustees), Sarah MacIver (Library Trustee)

Rilee Clark (Interim Parks & Recreation Director), Amelia Clause (Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator), Andrew Kilmer (Parks & Recreation Commissioner), Blake Roberts (Parks & Recreation Commissioner)

Committee Chair Diane Cummings called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Minutes of the 11/09/23 meeting were not received until late today. Motion to table their approval until the next meeting (DS); seconded (AB); passed 5/0.

The library budget was reviewed. Meagan Carr, Library Director, discussed recent initiatives, the activities of the Friends of the Library group, and recent and future maintenance plans and capital projects.

- It was suggested that the library investigate opening a year-round shop to sell donated and excess books. It is hard to sell a lot of books during a one-day annual sale and this has proved very successful for other libraries.

Parks & Recreation Department operations were reviewed.

- To recruit and retain staff they raised the pay for the temporary summer positions from \$7.25 to \$10.50 per hour. There were approximately 22 summer positions and 130 memberships in the summer program.
- They updated the summer program pricing model to a simpler structure (getting rid of “early arrival” and “late departure” charges and extra charges for the field trips). The price was raised to \$130 per child per week for residents and \$140/week for non-residents. This now covers attendance from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm and all field trips. The summer program lasted for nine weeks.
- A number of increases and decreases were made to their original submission, bringing their total estimated expenses for 2024 to \$731,538.

Parks & Recreation Warrant Articles were reviewed:

- W/A 37 (transfer of \$571,439 from the General Fund to the Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund, reflecting latest estimated spending for 2024)
- W/A 38 (purchase of zero-turn mower for \$15,000) – this is the current estimate, subject to change depending on bids received
- W/A 39 (purchase of new tractor at a net cost of \$54,496 after trading in a 2012 tractor and a 2017 tractor). During last year's budget cycle this same warrant article was proposed and discussed with the Budget Committee. The committee expressed concern about the low hours and relatively young age of the equipment being traded in and felt that maintenance practices, operating procedures, and lack of training had contributed to the premature deterioration of the tractors. The warrant article was tabled last year, and the maintenance budget was increased to get the machines back in good operating order. Roger Emerson, who is knowledgeable on this subject, examined the machines earlier this year and agreed with the sentiments expressed by the budget committee members. After considerable discussion the Parks & Recreation commissioners decided to again table this warrant article.

JP raised the issue of continuing to provide finish mowing services to other Town departments and transferring into the Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund the \$42,250 that the DPW would pay a private landscaper to perform this work. It was noted that two employees devote one day per week to this work and that it takes them away from other Parks & Recreation projects. It was left that Jim Gleason would facilitate another discussion of this between DPW and Parks & Recreation.

It was decided to table the Opera House budget until 12/14/23.

Parking Lot Items:

- Discussion at the 10/19/23 meeting of petitioned warrant articles and whether to ask for presentations from the organizations and to vote on each or to abstain. The budget committee is required to vote on any warrant article with a tax impact. This still needs to be decided.

Upcoming Meetings:

There will be no meeting on 11/23/23 (Thanksgiving Day).

The 11/30/23 meeting will be at the Community Center to review the Police Department Budget.

The 12/07/23 meeting will be at the Fire House (?) to review the Fire Department budget.

The 12/14/23 meeting will be at the Community Center to review the Opera House budget and debt service.

Motion to adjourn (JP); second (AB); passed 6/0

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Menzies

Recording Secretary